

Norman C. Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
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Revelation: The Big Picture Wrap up Revelation

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible reveals God's plan, His relationship with man and woman whom He created. In Genesis, we read that it was in the beginning God created the earth, the animals and people. He created a perfect world, with perfect people...yet God did not create robots. He created people with the ability to choose. To choose right from wrong. To choose to love or choose to rebel. In this perfect environment...they chose to rebel and sin against God. In Genesis the first sin, the first rebellion. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation we see sin exiting the world, the world, destroyed, punished and dealt with. In Genesis, Adam and Eve rebel and disobey against God, they are banished from the garden and a curse is imposed. In Revelation that curse is removed. In Genesis, death begins, In Revelation death itself is cast into the lake of fire. In Genesis Man is sent away from face to face presence of God, exiled from the perfect garden. In Revelation, redeemed man is returned to the restful and perfect garden of God. In Genesis life is cut short. In Revelation there is life forevermore. In Genesis sorrow and pain come into the world. In Revelation there are no more tears, no more pain, no more sickness no more sorrow. In Genesis we read of Satan's entrance onto the world scene. In Revelation we read of Satan's end, defeat and doom. We read of the ultimate triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ. The triumph of the Prince of Peace. The Victory of the Lamb, the son of the King of the Universe.

This morning we are going to go back to look at Revelation as a whole. For the past year we have dissected and studied the individual parts, now I would like to put it all back together so you can see the book of Revelation as a whole. Revelation, or Apocalypse mean the revealing of Jesus Christ. While on earth Jesus deity and power was hidden behind the mask of humanity. But Revelation looks to that time when Jesus returns to defeat all His enemies and establish His righteous rule and kingdom. For years the evil powers have tried to undermine and erode

the authority of Jesus but Revelation tells us who will win in the end. If you are on Jesus team you will be on the winning side. This present world will end in utter defeat for the forces of darkness and an incredible victory by Jesus Christ and His righteous ones.

Revelation was written by the apostle John around 95 AD. The prophesy revealed was given to him through a vision while he was exiled on the island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian. Domitian was a terrible persecutor of the church and saw the people of Jesus Christ, the Christians as a threat to his control and power. Written on the wall behind his throne, Domitian had inscribed the words, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. John went after that sucker with a vengeance. He affirmed strongly that there was only One who is worthy to bear that Holy title. There is only One who is truly King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

John writes to challenge the people of God, the bride of Christ, the church, that Jesus is coming quickly and we must be prepared, must be ready and dressed for the wedding. For the day will come when Jesus will return and apocalypse, Jesus in all His power will be revealed. For some it will mean the fulfillment of hope and triumph. For others it will be the horrible realization of terror. Christ is coming back. whether you are ready or not. Will it be terror or triumph for you?

The book of Revelation includes its own short outline in verse 19 of chapter one. The things which you have seen. Chapter one, Christ is sovereign. The things which are. This is the present day challenge for the churches. And the things which are to come. These are the future events that will take place after the church is taken up into heaven. Revelation presents God's plan for His kingdom, through revealing the glorified Jesus Christ.

Remember our action rhyme to help us remember the truths of the first three chapters of Revelation. It's been a while since we have done this.

Chapter one (Shout) Ready or not here I come! (Hands cupped to mouth).

Jesus Christ from A to Z. (Sweep finger from left to right)

Shining Brightly. (Fingers up away from face)

Unmasked deity. (rip off a mask from face)

Burning eyes (point fingers at eyes)

Double edged sword (draw sword shape from mouth)

Listen ears (cup ears) to hear His Words (fold hands like a book)
Se-ven lamp-stands made of gold (point finger in circle with each syllable)

Se-ven chur-ches to be-hold (steeple with hands in a circle each syllable)

Chapter two. O Ephesus how hard you work (pound a hammer)
When did you lose your love spark? (Question hands and rip out heart)

O Smyrna, Smyrna pounded by pain (Pound on chest)
I know your hurt, (deaf sign for Jesus, pointing at palms)
a crown you'll gain (Victors wreath around head)

Pergamum living in Satan's den (devil fingers above the head)
Stand up, stand out, stand firm in Him (step up, open arms, fist in hand
compromise, tolerance eroding little by little. (Right arm up in air as to
say whatever, then left arm. then right thumb and finger signally little)
Stand up, stand out, stand firm in the middle (circle body with hands

Thyatira, you've traded your righteous-NESS (take off belt)
for the pleasures of sin (hands outline a crooked road)
you will not be blessed (finger across the throat)

Chapter 3

Sardis, your works show that you are dead (stab knife in heart)
Revive (pick off floor) Overcome (hold over head)
For Christ is your head (clasp hands over head)

Faithful Philly, walk through the open door (open the door)
Your weakness turns to strength (Flex muscle)
by the Power of His Word (hands together make a Bible)
You may be shaken (shake bottle) but will not be stirred (stir drink)

Lukewarm Laodicea you think your hot (wave fan in front of face)
You think your rich, but God says, "Not!" (rub thumb and forefingers)
Open your eyes, move close to the fire (Hands near a fire)
a meal with Jesus, be your desire (scoop your spoon)

Lessons from the churches. Lessons for us to learn right now in the present. Ephesus lost its first love so we must not allow that love to grow cold. We need to relight that first love remembering how much God loves the church. Amazed that He would choose what seems to be such an ineffective tool at times to get out the good news that Jesus loves people and wants them to be reconciled back to Himself. Because Christ loves the church, so should we.

Smyrna was pounded with pain and suffering. Remember, the gifts brought to the baby Jesus, Gold, Frankincense and Symrna, exact same word. Symrna, or myrrh was an ointment used to prepare bodies for burial made from the oils of a crushed thorny plant. Jesus, the little baby was born to die, a mission to die for us so that we might have life. For all who are suffering today, we have a God who knows. He too has suffered and we can rest that His timing is perfect, his relief is true comfort.

Pergamon. The church of tolerance and compromise. We realize we are in the world, but we can not be of the world. We are to stand up and stand strong for Jesus even when it is not safe. Stand firm even when it is not convenient. Stand up even when it is not popular. For when we do, by his power, He will refresh us, He will feed us the "hidden manna" the bread of life.

Thyatira made a terrible trade, trading in their righteousness with God for sin with the world. What you invest in will pay it's own dividend. Choose well your spiritual investments.

Sardis. Dead works are worthless. Not on your own strength, not for your own glory. For God and God alone.

Philadelphia. The city of brotherly love sees their weakness become strength by the power of the Word. We must recognize our absolute powerlessness apart from Christ by following the power of His Word.

Laodicea. This is the lukewarm church. Not cold toward God, but not at all hot for God. Are you an apathetic, lazy, ho-hum Christian? God is not impressed and you will never experience the joy and power of the Christian life until you get hot for God. Our church will never be hot for god until our people are hot for God. What do you need to get out of your

life that is causing you to be lukewarm Christian? What do you need to get more into your life to make you hot for God.

In chapters 2 and 3 the church is mentioned 19 times. Then strangely it is not mentioned in chapters 4 through 19. Why? I believe between chapters 3 and 4 the church is caught up to heaven, or raptured up to heaven as described in II Thess 4. This is the pre-tribulational view that believes the church is spared the judgments and wrath of God poured out during the seven year tribulational period. There are fine and godly men and women who hold to middle and end of the tribulation raptures of the church, but I believe the judgments are so terrible and harsh, they have God's wrath and condemnation written all over them. Just read through the Seals, trumpets and bowls of God's wrath.

I know from reading Romans 8 that there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I am told in God's Word that those who are in Christ Jesus are spared from the wrath of God, so I believe that God will "in a twinkling of an eye catch up those believers" prior to the tribulation. No matter what your eschatological beliefs, I would rather be standing amazed in heaven, than left behind shocked and terrified on the earth. I would rather be praising in jaw-dropped amazement, blown away with the splendor and holiness of heaven, rather than be left behind on earth, wondering where my friends and relatives who loved Jesus have disappeared to.

In chapter 4 there is the picture of the throne room of God. There is God the Father seated on the throne. Lampstands surrounding the throne representing the Holy Spirit. The 24 elders crowned and robed in white robes, representing the church. The crystal sea spreading out before the throne, a circular rainbow emanating from the throne itself and 4 creatures hovering about constantly saying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and Is and is to come." And all 24 elder fall on their faces in worship. What a picture of the sovereign power of God and coupled with His holiness and mercy.

It is God's holiness that demands God's justice. So we read in chapters 5 and 6 the first judgments seal are broken out upon the world. The lamb, standing as if slain is the only one worthy to break open the book that contains the seal judgments. This lamb is Jesus Christ

completing the Trinity picture in the throne room of heaven. "To Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb, cries out the elders and myriad's of others (that would be we saints raptured to be with God" We will cry out "To Him who sits on the throne and unto the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." There will be incredible worship going on in heaven. I can't wait to get there and join them all.

Chapter 6 the seals judgments are broken. Four horsemen emerge and head toward the earth. The white horse representing a false peace and counterfeit Christ. The Red horse representing war and bloodshed brings anarchy to the earth. The Black horse brings famine and hunger and the Pale horse brings death to the world with the authority to kill up to 1/4 of the worlds population. Sounds alot like God's wrath doesn't it? What lessons can we learn? Long term peace cannot be manufactured apart from God. In that day or any day, it is a foolish thing to try and hide from Almighty God.

Revelation 7 we see God's mercy in the middle of the madness. There is a soul harvest during the tribulation because of the witness of 144 thousands Jewish preachers who are sealed and protected from evil and danger, protected by God. They will preach God's message of truth and salvation by grace through faith in Jesus and millions will be saved. The counterfeit Christ, the antichrist will have a seal to place on his own peoples foreheads, it will be known by the number 666.

Revelation 8 there is silence in heaven, just before the terrible trumpet judgments come total and absolute silence in heaven. This silence is a deafening reminder of God's power and holiness. Then come blasting out the trumpet judgments that affect the vegetation, 1/3 of the earth is burned. That affects the transportation as 1/3 of the ships at sea are lost. That affects the sanitation as 1/3 of the water supply is poisoned. That affects the illumination as 1/3 of the sun and moon are darkened.

Are you still with me in our sprint through the book of Revelation. We read of the 5th trumpet judgment in chapter 9. Here we see demonized locusts come rushing out of the Abyss. These scorpions from Hell want to torment those who are believers in Jesus, but they are only allowed to sting and torment those who do not have the seal of god on their foreheads. The unbelievers want to die it is so painful, but they are

unable to, providing yet another opportunity to repent and turn to God in Jesus in faith and trust. But v.21 they do not repent.

Revelation 10 John is told to eat a little book. It tastes sweet in his mouth but down in his stomach it tastes very bitter. This represents the Word of God and the truth prophesied held in the pages of the book of Revelation. God's truth is sweet for some and for others it is a bitter thing to swallow. Psalm 19:9 The Commandments of the Lord are sure, Righteous all together. More precious than gold, yes, then fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Revelation 11. We read of the two fire breathing witnesses. For the first half of the 7 year tribulation, or 3-1/2 years they are protected by God, breathing down fire on any who dare try to harm them. Shutting off the rain from heaven at their word. Changing the water into blood at their command. While preaching judgment against the counterfeit Christ, or anti-Christ. They will preach the message of the true Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Then at the end of 3-1/2 years, God will allow the Beast to kill these two witnesses. These are put on display on the streets of Jerusalem in a sick display of the power of the beast, the people will party and celebrate their demise because they constantly reminded them of their own sin and rebellion. Yet, with all eyes of the world watching, God will breathe life into them and they will be taken up into heaven.

Chapter 12 tells of the very real but unseen warfare of spiritual forces. Battles between the angels and demons are all around, even now Ephesians 6 speaks of this spiritual warfare. We must be armed and protected. With the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. The breastplate of righteousness. Our feet wearing the boots of the gospel of peace. We cannot afford to underestimate the strength of the enemy, but we can neither allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by its power. For greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

Revelation 13 introduces more formally the beast out of the sea, which is the counterfeit Christ, or antichrist. This is the one world ruler, a charismatic leader who is extremely compelling and by his Satan induced power and political genius pulls together all the remaining nations of the world in a one world government. His strength is furthered by an almost miraculous recovery from a fatal wound, a counterfeit

resurrection. Similar to waking up out of your own coffin at the funeral. All the eyes of the world will be watching and assume this beast is the real Christ. But, his actions prove he is not. The Beast out of the earth is also the false prophet. He is the cheerleader for the Counterfeit Christ, the One world ruler. He will be the head of the world wide false religion.

Chapter 14 We are afforded another break in the action. A restful preview of the second coming where we will enjoy a continual and unbroken praise of God. God has great things planned for all of us for all eternity.

Chapter 15 introduces the bowl judgments. The judgements keep getting worse and worse. It is wishful thinking to assume that if only men could see and experience the power and righteous judgment of God that they would repent immediately and turn to Him. Yet, it doesn't happen. V9-10 they did not repent. They saw and experienced God's power, but it still didn't change their minds.

Sometimes it can be tempting for us still here on earth to look around at the unbelievers and be jealous of them. They choose to play by a different set of rules whenever it is convenient for them. Lying, cheating, cheap work....just to get ahead. They seem to have all the fun, the money and success. But the vividness of these increasingly terrible judgments remind us to stop being envious of evil doers, for God's powerful faithfulness will one day be evident to all. We can't afford to worship anything except God alone, for anything we worship apart from God will eventually turn on us. Our idols will leave us strangely empty and unsatisfied.

Revelation 17,18 talks about Babylon and it's downfall. Babylon was a very powerful; economically and politically, very worldly city. Babylon like a prostitute who seduces people away from doing right seduces people to sell their character, integrity for material gain, popularity and power...pushing those who feel like they need some religion to a false and feel good religion that does nothing to save anybody. Babylon will be soundly and totally defeated, as God acts in holiness destroying and defeating evil, destroying Babylon. The point for us it to praise God that He will one day act in holiness and wipe out Babylon and all she stands for. One day Jesus will return and make all

things right again. We are to give our strength to God and God alone. Only to Him and to no other.

Revelation 19. Here is the marriage supper of the lamb. The church is the bride. Jesus is the groom, the lamb. They will be brought together forever. Are you dressed for the wedding? Have you made yourself ready to be received by the groom? Chapter 19 paints a vivid picture of the second coming of Christ. Riding on a white horse. This is no fake entrance. No impostor here. This triumphal entry is the real thing, as Jesus will set up His kingdom here on earth.

The Beast out of the sea, and his unfaithful sidekick the false prophet will gather the enraged and rebellious nations of the world to fight against Jesus and his armies, in the battle of Armageddon. But the nations of the world will be no match for King Jesus. The Beast and False prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire. v.20

Revelation 20. Satan is bound up and thrown into the abyss for 1000 years. He will not be allowed to roam about to deceive the people of the earth as he is now. Jesus will then establish His kingdom on earth for these 1000 years. At the end, God will let Satan loose for a short time. Don't ask me why? But the children of the tribulation saints that happen to survive the tribulation will still have a choice to choose God or to reject Him. Sadly, even living in a perfect government. Even living in perfect circumstances and environment. Face to face with King Jesus in total control. Some will choose to rebel. For one last time, Satan and His enemy forces are completely defeated and at this time, Satan is cast away forever into the Lake of Fire to join the beast and the false prophet. The rest of the unbelievers are judged by God at the Great White Throne Judgment. Sadly, all those who failed to claim the name of Jesus will join Satan for an eternal lifetime of torment.

Revelation 21 God creates a new heaven and a new earth. God is always in the recreation business. There will be eternal satisfaction and bliss. No more pain. No more tears. No more headaches. For we will be in heaven with Jesus. There will be no greater privilege for we will serve Him. There will be no greater position for we will reign with Him. There will be no greater intimacy for we will see Him face to face.

In Revelation 22 we are reminded that it is all about Jesus. Just like the first Chapter, Jesus is the alpha and omega. He is the beginning

and the end. he is the perfect lamb and at the same time the lion of Judah. he is the bright and morning star. He is coming again and Jesus is coming quickly. Are you ready? Jesus is the only one who really satisfies. He is the only one bringing hope to the hopeless. He is coming quickly, don't be late. The invitation stands open for you to come. Just as you are before your God come.