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THE FORERUNNER & THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Session 2: Overview of the Book of Revelation

I. What is the Book of Revelation?

A. A Letter:

John was writing a letter to seven churches to whom he was well familiar with.

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia.

Re. 1:4

B. A Vision:

The content of John's letter is a series of encounters he had and messages he was given while in the most dynamic vision in the Scriptures. It is important to keep this in mind so that we can rightly perceive the things he heard and saw.

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard...And...I saw.

Re. 1:10-12

C. The Revelation of Jesus Christ:

We tend to think of the four gospels as God's unveiling of Jesus to the world; and clearly they are that. The Book of Revelation however is actually entitled The Revelation of Jesus Christ. This should tell us something monumental about how God sees His Son; that the picture of Christ depicted in Revelation is at least as much of who Jesus is as the picture given us in the gospels. This is a very new idea for many.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave...

Re. 1:1

D. Jesus' Battle Strategy:

In Revelation is the end time battle strategy from Heaven, foreseeing the enemy's moves and assigning right tactics for the Church that end in victory.

II. Why We're Given the Revelation:

A. The Stated Purpose:

Immediately following the title we are given the stated purpose.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon

take place.

Re. 1:1

B. To Equip the Church:

When read and applied Revelation serves to prepare the saints for the most dramatic time in human history.

C. To Warn the Church of What is Coming:

God uses the Book of Revelation to warn us (Re. 2:10, 12:9, 17, 13:9-10, 14:9-10, 12) about the coming difficulties and perils of persecution and the very real consequences for those who worship the beast.

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life...If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

Re. 13:8-10

III. Interpreting Revelation:

A. Taking it at its Plain Sense Meaning:

Unless the text tells us that it's symbolic (which it often times does) then the Bible means what it says and says what it means. There is no need to go outside the text to understand the broad strokes of what is being conveyed.

B. Use of hyperboles to create emphasis:

1. Hate your family:

Jesus uses some strong language to speak to His disciples about the measure of their commitment. The plain sense meaning of the text is not that Jesus promotes hate but rather that loyalty to Him is supreme above all other relationships.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.

Lk. 14:26

2. The Antichrist described as a beast:

Revelation chapter 13 makes it clear that it is speaking about a man in political authority, but it calls this man “a beast” eighteen times in the chapter to make the clear point that he is beastly in nature (allusion back to the beasts of Daniel 7).

Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?” The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God,

and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.
Re. 13:4-7

C. Symbols Interpreted in the Text:

The symbolic language of these sections is interpreted within the text itself so there is no guesswork about what each symbol means.

1. Seven stars = the seven angels of the seven churches (Re. 1:20)
2. Seven golden lampstands = the seven churches (Re. 1:20)
3. 144,000 = 12,000 Jews from each of the 12 tribes (Re. 7:4-8)
4. Great multitude = they who have come out of the great tribulation (Re. 7:9, 14)
5. Seven horns and seven eyes = the seven spirits of God (Re. 5:6)
6. The dragon = Satan (Re. 12:9)
7. Seven hills = seven kings (Re. 17:9-10)
8. Ten horns = ten kings (Re. 17:12)
9. Woman = the great city Babylon (Re. 17:18)
10. Bride = saints (Re. 19:7-8)
11. Seven bowls = seven last plagues (Re. 21:9)

IV. The Four-Part Structure of Revelation:

A. John's Calling to Prophecy About the End-Times:

In Revelation Chapter 1 the Apostle John gives us 18 truths about Jesus' majesty that formed the way he prophesied about the end-times, which are meant to equip us.

B. Jesus Gave 7 Letters to 7 Churches:

Chapters 2-3 are instructions Jesus gave to these 7 churches about overcoming sin give us practical insight into what we must also overcome today.

C. Jesus Takes the Scroll:

In chapters 4-5 we see the Heavenly court where Jesus is about to take the earth's title deed (the scroll) and reveal His battle plan to purge the Earth of its sin.

D. Jesus' Battle Plan:

Chapters 6-22 can rightly be seen as Jesus' battle plan, which includes the Great Tribulation judgments against the Antichrist. Jesus reveals His main storyline of love to cleanse the earth of evil.

V. The Fourth Part has Five Sections:

His battle plan is seen in 5 chronological sections that describe events that unfold in sequential order. Each of these sections is followed by an angelic explanation to help us understand that section.

A. First Section:

1. Chronological section (Re. 6):
The Seal Judgments are released against the kingdom of darkness.
 2. Angelic explanation (Re. 7):
This is where we receive God's protection from the judgments that will soon be released.
- B. Second Section:
1. Chronological section (Re. 8-9):
The Trumpet Judgments are released against the Antichrist's empire destroying infrastructure and supply.
 2. Angelic explanation (Re. 10-11):
We receive divine direction by an unprecedented increase of the prophetic ministry.
- C. Third Section:
1. Chronological section (Re. 11:15-19):
This section describes the events of the second coming procession where Jesus replaces all governmental leaders on earth in a hostile takeover. Below are several elements of that procession.
 - a) The 7th and last trumpet (1Co. 15:52; Re. 10:7; 1Th. 4:16).
 - b) Jesus first travels across the sky to rapture the saints; this is where every eye sees Him (Re. 1:7).
 - c) Then He marches through the land of Edom; which is modern day Jordan (Is. 63:1-6).
 - d) Finally He comes into Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives (Zch. 14:4).
 2. Angelic explanation (Re. 12-14):
The Antichrist's violent confrontation against the saints justifies that all his governments must be taken over. At this point in the storyline Satan is physically on the Earth.
- D. Fourth Section:
1. Chronological section (Re. 15-16):
The Bowl Judgments are released and destroy all the evil infrastructures in society as well as a large portion of the population.
 2. Angelic explanation (Re. 17-18):
The seduction of Babylon's evil religion will permeate every structure of society. This mandates that Babylon be totally destroyed as well.
- E. Fifth Section:
1. Chronological section (Re. 19-20):
Jesus' makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Re. 19:11-21:8).
 2. Angelic explanation (Re. 21-22):
The restoration of all things which Acts 3:21 speaks of (Re. 21:9-22:5).