

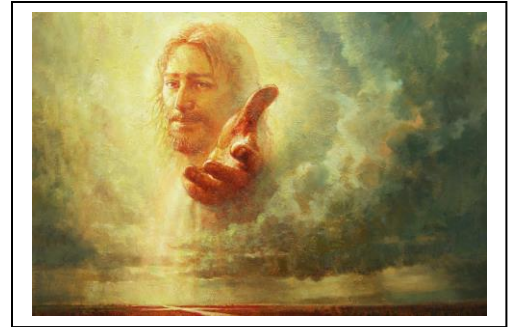
August 22nd, 2021 “Revelation- The Unveiling #1”

Partners in Prayer

Dear Partners in Prayer Team,

“The Revelation [Apocalypses or unveiling] of Jesus Christ... Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

Revelation 1:1a, 3 (NKJV)



Morning, prayer team and family members. We all know Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth very soon. I want you to know from the outset of our verse-by-verse study of the Book of Revelation that each Partners in Prayer that I will be preparing through the balance of the year will serve as a companion study to my outline. It will not be what I necessarily preach, but it will always be written as a letter exchange between our church and John the Revelator, the author of the Book of Revelation. I hope as you read it, it will help us grow.

As we also study Revelation, I want to remind us that Jesus himself made it crystal clear that we cannot know the date of His return. He stated in Matthew 24:36, “of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” But, the Bible makes it equally clear that those who have the Holy Spirit living in them — that is, those who believe in Jesus as Savior — can understand the nature of the times that mark His return (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6). And folks, the season of the Lord’s return is now! We are coming to the end of one age and the beginning of the age of Jesus’ glorious reign right here on earth.

Some Christians and secular individuals predicted several momentous events and have failed. I just want to remind us that when we study Revelation, we are not doing so to understand the future events, or to know when Scripture is being fulfilled, or even to determine and understand what the book is about with all its confusing parts of speech and imagery, even though those things are not wrong in and of themselves. We are studying the Book of Revelation to know who Christ is. The title “Revelation” in Greek is “Apocalypses” which is the word for “to unveil.” It’s like when a magician pulls the cover off of a table or when an artist unveils his famous statue. God, through the Holy Spirit and John the apostle, was concerned with “unveiling” Jesus to us. We must be sure that we see Him like we have never seen Him before. It’s as if God is pulling the sheet off of the greatest work of art which portrays “Jesus” and wants it to change our lives, not just admire, study, or recognize Him and the events of His coming. So, with that in mind, I want to start us with a “dear John” letter from our church:

Dear John of Patmos [the Revelator],

Everyone is saying: "These are the 'end times.'" What does that mean? You said that discerning Christians' will recognize the signs that the end is near... How can I be sure I am a

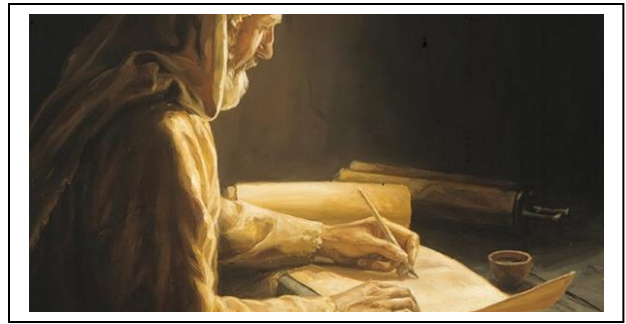
discerning Christian? I must admit that I don't understand the Book of Revelation even though I've tried to read it several times. How do we understand all this talk of trumpets, and scrolls, and tribulations, and bowl judgments? And why do you always write about things in the number "seven?" I'm very scared that I may miss the cues of what will happen before Jesus comes. I hear some Christians always telling us that if we know Jesus as Savior that the rapture will take us away from all the horrible things that the Book of Revelation says will happen. I also don't understand this because other Christians I know say that we will go through trouble and trials. How do we know that the trials today are not the fulfillment of the things of Revelation? What if we miss Jesus' coming? And I've had many people tell me, how ridiculous it is to believe in Jesus coming back just to solve my problems, when so many people throughout the years have tried to predict when Jesus would come, and they have been wrong. So help me make sense of this Book of Revelation, will you?

Sincerely, a confused Christ-Follower <><

Dear Confused Christ-Follower,

The Bible is filled with signs as to what the end times will look like. Some signs are so specific we can't miss them. For example, in Matthew 24:15-16 Jesus pointed out one sure sign of the end times: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains..."

Jesus expects His readers to understand the signs of the end. How will we know what to look for? We study the Scriptures.



The First Sign of the End Times

If we want to understand the signs of the “end times” and Christ’s Second Coming, wouldn’t it make sense that His return would be explained in the Scriptures just as prophecy foretold His first coming? I mean, if the Bible told us about His coming when the Gospels tell us of His birth, and His life, and His death on the cross for us were all “as the Scriptures were fulfilled” then doesn’t it make sense that any prophecy we are looking at should be interpreted the same way? So our starting point must be Deuteronomy 18:15-22: *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ And the Lord said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”*

So what was Moses saying? That you know prophecy is real and will come true just as it was historically, grammatically, contextually, literally, inductively, interpreted. “When the plain sense makes the best sense, seek no other sense.” For example, when Isaiah 7:14 predicted that a “virgin would have a child and His name would be called ‘Emmanuel’ and Matthew 1:22-23 says that Mary was a virgin and gave birth to a son, as Scripture predicted, that is what it means that God will literally do what is predicted. We interpret it literally within the Scriptures’ contexts, by asking questions and studying and comparing Scripture with Scripture to know it is so. If God did that with Christ’s first coming, wouldn’t it also apply with Christ’s second coming? What that means is that we don’t approach the book of Revelation and make up or interpret our own meanings or allegories from the text.

Another example is the prophet Daniel. In all his prophecies of chapters 1-6, they all came to be as literally as Daniel predicted. When studying the prophecies of chapters 7-12, we know that the predictions for a literal Babylonian Kingdom were true and fulfilled. So when there are times Daniel talked about future events, we need to interpret them as we see the example of Daniel. God told the prophet Daniel that when the end is near, many seemingly enigmatic verses will become clear. Probably because as the events prophesied are increasingly fulfilled, the clearer other signs will become.

As Daniel concluded his prophecy in chapter twelve, he asked God to let him in on the timing of the end-time events. God deflected his request in verse four: "But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end..." (Notice that when the end is near everything will become clearer).

Daniel then asked the two angels standing nearby, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" An angel replied in verse seven, "It will be for a time, times, and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

The terms, "time, times and half a time" and the corresponding 3.5 years, 1260 days and 1290 days are explained in the Book of Revelation. Daniel confessed in verse eight that he still did not understand so once again he asked the Lord, "My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

God replied in verse nine, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.... None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand."

So, rest assured that discerning spiritual men and women in the Body of Christ will be able to read the signs—and will be happy to share what they see with you. Notice I said, "spiritual men and women." Jesus predicted that near the end of time many false individuals will confuse many (this, of course, is another sign in itself).

But, don't stop by depending on the insights of others. Do your own homework. Be a biblical "self-feeder" and check these things out for yourself. So that you won't have to go searching to get started, I've listed below the basic prophetic books and passages in order to help make your study a little easier.

Signs and Events of the End Times Explained in Scripture:

I want to encourage you to do some word study through the Bible. We know that Scripture is fulfilled when God in Scripture showed it was fulfilled. So working through several Scriptures about end times will help our understanding of the Book of Revelation. Here are some:

Psalm 2

- The psalm of the battle of Armageddon: Nations rage; God laughs; and the exaltation of Christ as Lord.

The Book of Daniel

- An overview of God's dealing with human governments. A timeline of events from the days of Daniel, 598 B.C. to Palm Sunday, April 6, 30 A.D. An overview of the last seven years before the Second Coming

known as the Great Tribulation which begins with a peace treaty between Israel and a confederation of European states and ends with the Battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ.

Ezekiel 37

- The prophecy of the return of Jews from all over the world to the land of Israel to reestablish the nation of Israel (the dispersion occurred in 70 A.D. and against all odds, the return took place in 1948 A.D.). The battle between Gog, from the land of the north (Magog), that is directly north of Jerusalem (Russia??) and the nation of Israel. Gog, who is allied with a number of African nations, is soundly defeated. The battle probably occurs before the time of Great Tribulation.

Zechariah 12:10-14

- The Israelites weep and repent when they see the nail-scarred hands of Christ at the second coming.

Matthew 24

- Known as the Olivet Discourse, Jesus answered the disciples' questions about the end times and the future destruction of Israel.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- A description of the rapture when Jesus comes "for His saints" and takes them to Heaven. The swiftness and stealth of the Second Coming is detailed.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- Beware of the coming Antichrist who is revealed when he sets up the Abomination of Desolation. The Antichrist has deceptive tools to fool the world. When "that which restrains" (either the Holy Spirit or the church) is removed from earth, the Lord's wrath is unleashed.

1 Peter 4:7-11

- An outline of how to behave during the last days.

2 Peter 2

- A description of wicked men during the last days. The Second Coming time table is right on schedule. God is not delaying. "The elements will be destroyed by fire."

Jude

- A picture of the destruction of ungodly men and women at the Second Coming.

So, dear Christ-Follower, in order to read the signs well and not be deceived, I recommend that you:

1. Carefully study the Bible passages referring to the end as you read the Book of Revelation. Make sure you read the chapters repeatedly and ask the Lord to help you understand, because it says in Revelation 1:3 “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it, for the time is near.” Did you catch those three things we need to do? We must “read it”; “hear it”; and “apply” it.

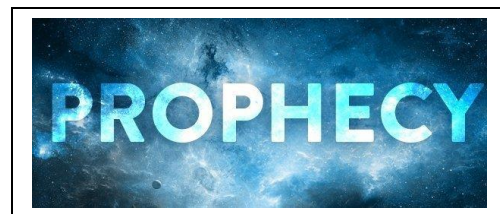
2. Keep an eye on world events, but don’t let them overwhelm you.

3. Listen to spiritual men and women who listen to God for their insights into "the times of the end." I want to recommend the people who have a good “literal historical interpretation” of the end-time events and their commentaries and books as follows:

- Escape the Coming Night, Dr. David Jeremiah, Word Publishing, 1990.
- Because the Time is Near- John MacArthur explains the Book of Revelation, Moody Publisher, 2007.
- Exploring Revelation, John Phillips, Moody Press, 1974.
- Be Victorious, Warren W. Wiersbe, Victor Books, 1973.
- Final Conquest, A verse-by-verse Study of Revelation, D. Robert Jeffress, Pathway to Victory, 2020
- Swindoll’s Living Insights of Revelation, Charles R. Swindoll, Zondervan, 2014

4. Finally, remember that Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:4: “But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief...”.

I hope this helps. Love, John the Revelator
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Let’s pray,

Our Lord God, Your Son, Jesus, closed yesterday’s door, therefore Your people don’t have to live enslaved to sin or shame anymore. Not because we’ve been strong and good and noble, but because You have transformed our lives and have begun a good work of Christ-likeness in us. You are daily changing our course of direction away from this world. Even though You’ve left us on foreign soil, as aliens and strangers, we have a home in heaven. And sometimes we get pretty homesick! Hear the prayers of Your people as we call out to You. Give us understanding and spiritual insight as You promised the Holy Spirit would do for us. Keep us easy to live with, strong in faith, unbending in our convictions yet full of grace toward those who are bound by sin and captured by habits they cannot break. Help us to live each day closer to You and be a greater witness for You. Help us not to get comfortable or complain about these dark and maybe hard days

ahead of us. Make us stronger in Your wisdom. Help our loved ones to come to You. ‘May the circle be unbroken by and by Lord!’ Enable us to shock this pagan culture with lives that are authentic, that stay balanced, that are still fun, and that ultimately glorify You, O God... just like Jesus did. In His great Name we pray. Amen.

**Praying for “tadah” moments,
Pastor Corvin <><**

Quote: The Bible opens with a garden (Eden) and it closes with one (the New Jerusalem, Revelation 22:1). These could be called Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. In the center is a third garden, Gethsemane. There Christ shed tears of blood for us- and prepared for His sacrifice. Reflect on the implications of this pattern of perfect symmetry. Thank God for sending His Son for you- at Creation, at Calvary, and as Conquering King.” ... John Henry Jowett

