



PROPHECY EXPO

Solving the Mysteries of the Apocalypse

- I. Many people are interested in the future
 - A. Personal future
 - B. Future of their children
 - C. Future of the United States
 - D. Future of the world
 - E. Future of Civilization

We know that Jesus is the future of civilization, as we saw last night!

- II. According to the Bible, God does reveal the future

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets."
(Amos 3:7; NASB; 651; SP894)

We must be careful not to put our own words into the Bible's predictions

1. Even as early as 1500s some people believed that the New Jerusalem was about to appear
2. David Koresh saw himself as the Lamb of Revelation

- III. Not only does God declare to know the future, but He claims to be the only One who does know the future,

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure. . . .'
(Isa 46:9-10; NASB520; SP728)

- IV. The book of Revelation should be the most clear of all books

A. Originally the book of Revelation was written in Greek and its Greek name was *Apocalypse*. *Apocalypse* means "unveiling" or "revelation"

B. The reason of the giving the visions of Revelation was to unveil the future

1.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,”
(Revelation 1:1; NASB 189; SP 1210)

2. “Revelation” means unveiling. Since, the Revelation was given to reveal, it should be the most understood, that is to say, clearest book in the New Testament

It is most often the most obscure because readers do not take the time to study its background and historical context

With this background we can turn our attention now to the **Four Keys** of understanding the book of Revelation

III. The Four Keys to understanding the book of Revelation

A. The **First Key** in understanding the book of Revelation is to recognize that the book of Revelation is a book about the conflict between God and Satan. According to Revelation 1:9, John wrote in the context of conflict. John himself was imprisoned because of preaching the gospel

“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”
(Revelation 1:9; NASB189; SP 1210)

1. John saw himself as a brother to those who suffered for Jesus

2. John was confined to the penal colony on the Island of Patmos

With the recognition that the context of the book of Revelation is one of conflict, we have the first key that will help us understand the apocalyptic prophecies in general and the book of Revelation in particular.

The first key is that the book of Revelation has to do with conflict between God’s faithful and those who would persecute them.

3. This book is not about everyday life, but it is a revelation of Jesus Christ and it provides information about the end of the world. That is the reason for the conflict

Revelation 1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John.”
(Revelation 1:1; NASB 189; SP1210)

B. The **Second Key**, and the most important, is that the book of Revelation is about, and by, Jesus Christ and His return to this world

1. Any interpretation schemes that focus on anything other than Jesus Christ and His plan to bring this world to an end should be suspect

"BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."
(Revelation 1:7; NASB 189; SP1210)

Some people mistakenly think last day events are about what is happening in Israel. Jesus was very clear that the special time period in which the Jewish people were "special" to God was past. The New Israel is anyone who accepts Jesus as their Savior.

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (the Jews) and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them."
(Matthew 21:43-45 NASB 18; SP 957)

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.
(Romans 2:28-29 NASB 120; SP1106)

2. Revelation is not only about Jesus, it is His message to those who are willing to suffer and, if necessary, willing to die for Him. Note Revelation 1:1 where Jesus says He sent this book to "His bond servants." You can't begin to understand the book of Revelation, unless you have the Holy Spirit alive in your heart and you are willing to follow Jesus to the end of time. Understanding Scripture is based on the gift of the Holy Spirit

" Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."
(1Corinthians 2:12-14; NASB 131; SP1122)

The book of Revelation is not a book for the curious. It is a book for the committed, sincere follower of Jesus

C. The **Third Key** in understanding the Book of Revelation is to realize that Revelation is the most Old Testament book in the New Testament. While the Old Testament is never directly quoted, its themes are omnipresent. The following are a few of the dozens of examples:

1. The book of Revelation has a special relationship to the book of Daniel in the Old Testament
a. The Son of Man

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him."
(Daniel 7:13, emphasis supplied; NASB635; SP875)

"I saw one like a **Son of man**, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire."
(Revelation 1:13-14; NASB189; SP1210)

- 2. Its dreams and visions are filled with beasts with composite characteristics and unique time periods dependent on the book of Daniel

Daniel

Revelation

Daniel 7 and 8
Daniel 7:25

Revelation 12 and 13
Revelation 12:6

- 3. Other Old Testament imagery also fills the pages of the book of Revelation
For example,

- 1. The Mark of the Beast and the Seal of God (Revelation 7:3; 14:9) are first reflected in Ezekiel 9

"The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, *even* through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst."
(Ezekiel 9:4; NASB 593; SP 818)

"Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."
(Revelation 7:3; NASB 192; SP 1215)

- 2. The Twelve Tribes of Israel are adapted and used in Revelation as a symbolic representation of God’s people. The tribes are not complete because the Revelation list is not about the literal Israelites but a symbolic people (Genesis 49, NASB39-40; SP53-55; Revelation 7:4-8, NASB192; SP1215)

D. The **Fourth Key** to the book of Revelation is its outline. The book of Revelation is constructed like Hebrew poetry in a chiasmic pattern. A chiasm is a Hebrew poetic device where the first and last ideas are paired (mirrored), then the second point and next to the last point are paired, and so on until the middle; in which case the middle is the most significant, that is to say, the most important point in the book. An example,

Chiasmic Outline of the Book of Revelation

IA. Prologue 1:1-10a

IB. Epilogue 22:6-21

IIA. Jesus and the “Overcomers” 1:1-4:11

IIB Jesus and the saved in the New Heaven 22:1-21:21

III. God’s Ongoing Work of Salvation 4:1-5:14
(7 Seals)

IIIB. God’s Judgment Finale (2nd Coming, Millennium, White Throne Judgment) 19:1-21:4

IVA. Trumpet Warnings (7 Trumpets)
(Exodus-Fall of Babylon Motif) 8:2-11:18

IVB. Bowl of Plagues (7 Plagues)
(Exodus-Fall of Babylon Motif) 15:1-16:17

VA. Evil Powers Opposing God and His Saints 11:19-14:20

VB. Evil Powers Judged by God 16:18-18:24