



Sermon Series Notes

“Back To The Future” (Revelation Overview)

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v.1a The focus of the book of Revelation is not the Antichrist, but rather Jesus Christ. During our study of this tremendous book over the next few months, if I hear that you are talking more about the Antichrist than Jesus Christ, I will rebuke you.

vv.1b-2 John the apostle is the one God used to bring this revelation to us. John had been banished to the island of Patmos as a result of his faith in Christ, and that is where he was when the angel brought this revelation to him. Several years ago I had the privilege of leading a tour group to the island, and I did an overview of this book on the island with our group. It was one of my favorite stops on that tour, and one I will never forget. Just as I gave an overview with our group on that tour, I'd like to do the same with you today. It will help you to see the book as a whole, and I pray help you appreciate its vital message. I remember several years ago when I for the first time read the entire book of Revelation in one sitting. It helped me to see it as one message, and it helped me to understand it better as well. I have since read it in one sitting on numerous occasions. I did so again this past Wednesday, then again on Friday. I recommend you do so as well.

vv.3-4 I do not understand why some pastors do not teach through this book. I do not understand why some pastors tell their congregations to not read this book, because it will confuse them. On the contrary, it is not meant to confuse but to clarify. The word revelation means to unveil, to uncover; 602. apokalupsis, ap-ok-al'-oop-sis; from G601; disclosure:--appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation. And check out the promise of blessing for those who will read it, and for those who will hear it as it is taught. And don't miss why we should do so – because “the time is near.” Certainly our generation is closer to the second coming of Christ than any other. And the prophetic signs we see in our day are incredible.

In the first chapter Jesus appears to John and gives him the outline of the book (read vv.18-19).

- What you have seen – Jesus resurrected and glorified
- What is now - The present age, & I believe specifically the church age.
- What will take place later – Future events, mainly a period of time known as The Great Tribulation.

Revelation chapters 2 & 3 are seven letters to seven churches – Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, & Laodicia. The messages in these letters are relevant for all churches throughout the church age.

Read 4:1-2; I believe this represents the rapture of the church at the end of the church age. The largest part of the remainder of the book will deal with the period I mentioned a moment ago, The Great Tribulation. It is also known as the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer.30:7). These future days will be very difficult for the world, and especially for the nation of Israel (Zech.13:8-9; Matt.24:21). But the difficulties will ultimately be used of the Lord to purge Israel of sin, especially their sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Rom.11:25-27 tells us that in this day all Israel will be saved.

After John is raptured to heaven, he sees a throne with someone seated on it (read 4:3). This is God the Father. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones. I have an idea of who sits on these thrones, but you’ll have to wait til we study chapter four to find out. In the center of the throne were four mysterious “living creatures,” and they never stop saying, “holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.”

In chapter five John sees a seven sealed scroll, and he weeps because no one is found worthy to open it. Then one of the twenty four elders he saw in chapter four speaks to him (read 5:5-6a, 11-12).

- Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.

The seven sealed scroll is connected to redemption, and the only one worthy to have accomplished the redemption of the world is Jesus Christ. But the scroll also contains judgment, because all those who reject the redemption God offers through the sacrifice of Jesus have only a fearful expectation of judgment and raging fire that will consume the enemies of God (Hebrews 10:26-27).

In Rev.6 the seals begin to be opened.

- Seal # 1 - A rider on a white horse; Some see him as Christ, and the conquest the spread of the gospel. But he is more likely the antichrist.
- Seal # 2 – A rider on a red horse (world war); Ten million people died in WWI, and twenty million in WWII. But in the coming war predicted in Revelation, half the population perishes. The current population of the world is over 7 billion people. So if this were to take place in our day, some 3.5 billion people would die. To put that in perspective, the current population of the U.S. is just over 300 million. Times that by 11 and you can appreciate the enormity of Revelation’s prophecy.
- Seal # 3 – A rider on a black horse (famine); Famine always follows the devastation of war. Food supplies are exhausted, and those who survive the conflict must now struggle to survive the aftermath of war.
- Seal # 4 – A rider named Death on a pale horse, with Hell following close behind him, signifying the destiny of his victims.
- Seal # 5 - Martyrs in heaven crying out for judgment upon the ungodliness in the world as they see more dying as a direct result of their faith in Jesus Christ. They are told to wait just a little longer; II Peter 3: 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
- Seal # 6 - The planet is shaken to it’s very core!; II Peter 3:10; Heb.12:26-27; Amos 5: 18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light. 19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. 20

Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light-- pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? Isaiah 2: 19 Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. See Isaiah 24:1-3, 6, 20-21.

Read 7:9, 13-15. As awful as this coming day will be, a multitude of people around the world will put their faith in Christ.

Read Rev.8:1, then have everyone be as quiet as possible for 30 seconds. This is the holy calm before the most hellish events in all of human history.

- Matt.24:21-22 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now- and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

8:2-5 As a result of the opening of the seventh seal, all the prayers of all the saints of all time will be answered. Read 8:6-13.

Rev.9, The fifth trumpet, demonic locusts (read 9:5-6)

The sixth trumpet; read Rev.9:13-19; John is trying to describe a Middle Eastern bloodbath with modern military machinery the likes of which he of course has never seen. The Euphrates River originates in the mountains of Armenia, south of Russia, and flows southeast until it joins the Tigris in lower Babylon.

- Show map of Euphrates

The third of mankind killed here are added to the one fourth that have already perished (Rev.6:8). This adds up to half of the population of the world! Islam teaches that there must be a great world war (global chaos) to usher in the twelfth imam, their messiah. It also teaches that Israel will be wiped off the map before imam comes. The current president of Iran believes he is called to pave the way for the coming of the Muslim messiah, and many believe that is why he is developing nuclear weapons.

In Rev.10 a mighty angel gives John a little scroll and tells him to eat it. It is sweet in his mouth, but turns his stomach sour. John is reminded that his ministry of prophesying the Word of God is bittersweet, because while he proclaims a message of salvation, he also proclaims a message of damnation for those who refuse the grace offered through Jesus Christ.

Rev.11 finds John in Jerusalem, where God provides two witnesses who have a ministry that reminds us of Moses and Elijah. When their ministry is complete, they are martyred, and for three and a half days people from all over the world gaze at their dead bodies (Satellite TV). People send gifts to one another, celebrating the deaths of these servants of God. It is very first ANTI-CHRISTMAS! Then they are resurrected "while their enemies looked on."

The seventh angel sounds his trumpet (11:15). We are very close to the end.

- The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.

In Rev.12, Satan and his entourage are kicked out of heaven; Satan is filled with fury, and he goes after the remnant of Israel, and others who have put their faith in Christ (v.17).

Rev.13 The dragon (Satan) is standing on the shore of the sea, and a beast comes up out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads. This is a revived Roman Empire (Daniel); see Rosenberg on countries today that were once part of Roman Empire. One of the "heads" of this ten nation confederation seems to have died and been resurrected (vv.3-4). This is the antichrist (false resurrection).

A beast out of the earth (13:11). This is the false prophet, and he orders an image to be set up in honor of the antichrist, forcing everyone to worship the antichrist.

The unholy trinity: The dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet.

Everyone left alive on the earth at this time will be forced to receive a mark in their forehead or on their right hand in order to buy or sell. We have the technology for this today, and we are using it on human beings!

Rev.14, While things continue to get worse and worse on the earth, God still calls out to anyone who will hear, anyone who will heed His call for salvation (see 14:6-7).

- Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Read Rev.15:1, 8; Prayer will do no one any good at this point.

Rev.16; Bowl # one – malignant sores; Bowl # two – oceans polluted; # three - fresh water polluted; # four – scorching heat; # five – darkness and pain; # six – Euphrates dried up to make way for the "kings from the East." This was a common designation in ancient times for the people who lived east of the Euphrates. Remember the sixth trumpet, the four angels released at the Euphrates to kill a third of mankind, and the army of 200 million? Here we see where this army is headed. Read 16:16. I have many times stood and looked across the place where this battle will take place. It is the valley of Megiddo in Israel. See Ezekiel 37:1-6, & Epicenter p.132.

Read Rev.16:17; Bowl # seven – into the air; an earthquake unlike any since man has been on the earth, hailstones 100 lbs. each! Twice in this chapter we are told that the people who remain to endure these horrible events refuse to repent, and v.21 says they cursed God.

Rev.17 John sees a woman riding a scarlet beast. The beast is a revived Roman empire and the woman is Babylon. Read Rev.17:18.

Rev.18 is the fall of Babylon. Read Rev.18:1-3. I have come to believe that this is literal Babylon (See Epicenter, pp.173-174). Babylon here is everything the world has to offer, and that will not last (see I John 2:15-17). Three times in the chapter we are told that Babylon falls in one hour. After 9/11 I understand the reality of this prophecy more than ever.

Read 19:1-7 and let the church respond:

- Hallelujah!
- Amen, Hallelujah!

- Hallelujah!
- Hallelujah!

Read Rev.19:11-16.

Rev.20 Satan bound in the Abyss for 1,000 years; See Daniel 7:11-13 on beasts allowed to live during this period; after the thousand years Satan is loosed, deceives the world one last time, then is cast forever into the lake of fire. Then comes the final judgment (20:11-15)

Read Rev.21:1-5

CONCLUSION: The invitation to join us, Read 22:17