

SESSION ONE:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ": "Apocalypsis"

Most likely penned toward the last of the first Century under the Roman rule of Domitian.

The Book of Revelation was treated almost immediately – if not immediately – as Scripture.

God > Christ Christ > His angel His Angel > John John > Seven Churches

And He sent and signified it

"semaino" – "carries the idea of figurative representation. Strictly speaking, it means to make known by some kind of sign." (NICNT, p.42)

"who is, and who was, and who is to come." Exodus 3:14

1. He loves us

2. He freed us

3. He made us to be...

SESSION TWO:

He held tightly to his position as brother and companion even in his isolation. (V.9)

Those of us in Christ are translated from tribulation to kingdom bliss and the meantime calls for patience.

He could be found in worship and "in the Spirit" when no one was looking. (V.10)

He had a history of allowing his former conceptions of Christ to be altered. (V.17)

Christ's voice is unmatched in volume and power. (Vv.10,15,16)

- Like a trumpet (Exodus 19:16; 20:18 Hebrew "qol sopar")
- Like the sound of rushing waters (Ezekiel 43:2)
- Out of His mouth came a double-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12)

Christ is seen actively serving as the Great High Priest.

Though Christ is highly exalted, He still leans down and touches man. (V.17)

Christ reveals Himself as the "I Am." Vv.17-18

SESSION THREE:

- Seven literal communities of Christianity in existence at that time.
- Representations of the church universal throughout the age.

One stream of thought from those who believe they have even further significance: The order of the 7 churches represents a preview of the entirety of church history.

- Christ identifies Himself in each letter by means of a descriptive phase found in the vision.
- With the exception of Laodicea, Christ issues commendations.
- With the exception of Smyrna and Philadelphia, Christ issues warnings.
- Each letter includes an exhortation to "hear".
- Each letter includes a promise to those who overcome.

He is completely PRESENT and acutely AWARE.

- hard work and perseverance
- recognition and intolerance of falseness

"You have forsaken your first love." (Greek "aphiemi" – to send forth, send away, let go from oneself")
NICNT, p.69: Every virtue carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

It seems probable that desire for sound teaching and the resulting forthright action taken to exclude all imposters had created a climate of suspicion in which love within the believing community could no longer exist. (ibid)

- Remember
- Repent
- Return to those first things

SESSION FOUR:

- This scene implicates the entire universe as utterly, unapologetically theocentric.
- Every element and creature is described in direct relationship to the Throne.

1. A rainbow (cf. Ezekiel 1:28)

2. "Four living creatures" (cf. Ezekiel 1:5 for the same description and number and Isaiah 6:2 for creatures in the same distinct roll.) WBC: In Ezekiel the living creatures are implicitly understood to bear up the movable throne of God. (p.297)

- There are **24 elders**.
- There is “what looked like a **sea of glass**.”
- There is **no description** of God, only that which **surrounds Him**.

Innumerable interpretations but most plausible and easily understood: the “scroll of **destiny**.” (NICNT)
According to WBC, The purpose for opening the scroll is not so that it can be read...but so that the eschatological events can **begin to take place**. (p.347)

This individual will perform the supreme service of bringing **history** to its **foreordained consummation**.

- To depict the singular **means of victory**
- To tie the **Passover Lamb** to the **coming plagues**

It is the beginning of a new era ushered in by a divine coronation. It depicts the Mediator’s **investiture** with the **office of King** over the universe. (Hendriksen, p.111)

SESSION FIVE:

The first four are often called “**The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**.”

The First Seal: The Rider on the **white horse**.

- The rider symbolizes **Christ** (cf. 19:11; Hendriksen, pgs.122,127)
- The rider symbolizes the **antichrist**. (2 Cor. 11:14; BKC)
- The rider symbolizes **military conquest** (NICNT gets more specific with invasions from **the outside**)
- The rider symbolizes “the **proclamation** of the **gospel of Christ** in all the world.”

The Second Seal: The Rider on the **Red Horse**

War in general or could specifically be **civil war**. NICNT differentiates the second rider from the first as a representation of **invasion from within**.

The Third Seal: The Rider on the **Black Horse**

Scarcity and resultant **famine**

The Fourth Seal: The Rider on the **Pale Horse**

This rider is given a name: **death**

The Fifth Seal: The **Cry** of the **Martyrs** (Luke 18:7-8)

The Sixth Seal: Great **Cosmic Disturbances**

1. We are placing these events in the context of our present culture and environment.
2. We are merciful people.
3. We can't picture God, having been so good to us being so harsh with the world.

SESSION SIX:

1. The remnant nation of Israel and the numbers are literal.
2. The remnant nation of Israel and the numbers are symbolic.
3. The "church" as the eschatological people of God who have taken up Israel's inheritance and the numbers are symbolic.
4. The people of God in general (Jew and Gentile alike) and the numbers are symbolic.

12 Tribes X 12 Apostles = 144.

144 X 1000 = 144,000

The Hebrew transliteration for "put a mark" is taw, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. NICNT explains "the mark of Ezekiel 9:4 was the Hebrew tau, made like an X or ±."

Quoting another scholar, NICNT writes: "Krodel notes that 'to Greek Christians this sign would suggest the first letter of the name of Christ (the letter Chi) or his cross.'"

Thankfully, they are identified for us in V.14: "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation."

V.17 "For the Lamb...will be their shepherd"

SESSION SEVEN:

1. The temple of God could be literal.
2. The temple of God could be symbolic.

It was symbolic of a blueprint for preservation.

Consider also that it may also represent reconstruction.

1. The reference to the months and days could be literal.
2. The reference to the months and days could be symbolic.

"We must conclude that the 42 months (1,260 days) represent the period of the satanic power in the world, with particular reference to the final days of the Antichrist. All that God's people are to suffer at the hands of satanic evil throughout the course of the age is but a preview of the final convulsive oppression by Antichrist in the time of the end."

• Based on V.6, there is little doubt they are patterned or modeled after Moses and Elijah. In the words of G.K. Beale, "The witnesses have the prophetic mantle of these two prophets." (p.573)

• The fact that there are two witnesses probably ties to both testaments: OT – the testimony of at least 2 witnesses was required to settle a legal matter. (Deut. 19:15)

NT – Jesus sent His missionaries out in twos. (Luke 10:1)

1. The two witnesses and the events surrounding them could be literal.

2. The two witnesses and the events surrounding them could be symbolic.

In the words of hymnist Isaac Watts: *His wisdom's vast, and knows no bound, A deep where all our thoughts are drowned.*

SESSION EIGHT:

This quote from Ladd's commentary on Revelation is beneficial in a lesson like the one before us: "Here is a fundamental clue to the understanding of biblical prophecy: eschatological events are foreshadowed in historical events." Add this thought to it: In Scripture, flashbacks are often comingled with flash forwards.

1. The length of this enduring enmity. See Genesis 3:15

G.K. Beale: "The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel."

"It is too limiting to view the woman as representing only a remnant of Israelites living in trial at the last stage of history, since the following verses show that the woman symbolizes a believing community extending from before the time of Christ's birth to at least the latter part of the first century A.D."

3. The red dragon.

• Seven crowns – represent the devil's "false claims of sovereign, universal authority in opposition to the true 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'" (Beale, p.635) Glance ahead to 13:1.

*one-third of the stars in heaven refer to "a vast number of evil spirits."

*In Scripture, stars often represent people.

4. The flight to the desert. (Vv.6 and 14)

5. The war in heaven. (Vv.7-9)

6. The hurling down of the accuser

7. A comparison of the crowns.

V.3 – the seven diadems.

V.1 – the one victor's crown.

"The woman 'appears in her true heavenly and glorious character despite her seemingly fragile and uncertain earthly history (Vv.13-16)"

SESSION NINE:

V.1 Coming out of the sea: may be a reference to the Gentiles.

V.1 Ten crowns: a confederation of rulers.

V.2 The animal-like characteristics: various dimensions of this world rule and ruler will resemble bits and pieces of former empires.

The leopard: Greece

The bear: Medo-Persia

The lion: Babylon

Could represent the fatal wound Satan received from the cross but the paradoxical way he appears to have healed from it.

Could represent the resurrection of the Roman Empire.

Could be a literal ruler who appears to have sustained a fatal wound but experiences an astonishing recovery.

V.4 The height of satanic counterfeit.

He is the figure or force that turns the popularity of the first Beast into a form of religion.

In Revelation 16:13, 19:20 and 20:10, he is also called the false prophet.

Tie to the original "Babel" – "Hebrew word meaning 'confusion' derived from a root which means 'to mix.'"

17:15 – The Beast will finally tire of using her and having to hide behind her.

SESSION TEN:

1. The **great occasion**: the **wedding supper** of the Lamb
 2. **The raucous praise**: "Let us **rejoice and be glad**."
 3. The **bridal attire**:: Fine linen is "an expensive fabric worn by **priests and royalty**"
 4. **The divine Romance**: Consider Ecclesiastes 3:11. "[God] has made **everything beautiful** in **its time**. He has also **set eternity** in the **hearts** of men; yet they cannot **fathom** what God has done from **beginning to end**."
- Hosea 2:19,20. "I will **betroth you** to me forever."
5. The ultimate **Groom**: Revelation 19:11.
 6. **The Great Ride**: Revelation 19:12-16.
- "...from '**once upon a time**' to '**kingdom come**'—You are God."

SESSION ELEVEN:

- In his commentary *Revelation*, Dr. M.E. Boring points out a fact based on this segment of Scripture with profound implications: "God does not make '**all new things**,' but '**all things new**.'"

The reference to "no longer any sea" could be a metaphorical reference to there no longer being a "**Red Sea**."

- See V.3. The Greek word for "dwelling" is (in lexical form) "skene," a word and concept with tremendous significance in God's Biblical program. It shares the 3 consonants of the word "**Shekinah**."
- See V.4. In this land of **Evermore**, part of its most exquisite beauty will be found in the "**Nevermore**."
- V.12 – "On the gates were written the names of the **twelve tribes of Israel**."
- V.14 – On the twelve foundations of the wall of the city were "the names of the **twelve apostles** of the Lamb."
- In the vision the city is shaped **as a cube**, undoubtedly tying it to the **Holy of Holies** both in the Old Testament Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.
- In every imaginable way, this is **paradise regained** and **Eden restored**.
- See Hebrews 11:8-16. The redeemed of the Lord will **finally be home**.