

Teaching Plan

- (1.) Introduction to Revelation
- (2.) Describe the 4 common categories of interpretation applied to Revelation.
- (3.) Describe the 4 common ways of understanding Eschatological Prophecy.
- (4.) Commentary on the Olivet Discourse of Mark 13 (and Matthew 24) and its connections with Revelation.
- (5.) Begin commentary on Revelation.

1. **Introduction**: Today we begin a study of Revelation – 22 chapters, 404 verses. Many people consider Revelation difficult to understand. Difficult or not, it is undeniable that interpretations of Revelation differ significantly in details and perspective - from “most of what is written has already happened” to “most of what is written is still to happen.”
 - Winston Churchill once described the former Soviet Union as a “*riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.*” Many Christians (perhaps most) would accept that statement as a good description of Revelation.
 - Yet, the first few verses of Revelation show that John believed his visions were not only understandable but would bring comfort, courage, and hope to God’s people through what they reveal about God and His plan for the ages.
2. **Summary of Revelation**: There is an ongoing spiritual war. God sovereignly rules the universe and will win! In Christ, He will cause history’s consummation as He chooses.
 - History’s consummation will be consistent with God’s plan to have for Himself a holy people who can live in eternity with Him (Heb 12:14, “*without holiness no one will see the Lord*”). Christ is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.
3. **Revelation 21:1-3**: *Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
4. **Revelation does not Consist of Puzzles and Riddles**: Although Revelation’s symbolic language seems strange to us, it was not so to the original recipients. John’s intent was to give believers a clear, understandable message, not give puzzles to be resolved.
 - Symbolic language often contains primary and secondary meanings, layers of meaning. John believed his message would be understood without a specialist to interpret it.
 - Revelation was sent as a letter to seven churches in Asia Minor. There were no copying machines, just a handwritten copy of John’s document circulated to all 7 churches. Each congregation would hear the document read aloud.
 - The word “revelation” means to reveal, unveil, or to make known.

- John's letter and its short prologue are intended to be understood by the recipients. It is not intended for experts to explain but for ordinary people to understand.
 - Key factors are the primary characters involved, and Revelation's methodology, which is to probe beneath the surface of history to reveal the spiritual forces involved.
5. **Revelation's Focus:** Revelation is Christ-centered from beginning to end. Christ is alpha and omega, the beginning and end. He is the mediator of God's plan for history.
 6. **Quotes from Revelation Illustrating its Focus on Christ:** *The faithful witness; firstborn of the dead; ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5); Alpha and Omega (1:8; 21:6); first and the last (1:17); the Living One (1:18); the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands (2:1);); the One who has the sharp two-edged sword (2:12); Son of God; the One who has eyes like a flame of fire, whose feet are like burnished bronze (2:18); the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (3:1); the One who is holy and true; holder of the "key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one will opens (3:7); the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; the Beginning of God's creation (3:14); Lion from the tribe of Judah; the Root of David (5:5); the Lamb of God (5:6; 6:1; 7:9-10; 8:1); the "Lord, holy and true (6:10); the One who is called Faithful and True (19:11); the Word of God (19:13); King of Kings, and Lord of lords (19:16); Christ (Messiah), ruling on earth with His glorified saints (20:6); the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star (22:16).*
 7. **Spiritual War:** On earth, there is an ongoing spiritual war that began in heaven ages ago. Lucifer, a powerful and beautiful angel led a rebellion against God.
 8. **Cause of Lucifer's Rebellion:** Lucifer had great power and beauty but was consumed by pride. His magnificent capabilities impressed him so much, he believed he could be God's equal. That pride led to his fall. His name became Satan. His rebellion became a war.
 9. **Revelation 12:3:** *Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.* (The dragon is Satan).
 10. **Revelation 12:7-9:** *Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*
 11. **Isaiah 14:12-14:** *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"*
 - Lucifer and other fallen angels were defeated and cast from heaven to earth. Satan lost that battle, but the war continued with its focus shifted to earth.
 - As Revelation shows, the war will not end until Satan and his forces are totally defeated.
 12. **God's Goal:** God's goal is to have for Himself a holy people who can live in eternity with Him (they must be holy, Heb 12:14). Rev 21:3b is about the realization of that goal.

13. **Revelation 21:3b**: *“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
14. **Satan’s Goal**: Satan’s desire is to have sovereign control like God, becoming the god of as many people as possible. He opposes God. There is no possibility he can replace God or be like Him, but Satan can counterfeit at least some of God’s actions, and that is what he does.
15. **Satan the Counterfeiter**: God originates. Satan counterfeits.
16. **Satan (the Red Dragon)**: Revelation 12:3, 9 represent Satan (the fallen Lucifer) as a great dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. He is a powerful counterfeit of God. In 13:1a, the Dragon (Satan), the counterfeit God, stands on the shore of a sea and from the sea brings forth a strange great Beast.
17. **Revelation 13:1b-3a**: *And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed.*
 - This Beast coming out of the sea has seven heads and is a counterfeit Christ. The Beast is the image of the Dragon (Satan). Both Dragon and Beast have two horns representing power, strength, and authority. The Dragon has crowns on his head. His image, the Beast, has crowns on his horns.
 - Satan (Dragon) wants to be like God but cannot. So, he counterfeits God’s actions.
 - The Beast drawn from the sea is an example. The Beast is in the image of the Dragon, the counterfeit God. This Beast is a counterfeit “Son of God.”
 - The Beast, as a counterfeit Christ, has a healed wound on one of his seven heads that appears as if it should have been fatal. It wasn’t. He didn’t die. He wasn’t resurrected.
 - There was a bad wound that could have been but wasn’t fatal. Counterfeiting the true resurrection, the Beast appears to be one who died from a head wound and yet lives.
18. **Beast out of the Earth**: A new Beast appears in Rev 13:11-15 out of the earth.
19. **Revelation 13:11-12**: *Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.*
 - This beast is identified as a false prophet (Rev 16:13). He is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. He spreads propaganda to convince people to follow the Dragon.
 - The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet together form a counterfeit Trinity. Satan’s plan is to bring all mankind under him.
 - The Beast (counterfeit Christ) with help from the beast out of the earth (counterfeit Holy Spirit who can work miraculous signs) are to bring Satan’s plan to fruition.

20. **Revelation 13:13-15:** *And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. ¹⁴ Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.*

- Those who follow the Beast (Rev 13:16-18) are in danger both from his bestial tyranny and of becoming like him. People become like that which they fervently follow.
- The psalmist says of idolators, ***“Their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes but they cannot see ...Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust them”*** (Ps 115:4-8).
- The desire of people who follow the Lamb is to be like Christ and be among those who abide with Christ in God’s presence in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:4).
- Knowing Satan is intrinsically a counterfeiter can help believers understand and prepare for the spiritual warfare Satan and his minions wage against them. Beware counterfeits.
- Those who follow Christ are increasingly conformed to Christ’s image (2 Cor 3:18). By analogy, those who follow the Beast are increasingly conformed to the one they follow.
- Satan’s plan to be like God will fool many people. Protection from attraction to Satan’s plan is found only by being “in Christ.”
- Satan’s desire to be like God is the primary cause of the ongoing spiritual war.

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- 3. Reading Revelation Responsibly, Michael J. Gorman; Cascade Books, 2011.**
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