

## Revelation Chart Study (Introduction)

### Background:

*Revelation 1:9 – "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

### Who wrote the Revelation? (John – which John?)

- Apostle (only Apostle who wasn't martyred)
- wrote Gospel of John and 1, 2 & 3 John and the Revelation
- was the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, who were all fishermen. Jesus called the brothers "Sons of Thunder"
- Jesus entrusted the care of his mother (Mary) to John at the Cross
- Christian tradition holds that he outlived the remaining apostles — all of whom suffered martyrdom (except Judas Iscariot) — and ultimately died of natural causes "in great old age near Ephesus" at the beginning of the second century
- John was the leader of the church at Ephesus

### Where was John when he received the Revelation? (Isle of Patmos)

- small Greek island in the Aegean Sea.
- 10 miles long x 6 miles wide
- mentioned rarely in Greek works
- remains show it once had temples to the god Apollo (god of light) and Dionysus *Di-a-nigh-sus* (god of grape harvest & wine) as well as the hippodrome (Greek stadium for horse racing).
- throughout the first years of antiquity (ancient times), the goddess Diana was particularly worshiped in Patmos and she was believed to be the protector of the island.
- under Roman rule, the island was abandoned & used solely for exiles.

### Who sent John there? (Emperor Domitian *Do-mish-un*)

- reigned from A.D. 81 - 96
- regularly arrested, imprisoned, and executed his enemies, even Roman noblemen and senators, and confiscated their properties for his own use
- about 40,000 Christians were killed during his reign
- Second to Nero in persecuting the Christians
- According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "The years A.D. 93 - 96 were regarded as a period of terror hitherto unsurpassed."
- assassinated on 18 September, A.D. 96
- so hated for his excesses that own wife participated in the plot to assassinate him.

**Note:** this was the same wife that he had previously exiled in A.D. 83 (she was later recalled by Domitian)

### Why was John sent to Patmos?

- Domitian required to be called Dominus et Deus "Lord and God."
  - John preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ: "the Lord Jesus Christ"
  - persecution of Christians under Domitian
    - Note:** persecution actually "helped" spread the Gospel (Acts 19:10 - in 2 years all of Asia had heard the Gospel; Saul's persecution caused Christians to flee)
  - John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil (Tertullian and Josephus)
    - Note:** oil boils at 2 or 3 times the temperature of boiling water
  - John was thought to have preached from the pot (oil didn't hurt him)
  - tradition: John was forced to drink poison, but it didn't hurt him (Mark 16:18).
  - John was banished to the abandoned Isle of Patmos (so he couldn't preach to anyone)
    - Note:** this fulfilled God's purpose – to give John the Revelation
- It was often in exile, hiding, or in prison that God was able to speak clearly to His servants
- Think of Moses & the burning bush, Elijah & the still, small voice, Paul in jail (where he wrote many of the books of the Bible), and John Bunyan (who wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* while in prison)

### When was the Revelation written? (A.D. 96)

- John was recalled upon Domitian's death (A.D. 96), so this has provided the traditional means for dating the writing of the book of Revelation.
- Upon his death, his successor, Nerva, reversed many of the cruel judgments of Domitian, and John was subsequently released.

### A Key to Studying Revelation:

- Revelation is considered to be hard to understand. There is a key to open our understanding. We don't have to leave the Bible to use this key.
- **Key:** (will use throughout the lesson)
- "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter **dark sayings** of old" (Psalm 78:2).
  - "hidden lessons from our past" (NLB)
  - "dark sayings of old [that hide important truth]" (Amplified Bible)
  - **Dark Sayings:** "riddle, difficult question, parable, enigmatic saying or question, perplexing saying or question" (Strong's Concordance)
  - Jesus spoke of this verse when He said, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 13:35).

Throughout the OT, God's dealings with Israel are often expressed in the form of a parable or an enigma (riddle or mystery). These were types (a symbol or representation of something to come) of what was coming under the Gospel dispensation (New Testament church). These mysteries, which were hid in God and under the shadows of the law and so were kept secret from the beginning of the world, and from the multitude, are now made known to the Apostles, and by them to others, according to the will of God. (Source: commentaries)

**Key:** "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate" (Isaiah 34:16).

For every dark saying, there's another Scripture that gives understanding.

## Is the Revelation a Secret Book?

**Who gave the Revelation?** (Jesus Christ; Revelation 1:1)

- All truth comes by divine revelation (Jesus gives understanding; Luke 24:45). Without this, people are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).
- Revelation doesn't come by man. Use **Key** to compare "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1) to Galatians 1:12 "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

## Heart condition:

- to understand the Revelation, our heart must be right with God.
- this is a sealed book (Revelation 5:1), and only the Holy Spirit can open the seal (give understanding).
- Isaiah 29:14 says that truth will be hidden from those who are not right with God.
- Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, . . . because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent" (Matthew 11:25).

**Note:** (Discuss the many, many interpretations of Revelation and how this applies.)

## What Does the Word "Revelation" Mean?

- many religious people completely avoid this book – say it's too hard to understand.
- But the actual Greek word (*apokalupsis*) means "an uncovering."  
(Compare to the uncovering or unveiling of a statue; until it was completed, it was covered, but when it is finished, the covering is removed.)

## Time Frame of Events Described in the Revelation:

*"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Revelation 1:19).*

**Note:** verse 1 ("shortly come to pass") and verse 3 ("time is at hand") only show part to the answer; verse 19 is more complete ("hast seen," "which are," and "which shall be")

- One ancient manuscript says, "This book is a running, prophetic history portraying the church from her inception, through this time world in this Gospel Day, the opposing forces she faces, and her triumphs."
- When the Apostle John received the Revelation, the Gospel Day had already been operating for 63 years (since A.D. 33). Therefore, some of these scenes were things that had already taken place, some were taking place as a present tense reality, and others would take place in other portions of the Gospel Day.

**John's commission:**

- Write it down (Revelation 1:11).
- Through the Revelation, God was showing His people how to overcome every opposing force of the church.

**Revelation style:**

- "*signified*" (Revelation 1:1) – means "expressing by signs (or symbols)"
- Symbology = "the literature use of literal objects to explain a spiritual message or truth"
- The picture method of writing was used by the Egyptians. Before writing, this was how people communicated.
- Symbolic language is not new to the Revelation: disciples called "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13); we are called "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). God's people are called sheep; false prophets are called wolves. Herod was called a fox.

**Who received the Revelation?**

- Notice, when Jesus spoke to lawyers, He spoke of the law (Luke 10:25-26).
- When He spoke to fishermen, He talked about fishing (Matthew 4:18-19).
- When Jesus gave John the Revelation, since John was a Hebrew, He used Hebrew imagery.

**Consider this:** If the Apostle John were to see pictures of the American Flag, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, George Washington, etc. would he understand them (without studying)? Likewise, for the Revelation. John (as an Hebrew) instantly understood the symbology that we don't readily recognize (being of non-Jewish heritage).

**Seven Series:**

- The Revelation is divided into seven series (letters, seals, trumpets, etc.)
- A series will take one all the way through the Gospel Day (morning time to evening time), and then the next series will repeat (morning time to evening time).
- Each series presents new aspects, much like a textbook with overlays. Each overlay gives a more complete understanding of the entire picture.

**An Important Symbol:****Number Seven:**

- ancient times "seven" was regarded as the perfect number. In the Bible "seven" is used to show completeness.
- "Seventh day" (Genesis 2:2); Pharaoh's dream (seven ears of corn, seven cows); Joshua (seven times around the city and seven days); the Passover consisted of seven days
- Revelation 1:4 – "seven churches" and "seven Spirits."
- How can there be "seven churches" when Ephesians 4:4 says there is "one body"? (church is Christ's body; Matthew 16:18).
- How could there be "seven Spirits" when Ephesians 4:4 says there is "one Spirit"?
- There were more than seven congregations in Asia at that time. Was this entire Revelation only for those seven congregations?

- Seven churches = the complete church, or the church during the entire Gospel Day. Thus, the Gospel Day is divided into seven segments.
- Seven Spirits = the Holy Spirit working in each segment of the Gospel Day.

### How do we know there are seven days?

- There are 2 Keys:
  - Key:** Isaiah 30:26 – "the light of the sun [New Testament light] shall be . . . as the light of seven days"
  - Key:** Matthew 24:37 – "As the days of Noe were"; Noah had seven days to get everyone into the Ark. There are seven days to get everyone in before the final door (Judgment) is shut.

### The Chart (Before A.D. 33)

**Note:** The Revelation chart is a pictorial representation of the symbolic language of this book. The chart we use is very similar to the charts created by Walter Goodnight & others (1930). They were the first to portray the Gospel Day in seven distinct time periods.

The Revelation chart depicts revelations God has given to people throughout the Old Testament & New Testament

### Chart is divided into 5 boxes:

- **1<sup>st</sup> = Mount Sinai** (where the Ten Commandments were received)
  - God's first written revelation to man (tablets written with God's finger)
- **2<sup>nd</sup> = layout of the tabernacle**, including the Holy of Holies (pattern given on Mt. Sinai)
  - God's first revelation of His presence (brought to the people, previously had been revealed to the patriarchs & the leaders)
- **3<sup>rd</sup> = Solomon's Temple** (God's first permanent dwelling place)
  - God's presence is where He wanted it to be, on Mount Moriah
- **4<sup>th</sup> = Nebuchadnezzar's dream**
  - God revealing future events to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream
- **5<sup>th</sup> = Daniel's vision**
  - God revealing future events to Daniel in a vision

These act as a "prophetic vehicle" that takes us up to the Gospel Day (A.D. 33). They are a time line bringing us to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Box #4)

#### Scripture Reference: Daniel 2:31-44

- Daniel 2:28 tells us the majority of that dream was about events to come: "in the latter [last] days."
  - KEY:** What are the "last days"? Joel 2:28-29 talks about things that would happen "afterward" and "in those days" (prophesy of things to come)
- On the Day of Pentecost (when the Holy Spirit came), Peter said, "This is the day spoken

of by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16-17).

- Last days = the Gospel Day (began on the Day of Pentecost)
- The dream was to make clear when the Kingdom of God would come (or the Gospel Day would begin)

**Why did Nebuchadnezzar see "an image" in his dream?** (Daniel 2:31).

- He was an idol worshiper; God put the dream in the language Nebuchadnezzar would understand.

### **Interpretation:**

- Each metallic section represents a kingdom or world empire
- Notice a deterioration of the quality of the fineness of the metals but an increase in the fierce strength
- **Head of Gold** – the Babylonian empire (Daniel 2:38)
  - **KEY:** Isaiah 14:4 – "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" Babylon was known as "the golden city."
  - Many of Babylon's decorations were made of pure gold. It was known for its hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. They were stocked with enough food to withstand a ten-year siege, and the city was surrounded by a moat.
- **Breast and Arms of Silver** – the Medes and the Persians (Daniel 2:39)
  - this kingdom followed Babylon
  - two arms = a dual kingdom under Darius and Cyrus
  - one breast = united in purpose
  - This is confirmed by the story of Belshazzar seeing the writing on the wall: "Thy kingdom is . . . given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:28).
- **Thighs of Brass** – the Grecian empire (Daniel 2:39)
  - Daniel 11:2 – four kings in Persia; there were four Persian kings after Darius
  - "shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia" (Daniel 11:2)
  - the fourth king (Xerxes or Ahasuerus) made an expedition against Greece and was disastrously defeated
- **The Grecian king was Alexander the Great**
  - "shall bear rule over all the earth" (Daniel 2:39)
  - "a mighty king shall stand up" (Daniel 11:3)
  - it only took Alexander five years to conquer the then-known world
  - at 33 he died, a drunken death (perhaps poisoned)
- **Legs of Iron/Feet of Iron and Clay**
  - kingdom successively following Grecian kingdom was the Roman Empire
  - two legs shows the eastern & western divisions of the empire
  - "kingdom shall be divided" (Daniel 11:41)
  - ten toes are the ten minor kingdoms that made up the Roman Empire
  - iron & clay don't mix
  - "they shall mingle . . . but they shall not cleave one to another" (Daniel 2:43)
  - iron = original stock (true bloods); the original material of the empire
  - clay = inferior race; mixed in later

- although they intermarried and had political alliances, they never lost their ethnic differences; this was a weakness
- commentators say this was not found in the previous three kingdoms
- These four kingdoms bring us to the time when the Kingdom of God was established (the King brings the kingdom). Just as the kingdoms are successive, with no gaps, so it is with the Stone.
- **A Stone**
  - "cut out of the mountain" (Daniel 2:45)
  - What was the "mountain"? (See Box #1) Mount Sinai
  - Christ came from old Judaism
  - the stone "smote the image upon his feet" (Daniel 2:34)
  - Jesus was born in the days of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1), a Roman Emperor
- **Several KEYS let us know that Jesus Christ is the Stone:**
  - KEY:** Christ was made "under the law" (Galatians 4:4)
  - "cut without hands" (Daniel 2:34); man had nothing to do with this (Virgin Birth)
  - KEY:** other Scriptures show that the Stone is Christ
  - "Jesus Christ . . . is the stone" (Acts 4:10-11)
  - "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20)
- **Stone Became a Great Mountain**
  - Mount Zion, or the kingdom, or the church
  - KEY:** Jesus said, "I will build my church." Hebrews 12:22 calls it "mount Sion." Paul called it "a kingdom."
  - this kingdom will never be destroyed; it will stand forever (Daniel 2:44).

## Daniel's Vision

**Text:** Daniel 7:1-7 and 17-19

- This vision came 62 years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
- Notice the language of this vision compared to Nebuchadnezzar.
  - both depict the same thing (four kingdoms)
  - Nebuchadnezzar saw them as something wonderful: metals of gold & silver
  - Daniel saw them with spiritual eyes: realized that they were "beasts" (hideous natures)
- **Four Beasts**
  - are four kings or four kingdoms (Daniel 7:17)
- **First Beast**
  - like a lion
    - (just as a lion is king of the beasts, this was known as the kingdom of kingdoms)
  - had eagle's wings



Two **KEYS** reveal why "eagle's wings" are a description of Babylon & its king:

**KEY:** Habakkuk 1:6-8 "the Chaldeans . . . shall fly as the eagle" (Chaldeans were the people of Babylon); eagle is the king of the birds

**KEY:** Daniel 4:33 Nebuchadnezzar had hair "like eagles' feathers and nails like birds claws," but he couldn't fly. Why? His wings were plucked, so to speak. God had brought him low.

– so, the first beast is Babylon

- **Second Beast**

- like a bear

- raised up on one side; it had two sides

- one side was more dominant than the other

- Persian side was more dominant than the Medes

- three ribs in its mouth (it had crushed the three provinces that made up Babylon (Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt)

- so, the second beast is the Medes & the Persians

- **Third Beast**

- like a leopard (characteristic = swiftness)

- four heads & four wings

- Alexander's conquest of the world in five years has never been equaled in history

- four heads (denoting government)

- Alexander put his four generals in charge before he died

- so, the third beast is the Grecian Empire

- **Fourth Beast**

- great iron teeth (same metallic substance as Nebuchadnezzar's dream)

- ten horns (ten toes)

- Historian Machiardi described them as "ten gothic tribes"

- In the decline of the Roman Empire, they became ten minor kingdoms

- so, the fourth beast is the Roman Empire (pagan)

- notice that the fourth beast is partially before A.D. 33 and partially after

- this beast has two forms: before Christ (pagan Rome, or pre-Christian era) and after Christ (papal Rome, or Christian era)