

OVERVIEW OF THE REVELATION

by Charli Yana

Revelation- Greek 602: ἀποκάλυψις (apocalypse)

2) a disclosure of truth, instruction

2a) concerning things before unknown

2b) used of events by which things, or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view, are made visible to all (*Thayer*)

The Revelation was written sometime between 65-69AD (*[some say 96AD] but definitely before the fall of Jerusalem which occurred in 70AD*). John warned the churches of Asia just as the writer of Hebrews warned the church in Jerusalem (63 AD) of the global persecution that was, at that time, shortly to take place. John's writing began during Nero's reign (54-68 AD) since he would have been exiled on Patmos due to the Emperor's abhorrence toward Christians. (*Mat 24 speaks of a "great tribulation" [v. 21] and that his "generation" would "not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" [v. 34]. See also Dan 12:1; Rev 7:14.*)

Concerning Jerusalem: *"The dedication of the millions of devout Jews throughout the world, seeing that their tithes found their way to Jerusalem, made this city the richest and most lavish city for its size in the world."* *"So the authority of Jerusalem as a city was universal. It extended to every city on earth which lodged a Jew!"* *"Only Rome gave serious competition."*

Arthur Ogden- Pgs. 46-48

Much of the Revelation to the churches of Asia concerned preparedness for persecution that came from the Jews, the fall of Jerusalem (*especially chapter 17 which discusses the city's destruction at the hand of the Empire*) and the subsequent persecution from Rome. Chapters 13 thru 20:7 then pertain to the churches of Asia according to what John was told would

“take place after this” (1:19). *(It is suggested here that a pre-destruction referencing of the “two witnesses” of chapter 11 represent ‘the Law and the Prophets’ who prophesied “until John; since the good news of the kingdom [began being] preached” [Lk 16:16]-emp. added).* 20:7 through 22:5 have yet to occur with chapters 21 and 22 describing the glorified church as seen by John from her origin (*Heaven*). The Law and Prophets became “obsolete” (*Heb 3:13*) after being fulfilled (*Mat 5:17; Lk 24:44; Rev 11:12*) once the Gospel age began when both John (*the immerser*) and Jesus “began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven (*the church*) is at hand (*near*)” (*Mat 3:2; 4:17*). But since the rebellious Jew, who didn’t accept Jesus as the Messiah, continued the temple worship system, Jerusalem’s destruction (*under Titus as the new General of the Roman army*) then finally ended it. Jesus ‘revealed’ to His disciples who lived in the city what was to happen shortly to Jerusalem in Mat 24 which was later addressed to the converted Jewish Christians living there in Heb 10:16-25.

The following study encompasses those who lived (*and died*) under the O.T. Jewish persecution (6:9-11), Christians of the infant church under the N.T., along with the subsequent Roman oppression.

Theme: Victory (*Christians rule! - Mat 5:5; 28:19*) Subject:

When persecution would come and **why** it was necessary.

Our Leader is the Eternal One: Rev 1:17-18.

- To have the keys to anything is to have control over or entrance into whatever those keys have access to: Rev 1:18; 5:5; 9:1; 20:1.

- John saw (5:6) our crucified Lord as He appeared to His disciples **after** His resurrection. Jesus not only had the scars from the cross but also from the prophesied horrific beating He took from the Jews and Romans before that: Isa 50:6.

Which is the main reason why He wasn't recognized by Mary until He spoke (*Jn 20:16*). Satan is too proud to realize that the war between good and evil was won the day Jesus resurrected (*Gen 3:14-15*). He is only chained (*20:2*) so he still has an influence on our human nature. There are many skirmishes the faithful saints have yet to battle until the end of the 1,000-year reign when he is released (*20:7*). Meanwhile we have our spiritual weaponry to hone and wield (*Eph 6*).

Timeframe: Once we understand this very critical aspect of the Revelation, everything else will fall into place.

Rev 1:19 Write therefore the things that you **have seen** (*past*), **those that are** (*present*) and **those that are** to take place **after this** (*future*). (*ESV- emp. added*) *The Revelation covers all three points of time during John's exile on Patmos; what he saw, what was to take place shortly [either during his life or soon thereafter], and what had [has] yet to take place (to the church of the first century and to us- 20:7ff).*

Past: "have seen" (*Gk.1492-to know*)

- Jesus here points to some things that John saw (*things he already knew*); among which was the unrest in Jerusalem (*war between competing factions of the Jews along with their animosity against the Romans- Mat 24:7*) and of the seven churches of Asia, seven being a number of completeness. It only concerns us in that "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction" (*Rom 15:4*), and because of the future events that we need to be ready for that have yet to transpire, once the thousand-year reign has ended (*20:7-15*): Rev 1:20.

- Whatever John "saw" in The Revelation, such as "the souls under the altar" of 6:9, he was to write to the churches of Asia for encouragement so they would get a 'heads-up' in order to not be caught off guard over what was about to happen to them once the Jewish persecution against them morphed into the oppression that came from the Roman

Empire since Rome thought the Christian faith was just another sect of Judaism. Why were those things written in such a mysterious form of language?

“It was written in highly symbolic language to accomplish these opposing concepts (*Reveal and Conceal*) at the same time. It was to REVEAL to God’s people their need for faithfulness, the glory to come, of the vindication of their cause with the overthrow of the opposing forces. Yet, it was also written in such a manner as to CONCEAL these thoughts from the enemy. If the documents showing the overthrow of the persecuting force came into the hands of that government, it would only make the persecution stronger on God’s people. To the persecutors, the highly symbolic language was of “fairy tale” proportions and they made nothing of it”.

Rodney M. Miller- The LION and The LAMB on Planet
Earth © 1976/1981
(*Fair Use copyright codified #4 at 17 U.S.C. § 107*)

Christians, in this case mostly Gentile converts in Asia, understood, or were learning, the emblematic nature of Old Testament writing, which, when used in this manner, the Jews did not understand and the Romans could not decipher... (*Ex: Rev 17:1*)

2Co 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Present: “are”

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things **which are**, and the things which shall be hereafter; (*Emp. added*)

- Specifically, the Asian churches were to “keep what is written in it” and to be ready to endure the persecution. All that was about to happen to the churches of Asia, at that time, was to happen very soon. Notice the instructions to Daniel about sealing up his prophesy concerning

timeframe and then to John when it came to The Revelation: Dan 12:4; Rev 22:10.

- If John was told to not seal the book and Daniel was told to (*written in 539 BC, fulfilled in 175-163 BC*), wouldn't that help us understand that, for the most part, the prophecies of The Revelation were for that specific era and people and not for us nearly two thousand years into the future (*other than for our learning*)?

Future: "after this"

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and **the things which shall be hereafter**; (*Emp. added*)

- Specifically concerning the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD since this was written prior to that date. It also concerns those things that have yet to take place, even from where we are today.

Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth (*to be global*), Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, (*ESV*)

- The (*figurative*) thousand years concerning the (*literal*) Christian reign, thousand as a number of completion (*according to God's timeframe-2 Pet 3:8-9*), runs concurrent with the binding of Satan (20:3), which contrasted the short period of martyrdom (12:6 *the woman representing the church being "nourished"-Gk.5142-to stiffen [42 months or 1,260 days]*). The 1,000-year reign of the saints (20:4-6) represents the age between Christ's resurrection, His ascension, Pentecost

and His return. Then the general judgment will occur in which all people, from every status/walk of life, are to attend. Only those written in the book of life will “not come into condemnation; but [will pass] from death into life” (*Jn 5:24*): Rev 20:11-12 (*same book Moses alluded to in Ex 32:32*).

- books (*plural- 20:12*): a huge library containing the names and deeds of the unrighteous.

Mat 7:13 "...and **those who enter by it** are **many**. (*Emp. added*)

- another book (*singular*): comparatively much fewer names of the righteous and their deeds (*13:8*): Php 4:3; Heb 12:23; Lk 10:20.

Mat 7:14 ... **few** there be that find it. (*Emp. added*)

- Rev 20:13-15. sea- not physical here. The physical sea is to be destroyed along with the earth (*v. 11*). This is the sea that is before the throne (*4:6, 15:2*), and is part of the Hadean realm known as Paradise. The righteous dead will be separated from that realm first (*1 Thes 4:16*) and won't “come into condemnation” (*Jn 5:24*), when it is cast, along with Death, “into the lake of fire” (*20:14*). It is upon this sea that the righteous dead stand, whose names are in the book of life. It's where Paul went to “be with Christ” (*Php 1:23*) since the “sea” here is spiritual, and...

Rev 7:15 "... they are **before** the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple (*denotes separation*); and He Who sits on the throne will **shelter them with His presence**.” (*Emp. added*) But, as John prophesied of the church glorified...

Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

- Death and Hades- (6:8) the personified rider on the pale horse (*Death*) took lives and Hades collected them. Here both are delivered to be judged. Unlike those from the sea before the throne whose deeds were righteous, these according to their ungodly deeds.

- second death- For there to be a second to anything there must be a first. The first death and resurrection are spiritual for those who were “under the altar” (6:9), for those after Pentecost (*having been baptized according to Rom 6*) and all who have been obedient (*under the O.T. to the Law and the Prophets and under the N.T. to the message of the Gospel*) even though everyone can expect to die physically (*as did those under the altar; unless Christ returns beforehand*). That’s when we put Christ on (*Gal 3:27*) as a white garment (*the same that was granted to the “souls under the altar” [6:9], i.e., those who died under the Old Testament who awaited the coming of the Messiah*). Our reigning with Christ begins at that point and will continue as we “walk in the light as He is in the light” (*1 Jn 1:7*). The first death is physical **and** spiritual then, for those who have **not** obeyed the Gospel message. Physical death is the soul’s separation from the physical body, but spiritual death is the soul’s separation from God (*2 Thes 1:8-9*). We will all experience a physical death. **Most**, though, will by their ultimate choice face a second, spiritual death, being separated from God for all eternity: Mat 7:13-14.
- When portions of The Revelation were written in past tense as though they had already happened as John was writing them (*such as 20:7-22:5*), they were written in such a manner because they were/are imminent (*known as “prophet perfect”*), as are all prophecies originating from the mouth of God via Holy Spirit, Who inspired those chosen to pen the inspiration of truth (*2 Pet 1:21*).
- In Acts 2:23 Peter, by inspiration, stated concerning Jesus how his Jewish audience were participants in “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” telling

them how Christ was “by wicked hands... crucified and slain”. Jesus also reminded His disciples of the things He told them during His earthly ministry when He was yet with them (*Lk 24:44*). They occurred just as the things John wrote that have transpired (*according to where we are with reference to history*) and those that are yet imminent (*20:7-22:5*). With the track record of evidence (*Heb 12:1*) concerning all these inspired prophesies that have been confirmed, why would anyone not want to be prepared for Christ's second and final coming? The Revelation was not only written for the preparation of the seven churches of Asia, but also “for our instruction” (*Rom 15:4*). Are we ready? Is the church ready? When Christ comes “will He find faith on earth?” (*Lk 18:8*)

The only portion of the Revelation yet to transpire is from chapter 20:7 to 22:5 with the end of the 1,000-year reign (*the present Christian dispensation, which began with the resumption of Christ's power [Mat 28:18] and will continue until His return*) and the final judgment **...all else has come to pass!**