

March 12/13, 2011  
Revelation 1  
“Unlocking Revelation”  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

We’re going to be studying the book of Revelation for the next few months. The messages will be much different than the verse-by-verse teaching Pastor Gary did on Wednesday evenings in 2010.<sup>1</sup> This view will be from about 30,000 feet, as they say. We’ll look at major themes of Revelation to gain a good understanding of what the Lord wants to say about the end times.

There is some confusion about the fact that this book does not deal with the revelation of John. The Greek word is *apokalupsis*, which means an unveiling or a revealing. [Revelation 1:1](#)<sup>2</sup> says that this is clearly the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The writer is John the apostle, and the date is approximately 95AD. Emperor Domitian sent John to the island of Patmos,<sup>3</sup> which was essentially a labor camp.

### Nine Titles Of Jesus

1. There are 32 titles for Jesus in this book, and nine are found in chapter one.
  - a. The Faithful Witness (1:5)
  - b. The Firstborn from the dead (1:5)
  - c. The Ruler over the kings of the earth (1:5)
  - d. The Alpha and the Omega (1:8)
  - e. Who is, Who was, Who is to come (1:8)
  - f. The Almighty (1:8)

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<sup>1</sup> Use this link to access the Cornerstone Teaching Library for Pastor Gary’s messages (February 17, 2010 through November 3, 2010). <http://www.cornerstonechapel.net/ministries/teachingLibrary>

<sup>2</sup> “The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...”

<sup>3</sup> Patmos is a small island located in the Aegean Sea, covering about 13 square miles.

- g. The Son of Man (1:13)
- h. The First and the Last (1:17)
- i. The Living One (1:18)

### Outline Of Revelation From Revelation 1:19

- 2. Chapter 1 - *"have seen"*
- 3. Chapter 2-3 - *"what is now"*
- 4. Chapter 4-22 - *"what will take place later"*

### Timeline Of Revelation

- 5. We are currently in what is known as the Church Age. (See timeline on page six of this study guide.)
- 6. Chapter 4 - 5 - Jesus raptures the church; Christians are kept in heaven.
- 7. Chapters 6 - 18 - The Tribulation.
- 8. Chapter 19 - Jesus returns!
- 9. Chapter 20 - The Millennial Reign (1,000 years) on earth and Judgment Day.
- 10. Chapters 21-22 - New heaven and earth.

### Methods Of Interpretation

- 11. Allegorical
  - a. This position holds that everything in this book is symbolic.
  - b. It's an account of good versus evil, paganism versus Christianity, and the ultimate triumph of Christ in our lives.
  - c. The book is seen as a spiritual allegory for the comfort and encouragement of the church, denying prophecies of literal, future events.
- 12. Historical
  - a. This perspective is similar to the allegorical position; however, there is a belief in a literal struggle of the church against either Imperial Rome or

other opposing world systems, which culminates in the Second Coming of Christ.

- b. This view denies a prophetic interpretation of events, except for the actual Return of Christ.

### 13. Literal/Futuristic

- a. Cornerstone Chapel embraces this method of interpretation according to what we believe the Bible teaches.
- b. The events beginning in [Revelation 4:1](#) are futuristic, with a few exceptions.
- c. Frequent symbolism is recognized, but events will be fulfilled in a literal way.
- d. There are differences within this view as to the time of the rapture of the church.

### Three Keys To Understanding Revelation

### 14. Everything does not necessarily mean something.

- a. There is a tendency to over-interpret things and see *everything* as a fulfillment of Revelation prophecy when, in fact, it may not be.
- b. Several examples of this include:
  - i. In the 1980s, there were people who mistakenly believed that Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist! In their minds the evidence that led them to this conclusion was simply because of his name – Ronald Wilson Reagan. The theory was that since each of his names contained six letters, he had the 666 mark of the Beast!
  - ii. People were reluctant to use credit cards that had a hologram, because this was the mark of the Beast.
  - iii. Others were fearful of bar codes on merchandise because it symbolized the mark of the Beast.
- c. In general, the tendency exists among too many Christians to over-interpret Scripture by reading more things into it that may actually be there.
- d. Holding this view leads to the temptation to attach meaning to everything and to be convinced that “this means that!”
  - i. One disastrous example of this happened in 1930s and 1940s. All over Europe, Christians were convinced that Adolph Hitler was the Antichrist and either Benito Mussolini or Joseph Stalin would be the False Prophet. And, since they believed they wouldn’t have to go through the Tribulation, they stood idle. The fact is that approximately 10,000 pastors, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, were killed when they did not swear allegiance to the Nazi State. This caused

Christians to be disillusioned when the trumpet of God didn't sound and Jesus didn't return.

ii. If they held a proper view of Scripture, they would have known that there has and always be tribulation (small *t*), but there will be a Tribulation (capital *T*) at some future time.

iii. What about earthquakes and tsunamis?

1. [Luke 21:25](#) - *"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea."*

iv. What about the increase of diseases like cancer, AIDS, or the increase of bacteria and viruses like e-coli, salmonella, MRSA, bird flu, swine flu and mad cow disease?

1. [Luke 21:11](#) - *"There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven."*

v. What about unrest in the Middle East, power shifts and civil war in Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen, and the madman in Iran?

1. [Ezekiel 38](#) tells us that many of these nations will converge on Israel, and it appears like there will be a vacuum that will be created in which even more radical Muslim leadership will rise to power.

15. Limited language is used to describe distant events

a. John is seeing things into at least the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so it's easy to see that he has a limited vocabulary to describe the things he's seeing.

b. Pastor Gary's illustration of George Washington's attempt to describe a flat-screen TV included the elimination of words like plastic, electricity, amplified sound, and electronic images.<sup>4</sup>

c. [Revelation 9:7-10](#)<sup>5</sup> would be one example of a vision that would create a shortage of description language.

16. John writes about things from a circular view of events.

a. Westerners see things arranged sequentially and they think in a monochromic way, while Easterners are polychromic who see multiple things arranged in a circular way.

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<sup>4</sup> "I saw people's faces, moving inside a frame, with colors and sounds; you could make those people appear and disappear and sounds would get louder and softer by pressing small round bumps on a flat tool you would hold in your hand... that if lost led to great panic and foul language."

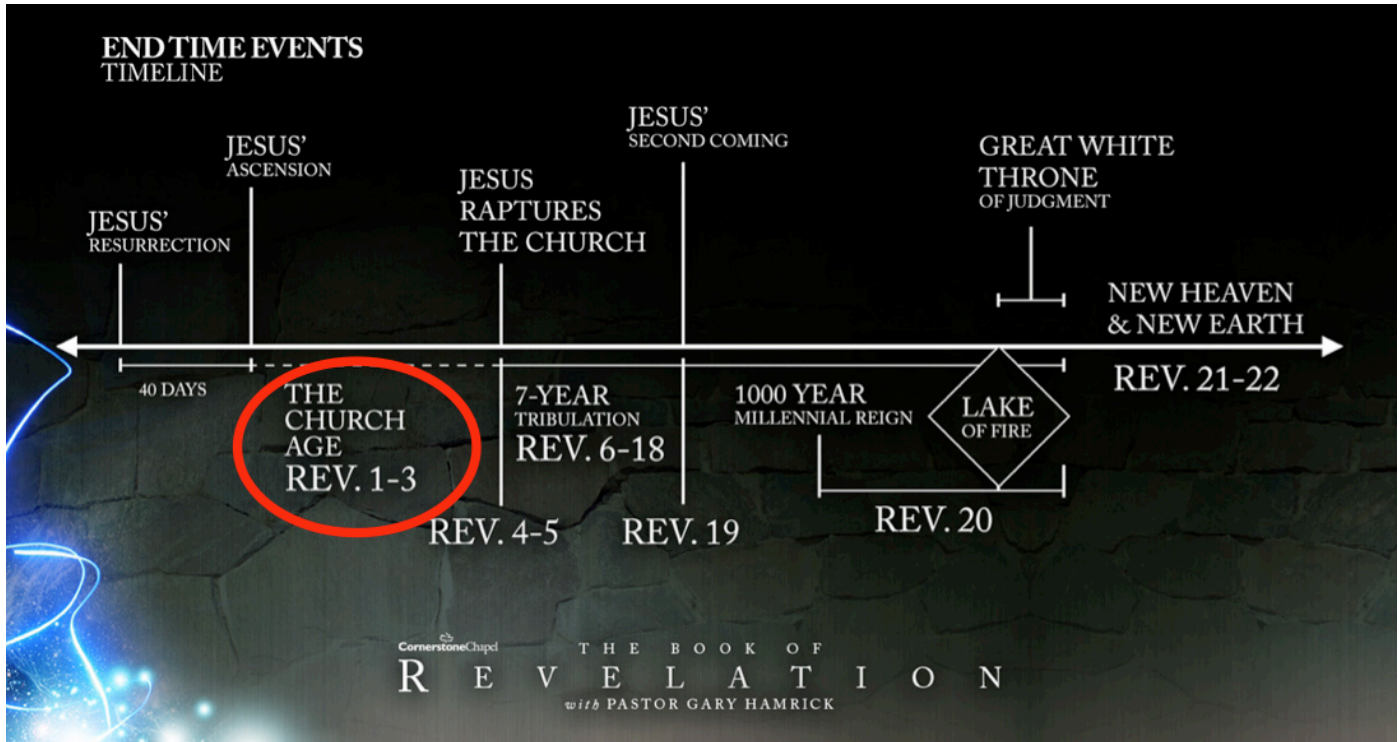
<sup>5</sup> *"The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months."*

- b. It's important to note that while much of Revelation is in chronological order, there are times when it seems as if John is standing in a huge circular room with movie screens all around that play dramatic events, and his senses are bombarded with sights and sounds.
  - i. John writes:
    - 1. "I saw" - 33 times
    - 2. "I looked" - 9 times
    - 3. "I watched" - 3 times
    - 4. "I heard" - 23 times
- c. Examples of John's senses being overloaded include times when he saw lightning, fire, hailstones, bloody rivers, scorpions, a dragon, and beasts with horns; and while these things are going on he heard loud peals of thunder, trumpets, rushing water, loud voices and multitudes singing.
- d. The question we want to ask is, "Now, is there one time of lighting or four different times? ([Revelation 4, 8, 11 and 16](#))
  - i. Is this one event of lighting that he described four times or four different events of light he described one time each?

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Revelation 1](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss the nine titles for Jesus. (See #1 above)
4. Review the outline and timeline for the book of Revelation.
5. Review the methods of interpretation and allow people in your group to share their experiences about churches they've attended that may have held the allegorical or historical viewpoint.
6. Allow people to share their experiences concerning unusual theories some people have held concerning end-time events, people, etc. (See #14b above)
7. Read and discuss the questions in #14d above.
8. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: understand that the Lord does not want them to be afraid concerning the End

Times; remember that the Lord has always rescued the righteous from judgment (The Flood and the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah).



Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).