



**T**HE Revelations of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (Rev 1:1-2)

With this introductory lesson today, we undertake to present a study on the Book of Revelations. As a fitting benediction to the entire books of the Holy Bible, it serves as a compendium of the prophetic utterances of the ancient prophets up to the time of Saint John the Revelator. To undertake such a daunting task is both humbling and a grave challenge.

There are two books of the Bible so very closely related it may seem difficult to understand one without an understanding of the other. That other book is the Book of Daniel; however, we will concentrate on the Book of Revelations for this initial study, and resort later to a study of Daniel.

There are many theologians who will say it is impossible to understand the Book of Revelations given the knowledge of eschatology<sup>1</sup> to which the modern church is privy. This position is partially true and partially false. The Book of Revelations presents a panorama of visions, images, and metaphorical material that differentiates this book from all others; however, these are designed to inform the mind, eager for wisdom, of the events peculiar to the last days of the Church. Some of the prophetic material has already been fulfilled, and some awaits the Lord's timing for fulfillment. All that we must understand will be revealed to the scholar who makes truth his primary goal – for truth is of God.

At the outset, let us stipulate the nature of this Book – it is, first of all, a Revelations intended to be shared by Saint John with the servants of God – those servants constitute all of the True Church who love the Lord and hunger for truth. In the second place, a Revelations is not a Revelations unless it does reveal that truth for which the saint hungers and thirsts. This is not Saint John's Revelation, but "*The*

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<sup>1</sup> Eschatology / ,ɛskə'tɒlədʒi/ (listen) is a part of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity. This concept is commonly referred to as the "end of the world" or "end times."

*Revelations of Jesus Christ*” God has always provided His prophets with sacred truths which He will share with the Elect of God. Saint John was such a prophet; so was Isaiah, Enoch, Jeremiah, Abel, Zechariah and many others. Unfortunately, the words of the prophets fell on, and were absorbed, by select ears, but were disregarded by the larger number of the people of Israel and Judah. Every generation of the Church, from antiquity until today, has had prophets who warn of apostasy from Godly truths and living.

You may ask, “Where are the prophets for our day?” This generation of the Church has a greater assemblage of prophets than any who came before – you might say, A Great Cloud of Witnesses in the Glory. This generation of the Church has ALL of the prophets upon which to rely, and the words of these prophets are recorded in a Book for their understanding and learning. Yet, this generation is no more keen to hear the prophets as were previous apostate people. The living, breathing prophets of our day are those who teach God’s Holy Word and reproach those who are disobedient to our God. They do so, not by any innate authority of their own, but by the Authority of God’s Holy Word.

Those things to which the Revelations refers to as “*must shortly come to pass*” are parts of the prophecies which have indeed been fulfilled in the Fall of Jerusalem and similar events; however, many prophecies remain to be observed in fulfillment until God’s discretion in bringing them to pass.

The Book of Revelations is full of awe and wonder. As an elementary school student, Revelations and the Book of Daniel were my favorites owing to the stark and imaginative imagery. In my youth, my knowledge was not sufficiently developed to understand those images as symbolizing things less arcane and more real in purpose to the Bible scholar who was well read and wise.

In this Book, we have great Red Dragons, white Stones, the seven golden candlesticks, the Seven Churches (and their natures), a beautiful Woman clothed with the sun, Michael the Archangel, seas of glass, and Heavenly Jerusalem. These are the things to quench the thirst of that mind which hunts after fantasy – but these things in Revelations are not fantasies – they are real to those who have been given to understand through Godly study and righteous living.

Revelations could almost be termed a 5<sup>th</sup> Gospel since it is the very Revelations of our Lord Jesus Christ from His Throne of Grace in Glory. The first four Gospels give an account of His life on earth; but this Book gives an account of His Sovereignty beyond the Gates of Splendor in Heaven.

Throughout all of the seeming hyperbole of expression in Revelations, there is a glowing hint and promise of the glorious finality and fulfillment of all promises of God which is reserved for the final three chapters. In these final three chapters, we realize the meaning and beauty of God’s Word at a higher level than any previous prophetic utterances. We see all of the prophecies of old coming to light in those final chapters and, then, too, we see the grave warning against adding to, or taking away, any words of this Book – a practice we see being realized in the new and corrupt Bible versions that proliferate in our day.

Part II of our study will begin a more systematic study of this work beginning at the opening verses of Chapter One. It would behoove the scholar to study ahead so the topsoil of his heart will be cultivated in preparation for receiving the seed of truth from God’s Word. This is true of every Bible study. It should be noted, further, that my devotions on Revelations are based on my study of God’s Word and the understanding of it thereof; but no man is perfect in knowledge and truth except our Lord Jesus Christ

If my understanding does not match the revealed Word of God in truth, it is man's work and not God's.

One last remark of warning to the student of the Book of Revelations: there are many who make filthy lucre from their writings on Revelations. They write to overdramatize and sensationalize every aspect of the prophecies of this great Book. Hear them not! If you love the Lord, are literate in reading and study, you will recognize truth, or even error, when it is presented. God does not need to add any meaning to His Word in order to make it more sensational or palatable to the reader. His Word stands alone! The wise in heart will be privileged to understand while the mundane student of worldly care will consider it to be foolishness.

May the good Lord be our Guide in this Study, and His Holy Spirit be our Lamp of Understanding.