

Revelation - Part 4 - Lecture 2

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[Revelation - Pt 1 - Revelation 1-3, 10 lessons](#)

[Revelation - Pt 2 - Revelation 4-22, 12 lessons](#)

[Revelation - Pt 3 - Revelation 4-22, 11 lessons](#)

[Revelation - Pt 4 - Revelation 4-22, 14 lessons](#)

If you can find a local Precept class studying Revelation, I would strongly encourage you to join the class, as I know of no other study available anywhere in the world that will equip you so thoroughly to discern the signs of the times and cause you to live expectantly as you look for Christ's Return!

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[Click here for Kay Arthur's Older Lecture Series on Daniel](#)

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Revelation Pt 4 - Lecture 2
Are the Events of Revelation Past?
Happening Now? Or Yet Future ?

Are we standing on the brink of eternity future, of events yet to come? Some interpret Revelation as timeless principles for living. The way you interpret Scripture determines what you will believe about the Revelation.

Always interpret Scripture in its normal literary sense. The Bible is a book given by God through men to men. It is composed of 66 books written by many men over many years. Let us reason together like Paul did in Acts because...

2Ti 3:16+ **All Scripture is inspired** (*theopneustos*= "God breathed because *pneustos* is from *pneuma* for spirit or breath) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Peter in his last epistle wants his readers to remember certain things. In the third chapter he writes that some are questioning the promise of Christ's coming again saying that instead things are going to continue just they way they have always been. So Peter writes

2 Peter 1:19+ And so we have the **prophetic word** made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a **lamp** shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, (i.e., when men wrote words that were "God-breathed", it was not something that came from their own reasoning, imagination or understanding.) 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved by the Holy Spirit** spoke from God.

So these 66 books of the Bible are unique because there is no other book that can be compared. Only the Bible is inspired by God. Written by men ONLY as they were moved by His Spirit.

From 2Timothy 3:16-17+ we need to determine WHY Scripture was given to man. If we know the WHY it will help us determine how it should be interpreted. And these are truths we need to share with others.

What is Scripture profitable for?

TEACHING OR DOCTRINE: What I am going to believe or embrace. It is fact. It is a belief system. Today many say "**doctrine**" is not important and that all we need to do is love Jesus and that if we hold to doctrine it will lead to dead orthodoxy. This is a subtle lie from the enemy who desires to undermine the Truth we are to live by. Like the teachers described in 2 Peter, they want to take away your belief system and they want you to function on your feelings and emotions (and on visions and new revelations). Why? Because then they can destroy the FOUNDATION of what you believe. If you are studying God's word on your own you are building a doctrinal foundation that will hold you firm in the days to come. Doctrine is practical!

The way you believe determines the way you behave.

REPROOF: shows us where we are wrong or off base. E.g., as we study Revelation we all come from different backgrounds. But if we have as our goal to know what God's word is saying, what happens as we study is that we see something in God's Word that REPROVES our current belief system. We see that we have believed something that is wrong.

Kay has for example gone back to Precept's "2 Thessalonians course" and discontinued the charts that showed that the tribulation is a 7 year period, because as she studied the word of God she was "reproved". We'll study this more later. She went to a group of scholars and ask them why are we calling these 7 years "tribulation" when the Bible doesn't do that. (Dr. John Walvoord one of the world's foremost experts on Bible prophecy was among that august group and quipped when so confronted "*She's right... nowhere in Scripture is a 7 year period called the tribulation.*"). The point is that we have all been taught a certain way to believe about this subject and we trust those who have taught us and yet we need to ask "what does God's word really say?" even if it "reproves" us! Or will I hold to what I believe regardless of what God's word says?

CORRECTION: as the word of God reproves us we then have the opportunity to bring our beliefs in line with the plumb line of God's Word which is the process of CORRECTION. When the authors of Scripture were moved by His Spirit, they wrote exactly what God wanted them to say.

TRAINING (INSTRUCTION) IN RIGHTEOUSNESS: What is "righteousness"? It's me not living the way I think is right but it's me living according to what God says is right. 52% of evangelicals say there are no absolutes but God's word is filled with absolutes. When I live according to His absolute Word, then I am doing what God says is right. I am ordering my way in the way that God says is right. We need to interpret Revelation correctly because we are accountable to God as to how we handle His Word (2Ti 2:15). Yes teachers receive a greater condemnation (Jas 3:1), but we **all** will be held accountable.

Context of Luke 24: Jesus had risen from the dead and was walking to Emmaus with 2 men who had a "veil over their eyes" and are sad because they do not know Who He is.

Luke 24:17+ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. (bc of His crucifixion)... 25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in **all** that the prophets have spoken!

What had the prophets spoken? Genesis to Malachi. ALL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. We are to believe **ALL** of it.

Luke 24:26+ "Was it not necessary for the Christ (*the Messiah, the Anointed One*) to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" (*The OT taught these things*). 27 And beginning with Moses (*Genesis... God inspired Moses even though he was not there. If you say you cannot accept that then you are forcing your personal interpretation on the Word of God instead of letting it say what it says about itself!*) and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in **all** the Scriptures. 32 And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining (or opening) the Scriptures to us?" (*He was taking off the veil of their understanding*).

In John 17 Jesus has been in the Upper Room and now was preparing to go to Gethsemane where He would be arrested. On His way Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17.

John 17:17 "**Sanctify** (set them apart) them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

What is truth? The Word of God. How do you know? because it says it is "truth". So we have seen what the Word of God is profitable for, that Jesus believed the Whole Old Testament and the Whole OT shows the exact truth about Jesus Christ, and that Truth sanctifies or sets us apart.

Jesus teaching "The Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5:

Mt 5:17+ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

In other words every word written in the OT is going to be fulfilled and Christ is part of that fulfillment. So all the OT prophecies that teach about His coming to die and all those that talk about His second coming to reign... they will **all be fulfilled**.

Mt 5:18+ "For truly I say (*He is the way, THE TRUTH, the life so when He speaks it is TRUTH*) to you, until heaven and earth pass away, (in Revelation 21:1) not the smallest letter or stroke (*small characters above the Hebrew letters*) shall pass away from the Law, until **all** is accomplished.

All the Old Testament will ALL be accomplished, but how? Figuratively? Literally? Spiritually?

If Jesus talks about physical events occurring to Israel, Himself, etc, it must mean **LITERALLY**. So this Word will (1) not be altered or changed and (2) it will ALL be accomplished. Therefore our responsibility is not to interpret **HOW** it will be accomplished but to know the Word inside and out and to **wait** for it to be accomplished. This is especially important in interpreting Revelation. E.g., if you think it has ALREADY been ACCOMPLISHED, then you would take events of HISTORY and fit them into the events in Revelation. Then you would be taking Scripture and forcing His Word into events that have happened in the past or which may be happening at present. We are NOT to try to determine how it will be accomplished. When it is accomplished you will know it.

RULES FOR INTERPRETATION of SCRIPTURE:

(1). CONSIDER THE TYPE OF LITERATURE:

Because it is a book or literature, God communicates by the different types of literature. E.g., Genesis is **historical** and begins at the beginning, the Creation. Some would say that is not LITERAL HISTORY but SYMBOLISM because men of that day did not understand SCIENCE and so they could not really understand how God created the earth. But they go on to say that today we know that the earth had to come into existence via a "big bang". The problem is that they have forgotten that the Bible was given by God through man to man in order to teach man TRUTH. If God says in the beginning that He created the heavens and the earth then is that true? Yes. Why? because this is **HISTORICAL**. The Psalms are Jewish rhythmic **POETRY**. **Proverbs** are "wise sayings for the instruction" of men. The next major section is **PROPHECY**.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PROPHECY: Prophecy is to be looked at two ways: (1) It is the Word from God. ("God said", etc) and God is speaking through a prophet to His people warning them and telling them to straighten up. (2). It is a Word of God regarding what is COMING.

WHAT DOES ISAIAH TEACH ABOUT GOD'S WORD AS PROPHECY?

Isa 44:6 "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. (So God was there at the beginning and will be there at the end. So Who has the **WHOLE** picture? God! Not us.) 7 'And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them **the things that are coming** And the **events that are going to take place** 8 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.' "

Isa 45:11 Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, And you shall commit to Me the work of My hands. (So in **PROPHECY** God is not only speaking to His people but He is also telling them **THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO COME TO PASS**)... 19 "I have not spoken in **secret**, In some dark land; (i.e., this Word is not for a select few in some "dark land" to come and find out what's the secret. No. This book is given by God through man to man and He intends for the common man to understand it and not just some elite group.)

Continuation of TYPE OF LITERATURE:

BIOGRAPHICAL. EPISTLES or letters and they are instructional on how to live this Christian life.

The Bible is not a **mystical** book with a hidden meaning that only an elite group would understand. It's like a form of Gnosticism. This would however violate God's purpose for giving man the Scriptures... teaching, reproof, etc. How could man be reproved by something he could not understand?

(2). ALWAYS INTERPRET THE BIBLE ACCORDINGLY:

(a) recognize FIGURES OF SPEECH

Such as METAPHOR, SIMILE, PARABLE, etc (term of comparison// simile// metaphor). So if I am to interpret accordingly and God is pointing to a FUTURE EVENT then I have to wait until that event happens in order to interpret. And if God says it is literally going to happen then we must interpret it ACCORDINGLY whether we can understand how it is going to happen or not. All we have to do is to understand WHAT (not necessarily "how") it says. (See also Guidelines for Figuring our Figurative Language)

(b) HONOR THE LAWS OF LANGUAGE:

So you honor the fact that the Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, which means that you honor the grammatical principles of that language. E.g., when the Greeks spoke they always put the thing they wanted to emphasize at the beginning of the sentence. So you honor the sentence structure, the verb tenses, etc. God is communicating through man's tongue, not some supernatural language.

(3). LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE:

What's the problem here? Since most people don't have a good command of the **WHOLE counsel** of God's Word, they look at certain passages very **NARROWLY** without a grasp of the **BIG PICTURE**. So you need to know the **WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD'S WORD**. Remember also that God's Word is a **PROGRESSIVE REVELATION**. Therefore if you read something and don't understand it, then you must be willing to wait until the Holy Spirit shows you what it means because His job is to lead you into **ALL TRUTH** (John 16:13). And He guides us not through mystical revelations but **THROUGH HIS WORD**.

1Cor 2:9+ but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And [which] have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God... 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (SO YOU SEE THAT SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE, SPIRITUAL WITH SPIRITUAL)

1Cor 2:16+ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? (The world is not going to understand you or what you believe.) But we have **the mind of Christ**.

Remember that **THE MIND OF CHRIST** will NEVER violate the clear teaching of the Word of God because the Word is **TRUTH** and it is given by God.

(4). DON'T ADOPT A "SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY" AND HOLD TO IT NO MATTER WHAT:

For example you can interpret Scriptures in light of the "**Reformation**" view such as Calvin held but some of his beliefs about the Revelation you need to carefully assess... are they true to God's Word? The "**Dispensational**" view will interpret Scripture with a certain bias. And this is true of any so-called "**systematic**" theological approach. So if you come to God's Word with the mindset that "such and such" is my system for interpreting Scripture, then everything you read will be colored by that particular theological teaching instead of allowing SCRIPTURE TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE.

(5). DON'T FORCE THE WORD OF GOD INTO HISTORY:

Let HISTORY itself FULFILL the Word of God. You can count on it... the Word of God will be LITERALLY FULFILLED in God's time and in God's way just as He said.

(6). NEVER FORGET THAT WHETHER YOU UNDERSTAND IT OR NOT, THE BIBLE IS PURE TRUTH GIVEN BY GOD, PRESERVED BY GOD AND IS INERRANT IN ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND TEXTS.

There are no mistakes in the original language and texts. So if are going to interpret it correctly, you must accept the Word as it is. You cannot pick and choose what to believe, what seems reasonable and what "fits".

FOUR BASIC SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION:

(1) PRETERISM: (click here for additional notes and categorization of writers by the school of interpretation they belong to) from "preter" a Latin word meaning "past". Teaches that Revelation has already been fulfilled but they don't know what to do with Revelation 20-22. They say Matthew 24 has already been fulfilled. They say Revelation was written before 70 AD, that all the prophecies regarding Israel in the Old Testament are fulfilled and thus God is "finished" with Israel! But to come up with this interpretation they cannot take God's Word in its normal literary sense using the rules we have just covered but instead must take what happened in the past and "squeeze" it into history. E.g., they will say that all of Revelation was fulfilled in Christ's time and in Rev 5-11 they see the church's victory over Judaism, in Rev 12-19 the church's victory over pagan Rome (they considered Roman Catholicism was pagan). In Rev 20-22 they see the church's happiness and glory as a consequence. There are mild, moderate and extreme preterists. Extremists say all in the OT had to be fulfilled by 70 AD.

(2) HISTORICISM: They say that prophecy is NOW being fulfilled and that the events that happen to the world begin at the time of the Apostle John on Patmos and thus now we are in the "Tribulation". So they can't interpret for example 1260 days literally instead taking it to mean "years" but the problem is that they have run out of time! They correlate Revelation with events that are occurring in this present age.

(3) FUTURISM: Sees the Revelation future to the present church age so that from Revelation 4 the events have not transpired because we have not seen these events yet LITERALLY happen (e.g., we have not seen 1/3 earth burned up, etc).

(4) IDEALISM: a timeless view so it ignores the specific time phrases and says all that Revelation is meant to teach is that God is sovereign over history (which is true). But is Revelation literal or simply ideal?

The **PRETERISTS** say that the theme of Revelation is Rev 1:7 He is coming with the clouds... and they say this is not the Second coming of Christ but is His judgment upon Israel in order to make the CHURCH the new kingdom. This is not LITERAL. So the point is that if you do not take the Word of God LITERALLY, they you must come with imaginative schemes and "MAKE" THEM FIT. E.g., preterists teach that the GREAT TRIBULATION took place in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and will not be repeated. They teach the great apostasy has occurred but 2 Thessalonians 2 teaches that the apostasy must come before the day of the Lord comes and you will know that the Day of the Lord is here because before it comes the man of lawlessness has to stand in the holy place and declare himself as God. They say "antichrist" is used by John to describe the widespread apostasy of the Christian church prior to the fall of Jerusalem. Any apostate teacher can be referred to as apostate.

The question is: **HOW WILL YOU INTERPRET REVELATION?** Will you interpret it from your own theological point of view and make the Scriptures fit into that view. If you do you will be in trouble because no theological view has a "corner on all the truth". To interpret Revelation correctly, you need to approach it from its LITERAL NATURAL, NORMAL SENSE, remembering that Revelation was given by God through man to man and is a book that man can understand and a book that is literally going to be fulfilled. Revelation tells us how to live in light of what is going to come to pass. You can know this: EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS SAID WILL COME TO PASS & WILL BE FULFILLED. From your study already you know that many of the OT prophecies have yet to come to pass. We must HANDLE THE WORD OF GOD CAREFULLY AND CORRECTLY.