

FUEL FOR FACING THE FUTURE

**A Verse By Verse Study of
Revelation**

Darin Latham
Broadway Church
Vancouver, BC

INTRODUCTION

I had been in full-time ministry for 32 years before I dared to attempt to tackle my greatest pastoral fear - teaching verse by verse through the last book in the Bible: The Revelation Of Jesus Christ.

The last book of the Bible scared me. The last book of the Bible intimidated me.

For over three decades, I avoided any formal attempt at unpacking its complexity, decoding its bizarre symbols and confusing numbers, or deciphering its nuanced prophetic declarations. However, I finally gathered the courage to make an attempt, and I am so glad that I did. The booklet you hold in your hands represents the fruit of that effort.

This study changed how I view the world around me. It gave me new insight into the power of God's kingdom and the pull of the world's kingdom. It gave me fresh assurance of which kingdom will prevail. It gave me fuel for the future.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ has been debated for centuries. Some portions leave themselves open to various interpretations. In this study, I have done my best to "flag" those particular areas, and provide the interpretive options as well. In most (if not all) cases, I have left the reader to decide with which option they feel the most comfort.

It is my prayer that these simple, basic outlines will serve as a foundational guide as you journey through this incredible letter. It is my prayer that studying this Spirit-inspired document changes your perspective as much as it changed mine.

Darin Latham
Lead Pastor
Broadway Church, Vancouver

THE BOOK OF REVELATION: VERSE BY VERSE

Darin Latham/www.broadwaychurch.com

WEEK ONE

I. SOME OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. What Kind Of Literature Is Revelation?

1. It is a form of ancient literature known as apocalyptic...

“The revelation (apocalypse) 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, who testifies to everything he saw...” (Revelation 1:1-2a)

- a. Apocalypsis means “unveiling or disclosure”...
- b. This was a style of writing popular between 200 BC and 200 AD, known for the following features:
 - i. People are represented using the likeness of animals.
 - ii. Historical events are represented using natural phenomena like earthquakes and floods.
 - iii. Colours and numbers have special meanings.
 - iv. It sets the present reality in light of unseen future realities.
 - v. It sets the visible present in light of the invisible present.

1.) A key phrase to remember: “Things are not merely as they seem.”

2.) The purpose of an apocalypse: to open up unseen realities that are undetected by our unaided senses.

2. It is a prophecy...

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy...” (Revelation 1:3a)

- a. It speaks into the present situation of its readers, but against the backdrop of the future...

3. It is a letter...

“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne...” (Revelation 1:4)

- a. It was written in the style of first century writers...
- b. It is the longest letter in the Bible...
- c. It was written by a specific person, to specific persons, living in specific cities, at a specific time in history, to meet specific needs...
 - 1.) Rule number one when interpreting an ancient letter: determine the writer’s original intent. What was he trying to communicate to his original audience?

Four Ways Forward...

There are essentially four ways in which interpreters have approached Revelation:

- 1.) **Preterist:** one who believes that most of the prophecies in Revelation have already been fulfilled.
- 2.) **Presentist:** one who believes that the events in Revelation are in the process of being fulfilled.
- 3.) **Futurist:** one who believes that most of the events are still to come.
- 4.) **Idealist:** one who believes that the events are not historical but mythological.

B. Who Wrote It?

1. Four times the author identifies himself as ***“John”*** (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8)
 - a. Although there is some disagreement, there is strong evidence that the writer of Revelation is the same Apostle who wrote the Gospel of John and the three letters attributed to him in the New Testament.

C. When And Where Was It Written?

“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9)

1. It was written during the time when the Roman authorities were beginning to enforce the cult of emperor worship: possibly around the beginning of Nero’s reign (68 A.D.) but more likely around the end of Domitian’s reign (95 A.D.)
2. It was written while John was in exile (for his refusal to declare Caesar as Lord) at a Roman penal colony on the island of Patmos (30-40 miles off the coast of modern day Turkey.) This island was opposite to the location of the seven churches in Asia Minor, founded by Paul, for whom this book was originally written.

D. To Whom Was It Written?

1. It was written to first century believers who were under pressure from the state, from religious institutions, from economic forces, and even from fellow church members.

Moving Forward...

We will be studying this book inductively – we will not be imposing a certain belief system upon the text, but we will be looking first at what the scripture is saying by asking three simple questions:

What does the passage say?

What did the passage mean in its original context?

What is the passage saying to us today?