

## The Revelation – Part 2

Today we wrap our 3-year fly-over of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, all 66 books. If you've been with us all the way, by the end of this hour you'll have been exposed to everything from Creation to the new heavens and new earth. We've examined at least 8,000 years of history, chronicled by some 40 authors -- men inspired by God to write the Bible over some 16 centuries.

We began because several of you said you weren't familiar with *how* to find *what* in the Bible. Now that you've scratched the surface of the world's all-time best-selling Book, I hope this has given each of us not just *information* -- but personal, lasting *transformation*!

Sure, you may not be able to recite all the prophets' names now, or chart Revelation's coming events. Not to worry. There are only two things you need to remember about the Bible.

### **First, the Bible is all about Jesus Christ.**

The 39 books of the Old Testament recount the rise of the Jewish nation whom God chose to bring into the world Jesus the Messiah, God-in-the-flesh, the only Son God actually sired Himself.

The New Testament's 27 books describe Jesus' birth (history's pinnacle), His life and teachings while on earth, His death, resurrection, ascension, the spread of His followers, and events leading up to and following His next two visits.

The OT says God created a perfect world which became poisoned by sin, thus separating every human from God. The NT explains that Jesus' crucifixion paid the complete penalty for your sins and mine, making it possible for us to have a right relationship with God for all eternity. The Bible's tens of thousands of verses can be summarized by just five sentences written by Jesus' half-brother John:

*"This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in Him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending His Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in Him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust Him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it."*

## Now You See 'em; Now You Don't

Last week two giants died. Bob Van Kampen was a high school teammate of mine. He founded Van Kampen-Merritt, an investment firm, sold it to Xerox and walked with \$400 million. Then he founded Van Kampen Funds, a mutual funds gorilla. At 60 he slipped into eternity last Friday in a Chicago hospital. With enough money to buy all the heart transplants in the world, his body couldn't accept a new heart, having been kept alive for days with an artificial one. Bob had a very personal relationship with Jesus. amazon.com lists three books he authored about the Lord.

Last week a Lear crash snuffed out a PGA superstar and five friends. I received this email from Mason Rutledge of Young Life: *"I've been disappointed in the coverage of the death of Payne Stewart. The memorials talk about the way Payne's life had changed from the early 90's to this year. They attribute the change to his wife, kids, maturity, etc. The reporters and writers are missing or avoiding the real change -- Payne had committed his life to Christ."*

Van Kampen and Stewart are in the Lord's presence! It wasn't their multi-millions, A-List friends, good works or winsome smiles that got them there.

The Bible says there are only two kinds of people on earth now: those who've put their faith in Christ and will spend eternity with God -- and those who've either said no to God -- or haven't decided yet, and they're bound for eternal separation from God in a place the Bible calls hell. They are, spiritually, "dead men walking."

As PGA chaplain Larry Moody says, "We're not in the land of the living, going to the land of the dying. We're in the land of the dying, going to the land of the living."

Whether your heart goes south, or your plane goes down, you never know when your meter will expire. Then, it's too late to say, "Jesus, I never got around to accepting Your forgiveness for my sins."

## Extra! Extra! God Makes Front Page!

Last month (Oct. 1999) *US News & World Report's* cover was "Is the Bible true?" It concluded, *"In extraordinary ways, modern archaeology has affirmed the historical core of the Old and New Testaments -- corroborating key portions of the stories of Israel's patriarchs, the Exodus, the Davidic monarchy and the life and times of Jesus."*

Not to be "out-Bibled," the next *Newsweek* cover read, "The Way the World Ends." It said, *"The Christian Bible begins with the creation of the world, before time itself began. It closes with a harrowing vision of the world's end, when time will be no more. ... Of all the books of the Bible, none has fired the imagination of the West more than the last: the mysterious Apocalypse (or Revelation). The four horsemen of the apocalypse, the heavenly book with seven seals, the beast with the mark of 666, the Whore of Babylon, the deceitful AntiChrist—these are just a few of the powerful and troubling images that Revelation injected into Western art and consciousness. Its prophecies have been of even*

*greater consequence: the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth, the Battle of Armageddon and the promise of a new heaven and earth have justified numerous wars and revolutions and inspired utopias and religious sects of every sort.*

*".... John's Apocalypse ... insists on hard truths that no serious believer can discount. One is that sinners have reason to fear a God who, having chosen to create the world, can also choose to destroy it. The second is that the just have reason to hope in a God who stands by those who trust their lives to him. Thinking of the end of the world—like contemplating one's own end—is a painful process.*

*But studying the Apocalypse presumes that even the end of the world is within the province of God. And who's to say that John's mythic battle between Christ and AntiChrist is not a valid insight into what the history of humankind is ultimately all about?"*

### **Breaking Story: We interrupt history to announce its climax.**

If they don't update that Psychic Hotline infomercial soon, their future predictions are fast becoming day-old doughnuts! There's a global curiosity about the future, but only God is all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere-present.

*As Henry Morris writes, "Since He created time, He stands outside time and thus knows and controls all events everywhere through all time. He may, on occasion, choose to share some of this knowledge with His holy angels, or with chosen men. To this extent -- and ONLY this extent -- can we really KNOW the future, which brings us to ... Revelation ... written specifically to provide knowledge of the future. This is made clear in the very first verse:" "A revealing of Jesus, the Messiah. God gave it to make plain to His servants what is about to happen. He published and delivered it by Angel to His servant John."*

What God wants us to know about the future is in this book. Can we take it to the bank? Well, we have only to check track records of the OT prophets. Hundreds of their prophecies have come true to the T, and those whose target is still in the future, *will* come true because to be God's voice, a prophet had to be 100% accurate.

Revelation wraps up all the Bible's yet-unfulfilled prophecies. Morris says, *"It is therefore a tremendously important book for every Christian to study and master. It is a book of real history -- real events with real people -- written ahead of time by the One outside of time. Since every individual who ever lived or will live is to be a participant in at least some of these events, and since they are the most profoundly important events since the resurrection of Christ, it is vital that we understand them and be prepared for them."*

## Rundown on "Coming Attractions"

Theologians are divided on the timing of the Rapture, the next "return" of Christ as described by Paul. But I'm buying the Pre-Tribulation view where Christ comes back to take believers with Him *before* the end of the world. Let's read I Thess. 4:13-18.

In terms of prophesied events, there's nothing left to precede the Rapture. It could happen ANY sec, even before you race home for Oprah. The Rapture is not in Revelation. By then, it's history.

Revelation contains what God the Father had revealed to Jesus who in turn had an angel deliver it to John in a vision on Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea, in about AD 95. Because of his stand for Christ, John was banished there by Roman Emperor Domitian.

John uses many symbols, explained either elsewhere in Revelation or in other Bible passages. Revelation has three sections, per Jesus' instructions: "Write, therefore, what you *have* seen, what *is now* and what *will take place* later."

Chapter 1 is the "have seen" part -- how this vision came to John, reaffirming Jesus as the God who is, was, and is to come, the all-powerful One.

Chapters 2-3 are the "what's now" -- seven letters dictated by Christ to seven actual Christian churches in the Roman province of Asia (today's western Turkey). Then, some sixty years after Christ had returned to heaven, in a time of chilling persecution, these early churches were in varying states of faithfulness and infidelity to Christ's teachings. In these letters Christ issues commendations, condemnations, corrections and challenges.

Chapters 4-22 are the "what's next." In his vision John sees a door open in heaven and hears Jesus invite him to "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.

In ch. 4 John sees God the Father on His throne, with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They're being worshipped by 24 elders (representing the 12 patriarchs of the OT and the 12 apostles of the NT), four living creatures (court attendants, ready to carry out the will of God the Father, the righteous Judge) and a throng of angels.

In ch. 5 John sees the Lamb of God (Jesus) and a 7-sealed scroll. Each seal represents a horrendous judgment pronounced on the earth in retaliation for rejecting Jesus as Messiah 2,000 years ago. Having died for the sins of all, then resurrected, Christ alone is deemed "worthy" to open the seals and scroll.

In ch. 6 Christ starts unsealing, ushering in the literal 7-year period, the Great Tribulation. This had been predicted often in the Bible. Three reasons are given as its purpose:

1. It will destroy wickedness and all sinners.
2. It will bring about a worldwide turning to God. During the first half of the Tribulation 12,000 Jews from each of the 12 tribes of Israel will accept Christ as

- their Messiah and become evangelists, leading to Jesus "a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues."
3. It will break the stubborn will of the Jewish nation. Those who embrace the Messiah will survive the Tribulation and enter God's millennial (1,000-year) Kingdom. Those who reject Messiah will be sentenced to hell for eternity at the Great White Throne Judgment.

To put Revelation's earth-rattling events in sequence .....

- A. As we sit here today, the next major event is the Rapture, i.e., Jesus comes from heaven in the clouds to take with Him those who have given their lives to Him in repentance and faith.
- B. A 10-nation confederacy is formed (Dan. 7:7, 24; Rev. 13:1, 17:3, 12-13).
- C. At some point the Russian army (augmented by Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Germany and Armenia) mounts a massive, surprise attack on Israel (Ezek. 38-39) to capture Israel's rich natural resources. But by natural catastrophic means, they're totally annihilated, punishing the Soviets for their godless and brutal past sins. The devastation is so great, it takes seven years to dismantle their weapons and seven months to bury their dead.
- D. After the Rapture AntiChrist appears (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1-8) and signs a treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 19:11-16), ensuring their safety. Satan gives all his authority to this counterfeit Christ. This charismatic leader, under Satan's total control, seems totally invincible in his worldwide conquest during the first three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation. Perhaps no one alive at this time will even know yet that this last world dictator is AntiChrist.
- E. As Jesus opens the seven seals of judgment, the earth is ravaged by war, hunger, famine and disease -- just as Moses pronounced the plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians in his efforts to free the Jews from bondage. This great dictator arrives on his white horse, loaded with solutions for the world's woes. He succeeds in temporarily bringing a false peace to the world.
- F. Midway through the Tribulation the peace treaty with Israel is broken, ushering in a one-world government, economy and atheistic religion (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:5-8, 15-17; 17:16-17). During this awful period the big dictator is unmasked as the AntiChrist. He performs miracles, declaring himself to be God. Those who refuse Him are martyred (Rev. 7:9-17; 13:15). His most incredible miracle follows his assassination when John writes, "....his deadly wound was healed...." (Rev. 13:3).
- G. The final series of catastrophic divine judgments is poured out on the earth (Rev. 6-18). During this fearful time God hides in a wilderness those who've turned to Him.
- H. Anti-Christ discovers their location, hastily assembles an army the size of which the world has never seen, and moves toward the valley of Megiddo, north of Jerusalem, to eradicate for all time God's chosen people, the Jews. World war erupts at Armageddon (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 9:13-21; 16:12-16).

- I. Now John sees another Rider ascending from heaven on a white horse followed by heaven's cavalry. This is the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21)!
- J. Jesus and His troops attack the armies of the world, under AntiChrist's command, and the blood is so deep, it runs up to the horses' bridles for 200 miles! Jesus captures and hurls AntiChrist and his false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20), keeping them bound there for the next 1,000 years.
- K. Christians martyred during the Tribulation along with OT believers are resurrected (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4).
- L. During the millennium Christ sets up His righteous kingdom on earth (Rev. 20:5-6), commencing 10 centuries of no wars, weeds, wild animals or death, only peace! But not all who are born during this time choose to follow Christ.
- M. At the end of the 1,000 years Satan is released to roam the earth where he deceives a countless number of rebels and forms an army (one more time!) to attack God's people. Fire comes out of heaven and "devours" them, sending him once and for all to hell, the penitentiary of the living dead. (Rev. 20:7-10).
- N. At the Great White Throne Judgment Jesus condemns all sinners (who haven't received Him in repentance and faith) to eternity in hell (Rev. 20:11-15). Verse 15 is the Bible's most ominous: *"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*
- O. John now sees a new heaven and earth with the old earth (the current model) having passed away. He sees the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, where God will reign forever with those of us who've trusted in His Son Jesus, trading in our sins for His righteousness.

### **Let's read some Revelation.**

Ch. 12 marks the beginning of the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation, before the Second Coming of Christ. John's vision carries him back to the beginning of earth's history, then races fast-forward to Christ's first time on earth 2,000 years ago, then finally farther forward to the end times. Let's read ch. 12:1-17.

Ch. 13 introduces the "unholy trinity," i.e, Satan the dragon, AntiChrist as the beast, and the false prophet (AntiChrist's right hand guy). The beast and the false prophet will make Nero, Mao, Stalin, Hitler, Amin, Saddam and their ilk seem, by comparison, to be like Don Knotts and his bullet. This is Satan's last hurrah to destroy God and all who love Him. Let's read ch. 13:1-18.

By ch. 19 the dragon, beast and false prophet are off to Armageddon, the OK Corral-to-the-max, the war between heaven and hell that began with Eve's first bite when sin (disobedience to God) first polluted our then-perfect planet. All the kings and armies of the earth converge on this Jewish plain. The scope is unimaginable! Raptured believers are in heaven, ready to witness Christ's awesome return to earth to banish Satan and all arrayed with him against God. Let's read ch. 19:1-21.

Ch. 20 commences Christ's 1,000-year reign of peace on earth. By the end of this holiday-from-sin, many will have been born who opt not to submit themselves to Christ.

Satan is loosed briefly to muster one last army to overthrow God. But He's tossed into hell for good, along with all who fail to pass the test at the Great White Throne Judgment. Let's read ch. 20:1-15.

The Bible is God's holy, infallible communication to us. His words are true. In its final chapter Jesus says, *"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."*

John adds, *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

John closes with *"Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."*

After Revelation you may be thinking, "God is love? I sure as heck don't see much love here! God seems to be the epitome of cruel and unusual punishment."

Jesus' sidekick Peter writes (II Peter 3:9) that "God does not want *anyone* to perish, so He is giving more time for everyone to repent." John says, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it but to save it." (John 3:17)

God's not cruel; He's just and fair. That's why He sent His only Son Jesus to live and die on earth to pay the penalty for your sins and mine. Christ's death purchased your eternal forgiveness for *all* of your sins -- past, present and future! If you haven't already, today by faith you can start a personal relationship with God. Paul describes this simple decision like this:

*"It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. ... Say the welcoming word to God -- 'Jesus is my Master' -- embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what He did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not 'doing' anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting Him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: 'God has set everything right between Him and me!' Scripture reassures us, 'No one who trusts God like this -- heart and soul -- will ever regret it.'"*

There's no need for you or those you love to fear God's wrath as described in Revelation. He's prepared a safe shelter for you. Paul refers to it simply as being "in Christ." If you aren't there yet, today is THE day to make the most important decision you'll ever make.

If you need help, that's what I'm here for. That's what these lunches are for. And you thought this was some multi-level sales deal!

His Deal

[www.HisDeal.org](http://www.HisDeal.org)

[george@HisDeal.org](mailto:george@HisDeal.org)

Copyright © 2022. George Toles. All Rights Reserved.

Other reliable resources:

- *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* by John F. Walvoord, Seminary Press
- *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, John F. Walvoord, Moody Press, 1966