

REVELATION SURVEY – End Times Summary

INTRODUCTION

I read a lot of science fiction stories in my late teens and early 20's. There was some bizarre stuff including multiple theories on the end of the world:

- further evolution of man
- sudden catastrophic endings
- 1000's of generations just fizzling out
- etc. etc.

Because God has set eternity in the heart of man, man has an innate interest and desire to want to know the end of the story. People want to know the end of the story – from natural curiosity to morbid fascination.

Isa 46:10 – “Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”

Christ taught The Olivet Discourse – Matt 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

Eschatology – means the study of Last Things (End Times)

- One of 7 disciplines of most systematic theologies

We want to get it right! → We want to hit the Biblical Center!

The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things.

The Book of Revelation is a complex book, but every believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit and can absolutely understand the main things.

READ Rev 1:1-3

1:1-3 is a self-contained introduction

- Subject/Topic
- Author
- Audience/Recipient(s)
- Style/Genre
- Outline

Much of this information is given to us in the first verse:

1:1 – “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,”

Topic → “**The Revelation**” – first deep theological teaching – ... there is no “s” at the end ☺

The original Greek word means unveiling

Luke 2:30-32 -“my eyes have seen Thy salvation, ³¹which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light of revelation to the Gentiles,”

All of Scripture is revelation. It is all the disclosure of God. But this last book is “The Revelation”

There is detail about the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ and the End Times throughout Scripture, both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

But there is an explosion of detail about the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ and the End Times in The Revelation.

Understand, this book is not a puzzle. It is not a mystery. In fact, it is the exact opposite of a puzzle, the exact opposite of a mystery. This is an **uncovering** ... not a **covering**.

Subject matter → “of Jesus Christ” – how are we to understand this?

Is this an objective genitive? Or is this a subjective genitive?

Is this a revelation about? Or is this a revelation from?
Is Jesus Christ the One revealed? Or is He the Revealer?
Does this “of” mean “**about**”? Or does this “of” mean “**from**”?

The answer is both.

He is the Revealed One. And He is the Revealer.

And He is the Recipient. → “**which God gave Him**” → Awesome!

This is an expression of God the Father’s pleasure →
Resurrection, Ascension, Exaltation, and now Revelation

Illustration – It is like the triumph in **2 Cor 2:14!**

Paul was bringing out the image of a victorious triumphant parade for the glory of Christ!

It goes back to **Tit 1:2** – “which God promised before time began”

Purpose → “**to show to His bond-servants**” - for the saved

Genre → “**the things which must shortly take place**” – this is a prophetic book. It does briefly talk about the past (Ch.1) and the present (Ch.2 & 3) and the rest (Ch. 4-22) is about the future.

If the prophecy fits, wear it – to Christians, to churches

Author → “**and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John**”

John is the last surviving apostle. He was the Son of Thunder, the Apostle of Love and the Apostle of Truth.

Outline → **1:19** – “Write therefore:

-the things which you have seen	the <u>Past</u>	chapter 1
-and the things which are	the <u>Present</u>	chapters 2-3
-and the things which shall take place after these things	the <u>Future</u>	chapters 4-22

The Revelation to John teaches faithfulness in the present.

There is a concern with exhorting to righteous living and alertness. Not concerned with giving dates and signs; not wild and sensational speculation ... nor to allegorize, spiritualize, and ignore!

Purpose of biblical eschatology is:
to warn, to exhort, to encourage

Illustration – there are 19 imperatives in the 37 vv. of the 13th Chapter of Mark! The purpose is to give believers clarity and encouragement, not complexity and anxiety.

Point – with what we face as we bring the good news of Jesus Christ to a hostile world, we do not need speculation and dates and excessive signs. What we need is **exhortation to readiness and endurance**.

Illustration – Like the man who got a prescription from his doctor, took it home, framed it, and hung it on the wall.

Application – In the same way, too many Christians either ignore the Revelation, or they take it home, study it, frame it, and hang it on their wall, but they never take it in.

The Purpose of Revelation is:

- Practical Teaching
- Relevant Teaching
- Important Teaching

4 Purposes of Biblical Eschatology: God Commands us to:

1. Beware
2. Be Discerning
3. Be Ready
4. Be Strong

So That: He is preparing us to live and to witness in a hostile world.

1. Beware: Of pretenders and persecutions, false messiahs and date setters, of complacency!!!

2. Be Discerning! There is Clarity! There are passages in the Old Testament that are rich in end times prophecy.

Dan 7:16 – “exact meaning” – not fuzzy or allegorical understanding

Dan 9:20-22 – “insight with understanding” – that is the purpose – to give clarity

3. Be Ready! We are to live our lives in such a way as to be ready. He may come at any moment.

Illustration – When Pompeii was destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius there were many persons buried in the ruins who were afterwards found in very different positions.

There were some found in deep vaults, as if they had gone there for security. There were some found in lofty chambers. But where did they find the Roman sentinel?

They found him standing at the city gate where he had been placed by the captain, with his hands still grasping the weapon. There, while the earth shook beneath him; there, while the floods of ashes and cinders overwhelmed him, he had stood at his post; and there, after a thousand years, he was found.

In the same way...

4. Be Strong! We can be encouraged! Hope-filled!

Point – Watch for His Coming! Endure! Be strong! Be encouraged! Be hope-filled! Be praying! Be evangelizing!

It is important to note that different solid believers will have different end time understanding. This is not an area to rupture fellowship. There are differences among conservative evangelical bible-believing Christians.

Pathway to Biblical Eschatology:

Why do Bible believing Christians with a high view of God have such different views of the end times and the Book of Revelation?

The difference comes from:

- A. Covenants
- B. Hermeneutics

A. Covenant Theology – “Covenant theology is a system of interpreting the Scriptures on the basis of two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Some covenant theologians specify three covenants: works, redemption, and grace.

Rather, it is better → What God calls a covenant, we should call a covenant. And we shouldn't make up covenants God does not specify.

Covenants – There are six covenants in the Bible: Noahic, Abrahamic, Priestly, Davidic, New, Mosaic

“Unconditional” Covenants God – “**I will**”

- **Abrahamic** **Gen 12:1-3** Gen 15
- **Noahic** Gen 9
- **Davidic** 2 Sam 7; 1 Cor 17
- **New** Jer 31; Ezek 36
- **Priestly** Num 25:12-13; Psa 106:30-31; Ezek 40:46

“Unconditional” Covenants “**Eternal**”

Gen 17 – What is expected – individual blessings

“Conditional” Covenant “**If you will ..., then ...**”

- **Mosaic** Exod 19; 20 No “**Eternal**”

“Old Covenant” replaced by the “New Covenant.” The Old Covenant administered promises through the Law, the New Covenant does so through the Holy Spirit.

The Old Covenant, that aspect of the law, came to an end when God ripped the veil of the temple and that is why we can enter into throne room of grace with confidence.

B. Hermeneutics

Luke 24:27 – “explained” – from the original Greek word *hermeneuo* which means ‘explain’, ‘interpret’.

Hermeneutics → methods, techniques, rules, or principles we have for interpreting Scripture.

We should apply the same rules for interpreting Scripture for all types or genres within Scripture.

Hard work! The Holy Spirit doesn’t bless ignorance and laziness. Language requires literal interpretation: Biblical writers wrote:

- 1) using normal grammar
- 2) so the readers could understand

The Holy Spirit guides men into truth and away from error. The Spirit uses language and the words of language. Grammar and words are the fundamentals of all meaningful speech.

Grammatical-historical understanding of Scripture – normal, plain language. We should have a normal ordinary usage of language, grammar, and words.

Luther –

“The literal sense of Scripture alone, is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology.”

“Each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions.”

Calvin –

“Let us know then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning, and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely.”

“It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”

This does leave room for the use of poetic language, figurative language, the beauty of language.

Christians take the Bible at face value:

Gen 6-9 (Flood)

Exod 7:17 – liberals try to explain away as some kind of algae

Exod 14 (Red Sea)

Jonah (Swallowed by the Great Fish)

Isa 7:14 (Virgin Birth)

Already, Not Yet! A wonderful phrase that captures a good understanding of prophetic books of the Bible and of the Gospel. Inaugurated eschatology without denying either what the Old Testament indicates about the future or what the New Testament indicates about the present reality.

Links the plan of God into a unified whole.

In my sermon on **Luke 2:21-28**, I made the following comment:

Simeon is not an Amillennialist ... he is not a Postmillennialist ... he is not even a Post-tribulational Premillennialist. **Simeon** is a Pretribulational Premillennialist.

Terms: Premillennial, Postmillennial, Amillennial, Pretribulational, Posttribulational

Definition: In terms of the “Millennium” → Pre-, Post-, and A- → are related to the 2nd Coming

Now, all Christians agree that Christ is coming again.

Premillennial – 2nd Coming is before the Millennium

Postmillennial – 2nd Coming is after the Millennium

Amillennial – There is no Millennium

A. Premillennial 2nd Coming Before Millennium

2nd Coming of Christ takes place before the Millennium.

- **literal 1,000 years** → unique to this view
- His Kingdom is Eternal → His physical reign begins with a literal 1000 years Kingdom
- Understanding of a literal 7-year period before the Millennium called **The Tribulation** – comes from Book of Daniel and Book of Revelation

Literal (Physical) fulfillment of the Covenant Promises
(Consistent hermeneutic) God made to:

B. Amillennial → No Millennium

Literally means “No Millennium”

- most spiritualized of all – believe all of Revelation is allegorical
- church age is the kingdom
- we are in the millennium now
- influenced by Origen (thoroughgoing liberal) – allegorical

No literal physical reign of Christ on earth. No Millennium.
No 7-year period. No physical fulfillment of promises to Israel

C. Postmillennial 2nd Coming After Millennium

- The world eventually will be Christianized, and the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace – the Millennium.
- Not a literal 1000 years, long period of time.
- Christ not physically present.
- Not literal 7-year period
- No literal physical fulfillment of Promises to Israel

Postmillennialism adopts an optimistic view with respect to this age, seeing a golden age of progress in the church age that affects every dimension of life: economic, social, cultural, and political.

Theonomy (qeoj + nomoj) – The entire Mosaic Law code is operative today in both its standards and penalties. This will bring about the return of Christ. They believe civil authorities should bring back the moral aspects of the Mosaic Law - carry out the death penalty in accordance with the Mosaic Law code – e.g., all 37 capital offenses: homosexuality, bestiality, rebellious children, etc.

A literal 7-year period preceding the millennium called:
The Tribulation, The Time of Jacob's Trouble

Matt 24:21 – “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”

Rev 7:14 – “I said to him, ‘My lord, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”

Floyd Hamilton, Amillennialist, in his book The Basis of Millennial Faith – “*Now we must admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures.*”

Application – If you are of the opinion that you switch the rules, the hermeneutics, then who decides when to use?

One point of allegorical (prophecy) interpreters is the pattern of the New Testament authors use of the Old Testament should be our pattern for interpretation.

- 1) What pattern is that? There is no one pattern.
- 2) Very simple – New Testament authors were borne along by the Spirit. Modern interpreters are not

CONCLUSION

→ Resurrection, Ascension, Exaltation, Pentecost – Church Age (New Covenant outpouring of the Holy Spirit), The Revelation

Two phases of 2nd Coming of Christ:

1. Rapture, Judgment Seat of Christ, Marriage Supper of the Lamb, 7 Year Tribulation (which begins with the signing of the Peace Treaty – 2nd Coming of Christ)

2. 75 Day Period (False Prophet, Antichrist, Satan bound, resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation saints, sheep/goat judgment)

Then you have the Millennium (Rev 20), short period – release and rebellion – God’s glory/Great White Throne – Eternal State