

Revelation

Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must take place. He made it known by sending his servant John, who saw and heard these things, and he wrote them down in this book.

sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.
17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if dead. Then he placed his right hand on my head and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and ever! And I have seen,

Introduction to the Book of Revelation, Pt 2

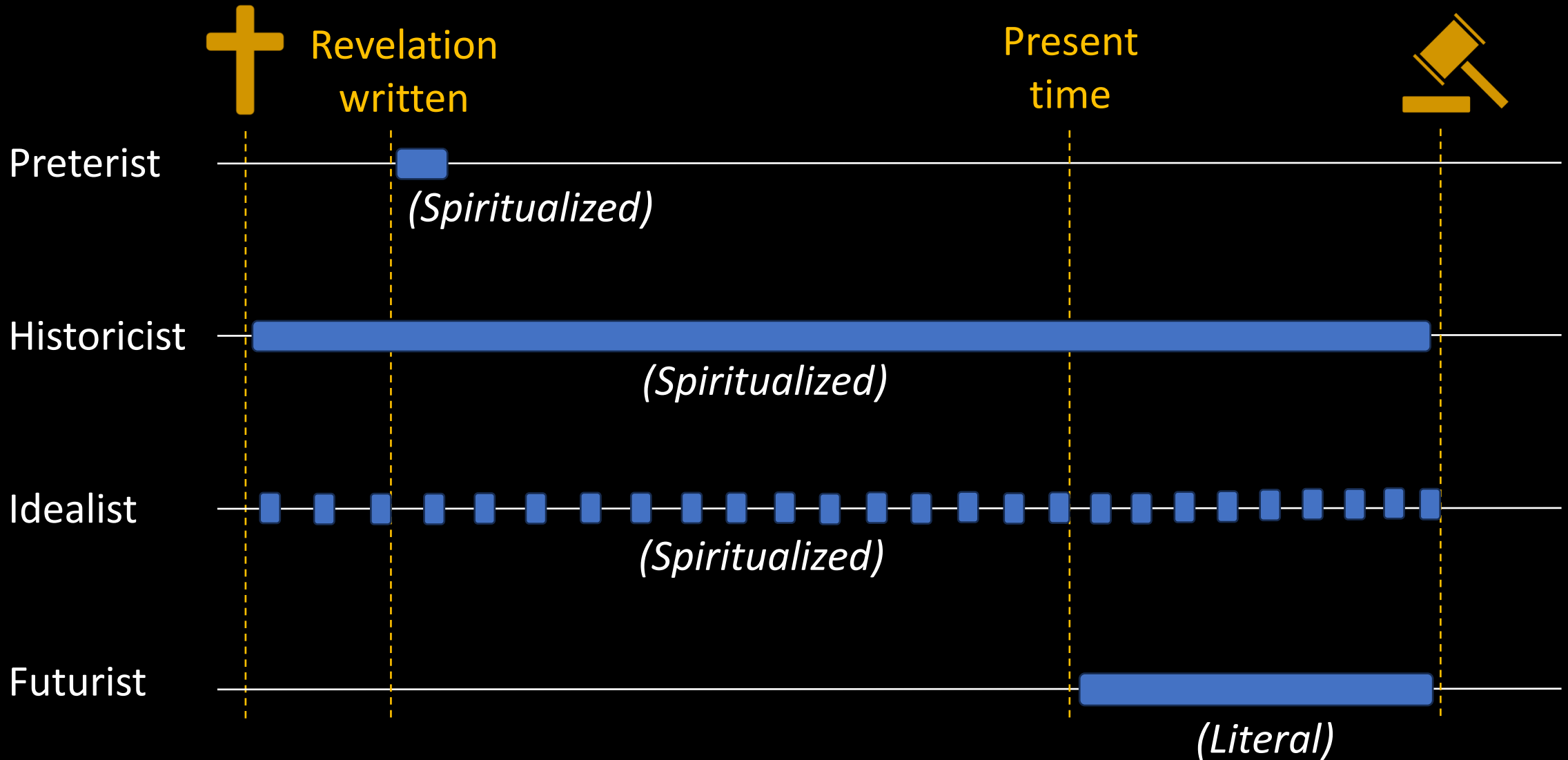
churches in the province of Asia: Grace to you from him who is and who is to come, and from the seven stars.

place later. 20 The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven churches.

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

—Revelation 1:1

I. How do we interpret Revelation? – A Review



*The blue indicates the “fulfillment” of Revelation 4–20

II. Why study the book of Revelation?



“It is between fifty and sixty years since I read it (i.e. the Book of Revelations), and I then considered it merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy nor capable of explanation than the incoherence of our own nightly dreams.”

—Letter of Thomas Jefferson
to General Alexander Smyth, January 17, 1825

“I have come to realize that I do not revere, respect, or even like this book anymore. I think it is a horrible depiction of God, portraying him as a ruthless tyrant who absolutely detests anyone who does not worship him with all their heart and soul, who wants not just to crush all opposition but to torture everyone who does not believe in Jesus. . . . My view of Revelation is that its ruthless, vengeful God who destroys the majority of the human race stands in sharp contrast with the God of Jesus.

—Bart Ehrman, “My New View of the Book of Revelation”





“There is widespread prejudice against the study of the Apocalypse. Though it is the great prophetic Book of the New Testament, the last of all the writings of Inspiration, a special message from the ascended Savior to His Churches on earth, and pressed upon every one’s attention with uncommon urgency, there are religious guides, sworn to teach the ‘whole counsel of God,’ who make a merit of not understanding it, and of not wishing to occupy themselves with it.”

—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, v

A. It is the word of God.

- From beginning to end, Revelation testifies to its status as *God's word*:
 - **Revelation 1:1–2** – “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.”
 - **Revelation 22:18–19** – “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

- As the word of God, the book of Revelation must be a part of the Christian's spiritual diet:
 - **Matthew 4:4 (Deuteronomy 8:3)** – “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’”
 - **Matthew 28:19 – 20** – “Go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you . . .”
 - **Colossians 3:16** – “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.”
 - **2 Timothy 3:16–17** – “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

B. It promises blessing to those who study it.

- Scripture in general pronounces blessing on those who study it:
 - **Psalm 1:1–2** – “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.”
 - **Luke 12:28** – “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

- Revelation in particular pronounces blessing on those who study it:
 - **Revelation 1:3** – “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
 - **Revelation 22:7** – “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

#BLESSED

C. It reveals Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ is the culmination of biblical revelation:
 - **Hebrews 1:1–2** – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”
- The dominant theme of Revelation is Jesus Christ, and Revelation reveals knowledge about Christ found nowhere else in Scripture.
 - **Revelation 1:1–2** – “The Revelation [ἀποκάλυψις, *apokalypsis*] of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bondservants . . .”

- John's vision of glorified Christ (1).
 - Christ's self-descriptions in the letters to the seven churches (2–3).
 - The vision of the Lamb in heaven (5)
 - The description of Christ's Second Coming (19) and millennial reign (20).
 - The description Christ's role in the new heavens and earth (21–22).
 - Christ's final exhortation (22).
- The book of Revelation is indeed a collection of prophecies about the end times, but it is a collection centered around the person of Christ.

“Admittedly, no writer on this inestimable volume can or should claim he has the final word on this book of Scripture. But this is no reason either to neglect its glorious message or engage in fantastic flights of the imagination. We all do well to realize it is God’s final unveiling of the glories of His blessed Son. Our focus must ever be on Him in this Grand Finale. The book is an incomparable Christology in itself.”

—Charles Feinberg, *Revelation: The Grand Finale*, x





“And this is the key to the whole book. It is a book of which Christ is the great subject and center, particularly in that period of his administrations and glory designated as the day of his uncovering, the day of his appearing. It is not a mere prediction of divine judgments upon the wicked, and of the final triumph of the righteous, made known *by* Christ; but a book of the revelation *of* Christ, in his own person, offices, and future administrations, when he shall be *seen* coming from heaven, as he was once seen going into heaven.”

—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 16

D. It provides vital truth to churches.

- The book of Revelation was written *to churches*.
 - **Revelation 1:4** – “John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace”
- These churches faced the same kinds of challenges we face today:
 - incorrect priorities (Ephesus)
 - compromise (Pergamum)
 - spiritual apathy (Sardis)
 - self-sufficiency (Laodicea)
 - persecution (Smyrna)
 - tolerance of immorality (Thyatira)
 - ostracism (Philadelphia)
- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

E. It reminds us the end is near.

- We share the same problems as the seven churches: either *materialism, cultural compromise, or despair*—all of which assume that things won't change.
- But the book of Revelation reminds us that this world as we know it is coming to an end.
 - **Revelation 1:3** – “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
 - **Revelation 22:10** – “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.”

- **Revelation 22:7** – “And behold, I am coming quickly. . . .”
- **Revelation 22:12** – “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me”
- **Revelation 22:20** – “Yes, I am coming quickly. . . .”
- One of the greatest needs in our day is the recovery of the doctrine of *imminency*.
 - “Imminence” describes “the condition of something that could happen at any time or is about to happen. When applied to the second coming, the term means that Christ could return at any moment” (MacArthur & Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 931).
- Revelation is the antidote to *materialism, compromise, and despair*.

“Like a magnet, it lifts the heart of the believer out of the world, and out of his low self, and enables him to stand with Moses on the mount, and transfigures him with the rays of blessed hope and promise which stream upon him from those sublime heights. It is the most animating and most sanctifying subjects in the Bible. It is the soul’s serenest light amid the darkness and trials of earth. . . . And just in proportion as he who is awake to the great truth of the Savior’s speedy coming, and is engaged in waiting and preparing himself accordingly, is a better man than the half-Christian and the lukewarm, in that same proportion is he who reads, hears and keeps the words of this prophecy blessed beyond all other people.”

—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 23

Why study the book of Revelation? – A Review

A. It is the word of God.

B. It promises blessing to those who study it.

C. It reveals Jesus Christ.

D. It provides vital truth to churches.

E. It reminds us the end is near.

“If we are interested in the story of the manger and the cross; if we can draw strength for our prayers and hopes by invoking Christ by the mystery of his incarnation, fasting, temptation, agony, and bloody sweat; if we find it such a precious treasure to our souls to come into undoubting sympathy with the scenes of his humiliation and grief; what should be our appreciation of this book which treats of the fruits of those sufferings, and tells only of that wronged Savior’s glory and triumphs, and shows us our Lord enthroned in majesty, riding prosperously, and scattering to his ransomed ones the crowns and regencies of empire which shall never perish, and celestial blessednesses without number and above all thought!”

—J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 22