

The Church in the End Times

Week #1

Seeking the blessing promised to those who
read these words, hear them and take them
to heart. Rev. 1:3

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Assignment for Week 1

- **Bring an open heart and mind and confidence that the Lord will speak to you through His Word.**
- **For next week read Revelation chapters 1-3, and Daniel chapter 9**

Agenda for This Week

- Why do we study the Bible?
- Why is the book of Revelation so special?
- What is your hermeneutic perspective and why is it important?
 - Allegorical vs. Literal
- Discussion about the Role of the Church
- Overview of the 7 letters to 7 churches in Revelation

Why We Read the Bible

- **To light our path**
 - Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).
- **To feed our spiritual bodies**
 - "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3-4).
- **To be able to live the lives that God intended**
 - This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8)
- **To be all that God wants us to be**
 - And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32 (Paul to the Church at Ephesus)

Why is Revelation So Special?

- Promises a special blessing to those who reads, hears and hears it (Rev. 1:3)
- Has a divinely inspired outline (Rev. 1:19)
- It ties together the whole redemptive plan of God
 - Blessed Assurance
 - God is in control
 - Evil will be purged from the Earth
 - The promise of a savior to Eve (Gen. 3:15) and to Mary (Luke 1:32-33) is fulfilled
 - The curse pronounced in Genesis, lifted in Revelation
 - Eden lost in Genesis, restored in Revelation
 - Heaven and earth created in Genesis, replaced in Revelation
 - Access to the Tree of Life is lost in Genesis, restored in Revelation
 - Satan tempts in Genesis, Satan is judged in Revelation

Ten Veins of Prophecy in Revelation

1. The Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15)
2. The church (Matthew 16:18)
3. The resurrection and translation of saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52)
4. The Great Tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30, 31)
5. Satan and evil (Ezekiel 28:11-18)
6. The “man of sin” (Ezekiel 28:1-10)
7. The course and end of apostate Christendom (Daniel 2:31-45; Matthew 13)
8. **The beginning, course, and end of the “times of the Gentiles” (Daniel 2:37; Luke 21:24, “Olivet Discourse”)**
9. The second coming of Christ (Jude 14, 15)
10. Israel’s covenants (Genesis 12:1-3), five things promised Israel
 - “I will make you into a great nation
 - “and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
 - “I will bless those who bless you,
 - “and whoever curses you I will curse;
 - “and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”T

Your Hermeneutic Perspective

- **What is your hermeneutic perspective and why is it important?**
 - How many of you have taken Mike Day's *Going Deep in the Word* class?
- **Allegory vs. Literal**
 - Beginning as early as the third century, Christian hermeneutics began to split into two primary schools: Alexandria and Antioch. The Alexandrian Biblical interpretations stressed allegorical readings, frequently at the expense of the texts' literal meaning. The Antiochene school stressed instead the more literal and historical meaning of the text
 - How you interpret the Bible makes a big difference
- **Augustine (building on the allegorical methods of Origin) argued that the Millenium would not be a literal reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years but a reigning of the church in His name (amillennialism)**
- **The amillennial point of view was adopted by many of the reformers, including John Calvin and heavily influenced the Protestant denominational churches**
- **Many wonderful scholars today still take an allegorical view of the scriptures (Jack Hayford is among them as far as Revelation is concerned)**
- **I will be exploring a literal viewpoint in this class**
 - That is how I chose to read from day one since I could never determine a higher authority than the Bible. I have not found this to have failed in 30 years.

Identity of the Church

- **The role of the church depends upon what it is**
 - **It is the Body of Christ**
 - **It is the Bride of Christ**
 - A man should love his wife (bride) as his own body (Eph 5:28)
- **Greek name for the church (“the called out ones”)**
 - **Ekklesia (Mt. 16:18, 18:17, throughout Acts, first in 2:47)**
 - A gathering of citizens called out from their homes
- **Separate from Israel**
 - **Different Origins and different destinies**
 - Church was born on the day of Pentecost and will matriculate at the Rapture
 - Israel began with the promise to Abraham, was born as a nation in Egypt and reigns with Christ on earth for 1000 years
 - **Promises to Church are heavenly and those to Israel are earthly**
 - **He who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than the greatest man of the Old Covenant, John (Mt. 11:11)**

The Role of the Church Today

- **Practical Questions:**
 - *What do you think the purpose of the church is today?*
 - *Where did you get that idea?*
 - *Are there any questions you currently have regarding the Church's role in the world?*
 - *What does the world think about our role?*
 - *Has the role of the Church changed since the time of Pentecost?*

Intro to the 7 Letters to 7 Churches

- They were written to 7 real churches
- They have a very regular structure – but the differences are intriguing
- They have several apparent levels of meaning
 - Local, pragmatic level
 - Each church had specific issues
 - Every church can see itself in all the letters
 - Prophetic history of the Church filling the gap from Acts to the Rapture
 - More speculative, not universally accepted, and it seems to fit only the western church
 - This can be helpful in understanding the role of the Church in the end times.
 - We'll study more about this later.

Personal Application

- **Every believer is called to hear what the Spirit says to the churches**
- **I have used these letters in ministry opportunities**
 - **Church at Philadelphia – The Pleasing Church**
 - *A dear sister was discouraged and we were praying for her when I noticed that one of the words that we got was for a door to be opened that no one could shut (Rev. 3:8) and I noticed that there were 4 or 5 references from that letter that we had all spoken to her without direct knowledge. When we read the whole letter to her she broke down crying.*
 - **Church at Ephesus – The Rigorous Church that Lost Its First Love**
 - *Another dear sister had been working in prison ministry since her teenage years. She had fallen away from it and now people were asking her to get back into it because she had been so successful. I had her read the Letter to the Church at Ephesus and she broke down crying.*
 - **Church at Laodicea – The Worldly, Lukewarm Church**
 - *I've read this several times to different people who believed in God but weren't committed. I've never seen one person turn from their indifference.*

One Final Thought

- **The number 7 in scripture signifies completeness**
- **This indicates that these 7 letters are in some way a complete reckoning of church health in Christ's eyes**
- **Since every church is to read the letters to all the churches, these should also apply to our local body**
- **We will spend some time thinking about how these letters indicate that our church is doing**
 - **Hint: we're not 100% the Philadelphian church**

Assignment for Next Week

- **Read Revelation chapters 1-3, and Daniel chapter 9**
- **Pray as you read that the Holy Spirit will open your minds and spirit to the truth about Jesus Christ and His will for the church.**
- **Pray for this class that we will bring glory to God as we seek to understand His Word.**

Backup

Notes on Bible Interpretation

From Mike Day's Class

The Interpretive Journey

Grasp the text in their town.
God's intended meaning in the
original context.

Measure the river of differences
between the biblical audience and us.

Cross the Principilizing Bridge:
What is the theological principle?

Grasp the text in our town. Application
of principles in parallel situations.

From *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall & Hays

Three Guidelines

- The Bible was God's word to someone else before it was God's word to us.
- When you want to find out what the Bible has to say, find out what the whole Bible says.
- The quality of your answers depends on the quality of your questions.

ASK: What is God up to? What does this tell me about the character of God?

Timeframe in History

- **Where Can We Place the Events of Revelation in Time?**
- **Here are some things to consider**
 - John 1 starts before the world was formed
 - Revelation 21 shows heaven and earth passing away, leading to a restoration of Paradise in ch. 22
 - The outline in 1:19 spoke of “what is now” and “what will take place later”.
 - We will see that Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the 7 letters to 7 churches.
 - These were real churches, as shown by the excavations of Sir Wm. Ramsay (1851 – 1939)
 - After the time of the churches (“the now”), the scene shifts to heaven and the “after these things” (meta tauta) starts
 - Keep that on your mind as we consider the timeframe

Theological Principles

(From Wikipedia on Hermeneutics)

- **Theological Group of Principles:**
- The **Election Principle**
- The **Historical-grammatical** principle based on historical, socio-political, geographical, cultural and linguistic / grammatical context
- The **Dispensation Principle** or The **Chronometrical Principle**: "During different periods of time, God has chosen to deal in a particular way with man in respect to sin and man's responsibility."
- The **Covenantal Principle**: "We differentiate between the various contracts that God has made with his people; specifically their provisions, their parties and their purposes."
- The **Ethnic Division Principle**: "The word of truth is rightly divided in relation to the three classes which it treats, i.e. Jews, Gentiles and the Church."
- The **Breach Principle**: Interpretation of a certain verse or passage in Scripture is aided by a consideration of certain breaches, either breaches of promise or breaches of time.
- The **Christo-Centric Principle**: "The mind of deity is eternally centered in Christ. All angelic thought and ministry are centered in Christ. All Satanic hatred and subtlety are centered at Christ. All human hopes are, and human occupations should be, centered in Christ. The whole material universe in creation is centered in Christ. The entire written word is centered in Christ."
- The **Moral Principle**
- The **Discriminational Principle**: "We should divide the word of truth so as to make a distinction where God makes a difference."
- The **Predictive Principle**
- The **Application Principle**: "An application of truth may be made only after the correct interpretation has been made"
- The **Principle of Human Willingness in Illumination**
- The **Context Principle**: "God gives light upon a subject through either near or remote passages bearing upon the same subject."
- **Sub-divided Context/Mention Principles:**
- The **First Mention Principle**: "God indicates in the first mention of a subject the truth with which that subject stands connected in the mind of God."
- The **Progressive Mention Principle**: "God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the word proceeds to its consummation."
- The **Comparative Mention Principle**
- The **Full Mention Principle** or The **Complete Mention Principle**: "God declares his full mind upon any subject vital to our spiritual life."
- The **Agreement Principle**: "The truthfulness and faithfulness of God become the guarantee that he will not set forth any passage in his word that contradicts any other passage."
- The **Direct Statement Principle**: "God says what he means and means what he says."
- The **Gap Principle**: "God, in the Jewish Scriptures, ignores certain periods of time, leaping over them without comment."
- The **Threefold Principle**: "The word of God sets forth the truths of salvation in a three-fold way: past - justification; present - sanctification/transformation; future - glorification/consummation."
- The **Repetition Principle**: "God repeats some truth or subject already given, generally with the addition of details not before given."
- The **Synthetic Principle**
- The **Principle of Illustrative Mention**
- The **Double Reference Principle**
- **Figures of Speech Group of Principles:**
- The **Numerical Principle**
- The **Symbolic Principle**
- The **Typical Principle**: "Certain people, events, objects and rituals found in the Old Testament may serve as object lessons and pictures by which God teaches us of his grace and saving power."
- The **Parabolic Principle**
- The **Allegorical Principle**

Sub-divided Context/Mention Principles

(From Wikipedia on Hermeneutics)

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- **The Parabolic Principle**
- **The Allegorical Principle**

Past, Present and Future

(v. 19)

“Alpha — Omega”

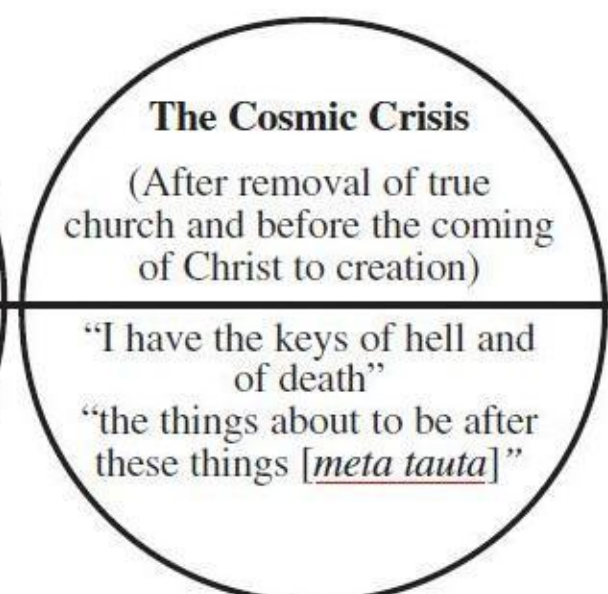
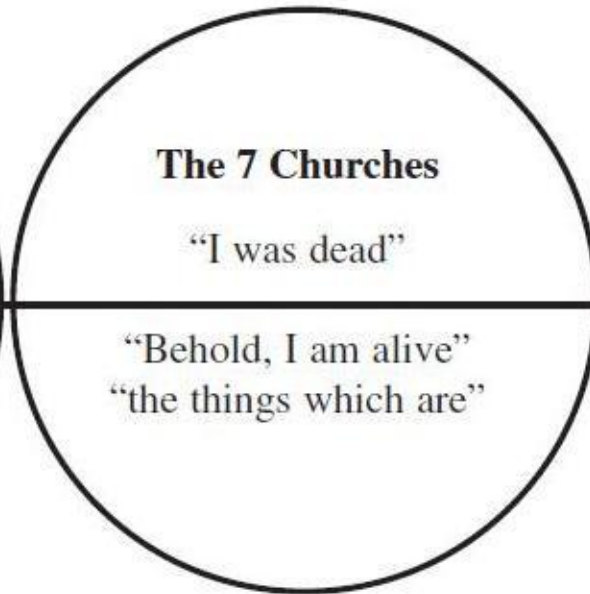
“Things...seen”

“Beginning — End”

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE



Revelation 1
Christ in Glory

Revelation 2, 3
Church in the World

Revelation 4 — 22
Crisis in the Future

From J. Vernon McGee

The 70 Weeks of Daniel

