

# THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

by  
William D. Barrick

The Bereans Adult Bible Fellowship  
Placerita Baptist Church  
2011

## Mission Statement

This study of the Book of Revelation gives special attention to the testimony it provides concerning our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10; cp. 1:2), leading us to worship and serve Him in everything.

## 1.0 The Outline of the Book of Revelation

- I. What you have seen (Rev 1).
- II. What is now (Rev 2–3)—the seven churches of Asia Minor.
- III. What will take place after these things (Rev 4–22).
  - A. The Seven Seals (4:1–8:1)
  - B. The Seven Trumpets (8:2–11:19)
  - C. The Unholy Trinity (12–14)
  - D. The Seven Bowls (15–16)
  - E. Babylon (17–18)
  - F. The Return of Christ (19:1–20:6)
  - G. The Millennial Kingdom (20:1–6; 21:9–22:5)
  - H. The Eternal Day of God (20:7–21:8; 22:6–21)

## 2.0 The Theme of the Book of Revelation: Jesus Christ Himself

## 3.0 The Purposes of the Book of Revelation

1. To reveal Jesus Christ.
2. To correct the moral and doctrinal problems that existed in the seven churches of Asia.
3. To reveal that the climax of human history will involve a period of great suffering and to describe the nature of the tribulation period with special emphasis upon the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments.
4. To reveal the ultimate triumph of true believers and the final victory of our Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to earth in judgment and glory.
5. To reveal to all true Christians, especially to those in the midst of persecution, that they have a sure hope for the future.

Doctrinal principles revealed in the Book of Revelation:

- Faith triumphs over might.
- The judgment of sin is inevitable.
- The Christian approach represents the true philosophy of history.
- The Lord is faithful in all He has promised and He is all that He claims to be.

## 4.0 The Author of the Book of Revelation: John

- John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James (Matt 4:21, 22).
- Fisherman by trade.
- Tradition says that John was the youngest of the disciples.

## Barrick, **The Testimony of Jesus in the Book of Revelation**

- Authored: Gospel of John, three epistles of John, and Revelation.
- Closest circle to Jesus: John, Peter, and James.
- John was the only disciple present at the cross when Christ was crucified.
- Jesus asked John to take care of His mother (John 19:25–27).
- John is known as the beloved disciple.
- Exiled to island of Patmos for his preaching (Rev 1:9), A.D. 85–90.

Evidence supporting the Apostle John as the author of Revelation:

1. The author calls himself by the name of John (1:1, 9).
2. Seven churches in same area where John had ministered previously.
3. Early Church Fathers state that John was the author of the book of Revelation.
4. Historical evidence of John's exile to Patmos.

### **5.0 The Date of Writing: A.D. 95–96**

### **6.0 The Visions in the Book of Revelation**

A vision is not the same as a dream—the two are distinct:

- A dream involves a series of mental images or ideas present while one is asleep.
- A vision presents images to the mind other than by natural, ordinary sight while a person is awake (Gen 46:2; Num 24:4, 16; Dan 10:7; Acts 9:3–7; Rev 1:9, 10, 17).
- However, the recipient of a biblical vision under divine influence can oscillate between the sleeping and wakening states (Zech 4:1, 2; Luke 9:32).

### **7.0 Symbols and Symbolism in the Book of Revelation**

- The Book of Revelation contains more symbols than any other book in the New Testament.
- Extraordinary happenings occur in the book, like the turning of one-third of the sea into blood, and hail and fire mingled with blood.
- Two main reasons for the use of symbolism in the book of Revelation:
  1. During Domitian's rule over the Roman Empire, the Christians were under severe persecution. In many places in the ancient Roman Empire Christian literature and the preaching of the gospel were forbidden. Symbols may have been used so the Roman authorities would not realize that the book of Revelation was Christian literature and God's Word.
  2. The message of prophecy given to John was so far removed from the language of his day that the ordinary use of Greek words would not have adequately conveyed all John saw.

### **8.0 The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation**

- No direct quotations from the Old Testament.
- Out of 404 verses, only 126 contain no allusion to the Old Testament.
- Closest association: the prophecies of Daniel.

### **9.0 Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Three Basic Principles of Interpretation**

1. The Bible, in every word and totally, is the inspired, final, and authoritative Word of God.
2. The Bible should be interpreted literally.
3. The context of Scripture must be carefully and faithfully observed.

## 10.0 Various Interpretations of the Book of Revelation

### A. Preterist View

The book of Revelation relates only to the events of the day in which it was written; that is, it is a record of the conflicts of the early church with Judaism and paganism. Therefore, the closing chapters of Revelation would show a picture of the contemporary triumph of the church. This view considers Revelation a symbolic history, rather than prophetic; thus it is only of historical interest today.

### B. Historicist View

The Book of Revelation is a picture of the history of the church from the Day of Pentecost to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth at the end of the tribulation. The book has been in the process of being fulfilled throughout the whole Christian era.

### C. Idealist View

The followers of the idealist view believe the book of Revelation is a symbolic picture of the continuing (not just past) struggle between good and evil and between Christianity and paganism. Followers of this view generally believe that the symbols cannot be identified as historic events, either in the past or in the future.

### D. Futurist View

- The events from chapter 4 to the end have yet to be fulfilled.
- Two types of views among futurists regarding chapters 2 and 3:
  1. These two chapters represent periods of church history up to the rapture of the church.
  2. These two chapters describe the churches in John's day.
- The events of Revelation 4–19 relate to the period just preceding the glorious coming of Christ to earth. This period of time is seven years long and is called the “tribulation.” The seven year tribulation is divided into two parts, three and one-half years each. The last three and one-half years is often called the “great tribulation,” and much of Revelation is taken up with this latter half. Revelation 19 refers to the coming of Christ to earth, Revelation 20 to the future millennial reign of Christ, and Revelation 21 and 22 to events either contemporary with or subsequent to the millennium.
- For the most part, we regard fulfillment of these prophecies in a normal way. No judgments in history have ever equaled those described in Revelation 6, 8, 9, and 16. The resurrections and judgments described in Revelation 20 have not yet occurred, nor has there been a visible return of Christ as portrayed in Revelation 19.
- Some object to the futurist view, saying that John and the first readers of the book of Revelation would not have understood the real meaning of the prophecies. Prophecy, as given in Scripture, was not always completely understood by the writer or his generation (Dan 12:4, 9; 1 Pet 1:10–12).

**Recommended Commentaries on the Book of Revelation**

Hindson, Edward. *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future*. Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series. Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002.

MacArthur, John. *Because the Time Is Near*. Chicago: Moody, 2007.

———. *Revelation 1–11*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1999.

———. *Revelation 12–22*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 2000.

Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Revelation*. Everyman's Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1968.

Smith, J. B. *A Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. Edited by J. Otis Yoder. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1961.

Thomas, Robert L. *Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1992.

———. *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1995.

Walvoord, John F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Chicago: Moody, 1966.