

Recap Reference Guide to Our Revelation Study

The essential themes to understanding the core message of Revelation

1. **God is (still) in control** – One of the most basic and fundamental messages of Revelation is that God is still, has always been and will always be in control. Early Christians struggled in their doubt of this fact because of the persecution by the Romans, but God made sure to send them a clear message that He is on His throne and will forever reign and no wicked will ever defeat Him. The message remains as strong and true for us today!
 - a. **References:** chapter 8; 9:13-19; 11:3-6; 19:7-10; 20:7-10; 22:6,7

2. **Repent of your sin, while there is still time** – Too often we fail to realize that we aren't guaranteed tomorrow, let alone the next moment. In that, we also fail to repent of sinful choices we have made before God while we still have time. The Bible clearly tells us that God wants none to perish but all to come to repentance (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9). It was/is no different for the Romans or the erring Christian. The Romans had, as so many have throughout history, reached a point where they felt they no longer needed God. As a result, they not only chose to live without him, but often chose sin over Him. God hates sin. And He hates that sin stands as a wall between us and Him. He sent Christ to release us from sin...and yet, just as the Romans, many still choose to live in sin. Knowing that sin separates us from Him and that time is not guaranteed, repentance must be done now while there is still time. This is a message that Christ shouts throughout Revelation in the hopes that many, some, even one, would hear it, believe it, and act upon it!
 - a. **References:** 2:1-7; 2:18-29; 3:1-6; 3:14-22; 8:1,2; 8:7-13; 9:13-21; 11:14-18; 16:8,9; 22:10,11

3. **Great punishment for those who choose sin** – No matter what any earthly leader may say, the Bible makes it clear that sin can only lead to spiritual death (Romans 6:23). For those who choose sin over God, terrible punishment – eternal punishment – awaits them. Revelation gives us a glimpse at the awful nature of that spiritual death and what it means to be eternally separated from God without a chance to repent ever again. God obviously decided to leave nothing to the guesswork of men as to the result of a life of sin. The picture painted for John of spiritual death comes through loud and clear as this theme of the writing it expressed in stark realism...
 - a. **References:** 6:12-17; chapter 8, 9:13-19; 14:6-13; chapter 16; 18:4-8; 19:19-21; 20:7-10; 21:5-8

4. **Victory in Christ for those who are faithful until death** – This can very easily be called the central theme of the Revelation. Early Christians were struggling with Roman persecution as well as dealing with internal strife within the church. They felt hopeless and weary and perhaps even at times felt God had abandoned them. But God wanted to make it abundantly clear that not only was He still in control, but that His promises had not changed. Victory has already been won by Christ on the cross! To those who would remain faithful to Him, even to their death, He would give the great reward of a heavenly home and the privilege of participating in the great eternal victory celebration around the throne!
 - a. **References:** 2:8-11; 3:7-13; 4:1-5; 5:1-5; 6:1,2; 7:9-17; 11:3-6; 11:14-18; 12:11; 14:1-5; 15:2; 17:14; 19:11-21; chapters 21 and 22

Final Thoughts:

Revelation is not a writing to be taken nor approached lightly. But it is not full of such deep mysteries that one, upon intense study, reveals entirely new teachings of God and Christ that do not support fundamental Christian principles repeated time and again throughout the Bible. Revelation is quite possibly the most misunderstood book of the Bible. As a result, it is consistently taken out of context and often times commonly held interpretations completely ignore the original audience to whom it was written. We can never forget that the messages of each writing of the Bible would not only have had an immediate meaning for the contemporary servant of God at the time of the writing, but also contains the eternal message of God that impacts Christians of any age. And Revelation is no different.

Even though we may not "get" all of the details of the Revelation, we certainly can walk away with an agreement that Victory has been achieved through Christ on the cross; that God remains in control of all things and His plans and purposes will be accomplished; and that we all have a basic choice to make – righteousness or sin, good or evil, self or God? The choice we make in the here and now will make a difference in the hereafter. We, like Rome and every other great nation that has ever existed, are not invincible. If we choose sin and evil over righteousness and God, our destruction will not come from without, but from within. And if we choose not to repent while we can, our destruction will be eternal. Revelation stands as a reminder to all people everywhere of the arrogance of Satan and that his destruction is inevitable...but ours is not. God loves each of us and desires to have us with Him in heaven; but is that desire equaled within us? Do we desire God as much as He desires us?

Don't allow Revelation to intimidate or overwhelm. It is a part of the revealed will of God and the period at the end of the grand sentence of the Holy Bible. It is intended to be ours for the learning and the living so that perhaps we may avoid the fate of that once massive empire of Rome and take hold of the eternal victory in Christ. Our study together is not the final word on the matter, however. Now, it rests once again within each of our own hands to re-read and to re-study and prayerfully consider the message that God leaves with us still today in the pages of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John.

It has been my great pleasure to share these thoughts with you throughout our 3 year study together. I hope that God's promises and purpose has shone through the sometimes difficult passages of this text. I cannot thank you enough for your patience and participation during our study of this wonderful writing!

- **Rich Shockley, September 2008**

Study Resources of Note:

- *Truth For Today Commentary – Revelation Volumes 1 & 2, David Roper*
- *Coffman Commentary – Revelation, James Burton Coffman*
- *Revelation: Four Views, A Parallel Commentary – Edited by Steve Gregg*
- *Study of Revelation (class notes) – Professor Joe Jones, Harding University*
- *Greek New Testament text w/study notes*
- *Various other print, internet and computer media also contributed to this study*