

Introduction to the Apocalypse, Part 2  
Revelation 1:4-8

### Review & Introduction

Last week we began our study of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the apostle John also known as the Apocalypse. That term is taken from the very first word of the book, ἀποκάλυψις / apokalypsis, meaning “to uncover” and hence to reveal. However, over the years it has taken on the additional connotation of “a great disaster.” The first definition now listed in the Concise Oxford dictionary is “*an event involving destruction or damage on a catastrophic scale.*” That is understandable because the book of Revelation describes terrible things that take place on a global scale during the tribulation period prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is revealed is so disturbing that many have tried to find ways to eliminate or at least diminish its message.

I pointed out last week the effort of Dionysius in the early third century to do this by challenging the authorship of the book and interpreting it allegorically. Eusebius was influenced by this and championed it in the early fourth century. However, a literal interpretation, often referred to as the Chiliasitic view, continued to prevail among the churches until Augustine in the early fifth century that brought allegorical interpretation of the book to dominance. This was not because that interpretation is accurate to the text but because it matched the change in the political situation. Over the course of the fourth century the church went from being persecuted to being tolerated to becoming the official religion of the Roman empire. The allegorical view of a subdued Satan and an ascendant Christ fit well with this new reality. Interpretation was driven by what was desired instead of what was actually in the text of Scripture.

I pointed out last week that despite the many attempts to challenge the authorship of the Apocalypse, it is well attested by both the external and internal evidence that Revelation 1:1,4,9 & 22:8 refer to John the apostle who wrote while exiled on the Isle of Patmos in AD 94-95. No one else is identified by any actual evidence.

More important than arguments about human authorship are the statements in verses 1-2 of divine origin. Revelation 1:1–2 (LSB), <sup>1</sup> “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His slaves the things which must soon happen; and He indicated this by sending it through His angel to His slave John,*” <sup>2</sup> *who bore witness to the word of God and to the witness of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.*” The human author, John, was only bearing witness to what he had been told, heard or seen. The Apocalypse is true prophecy because it was given by God the Father to Jesus the Son who sent through it an angel to John who wrote it down as a witness of it all. Its purpose was to show what would happen in the future to God’s slaves, those that belong to God, which refers to Christians.

The term “slave” is not one that people like applied to themselves and even more so those peoples that value their freedom and will fight to the death to avoid being subjugated to someone else. Such has been true of English peoples and so the tradition began early among translators of the Bible into English to use the term servant instead of slave, but the Greek term here, δοῦλος / doulos, is the word for slave, not servant. Christians are not their own but have indeed been bought with the price of the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rev. 5:9). Paul consistently referred to Himself as a slave of Christ as also so did James, Peter and Jude. We who are Christians ought to rejoice in this reality that we are slaves of our God and that the purpose of our existence is bound up in the quest to please our master. In this verse we rejoice that our God has sent to us His revelation of “things that must happen.”

What are these things that must happen? Jesus used that identical phrase in the Olivet Discourse to refer the prophecies given by Daniel. While that would include the conclusions of the various prophecies given in Daniel 2, 7 and 11, the immediate context in Matthew 24:15 is the prophecy of Daniel 9:26-27 and the Abomination of Desolation that occurs in the middle of the tribulation week. That is why we took the time to study Daniel in preparation for this study of Revelation. We will see more of the specific parallels between the Olivet Discourse and Revelation when we get to chapter 6. That clause occurs again at Revelation 4:1 and 22:6 which mark the main body of the prophecies of the book as the things that must happen.

The attached clause ἐν τάχει / en taxei adds a time element so that the phrase means either “*the things that must happen soon or quickly.*” Though the events described will take place in the relatively short time of seven years and hence quickly or suddenly, that idea does not fit the context as well as the idea of soon in the sense of a short time. That is supported by the statement at the end of verse 3 that “*the time is near.*” That is often used as an objection to this book being a prophecy of distant future events since it has been a little over nineteen hundred years since John’s death so how could these prophecies be soon?

The answer is actually simple for this is a reference to what is referred to as the doctrine of imminence as I have detailed in past sermons. While the prophecies in Daniel 2 would be fulfilled “*in the later days*” (2:28) and “*after these things*” (2:29,45), and Jesus would refer to the prophecies in the early part of the Olivet Discourse as “*not yet*” (Matthew 24) or “*the end is not immediately*” (Luke 21:9), John writing at the end of the first century could write that these things “*must happen soon*” and that the “*time is near*” because nothing else had to happen for the sequence in the prophecies to begin. That matches the statements of the apostles such as: *The coming of the Lord is near*” and “*the judge is standing right at the door*” in James 5:8-9; “*the end of all things is near*” in 1 Peter 4:7; and “*Children, it is the last hour*” in 1 John 2:18. Paul made many such statements concerning an imminent return of Christ with an expectation it could happen in his own lifetime (Romans 13:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 10:11; Philippians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:17). Remember, the Lord does not judge time the same way that we do (2 Peter 3:8) and that even the Hebrew prophets used such language for the day of the Lord being near though the events they describe would be thousands of years in the future (Isaiah 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7-18).

The purpose of the revelation of what is to come is stated in verse Revelation 1:3, “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it, for the time is near.*” A warning about impending judgment is a blessing to the unsaved because it creates motivation to repent and get right with God. The promise of Christ’s return and victory is motivation for the Christian to pursue personal holiness in the present time in preparation for His return (2 Peter 3:14; 1 John 3:3) and an encouragement to patiently persevere in present circumstances while waiting for His return (James 5:7).

### **Hermeneutical Approaches**

Before moving on to the structure and text of Revelation, I think it would be helpful if I gave you at least an overview of the different approaches people have made in their attempts to interpret revelation. The term “hermeneutic” simply refers to the method used to determine interpretation. This is a critical factor. A pre-supposed theology will determine the hermeneutic used as we have already seen in the cases of Dionysius, Eusebius and Augustine. That is still as true today as it was then. Pre-supposing that Jesus will not physically reign over His kingdom from David’s throne excludes the grammatical-historical or literal hermeneutic and demands some other system is used. At the same time this works the other way too. An allegorical or mystical hermeneutic allows for and pushes for interpretations that are not supported by the Scripture text but fit well with what is desired or pre-supposed. The questions at hand should always be what did God actually say / communicate, what did He expect those to whom He gave the message to understand from it, and how does He want me to understand and respond to it now?

Lets take a quick look at the major methods used recognizing that some of these methods are mixed together resulting in a plethora of interpretations of Revelation.

The Preterist approach assumes that Revelation is *“a sketch of the first century conditions in the Roman Empire, thereby emphasizing its historical background”* (Thomas, pg. 29-30). It assumes that the language used *“only faintly reflects actual events.”* Walvoord (pg 17) comments, *“it considers Revelation as a symbolic history, rather than prophetic . . .”* *“A record of the conflicts of the early church with Judaism and paganism”* and the closing chapters as *“a picture of the contemporary triumph of the church.”* This view holds that all the events described in Revelation were fulfilled by AD 70 when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. That removes any future significance of the book. It uses an allegorical, spiritual hermeneutic.

*“The tradition-historical approach views Revelation from the perspective of background material in Greek or Oriental myths and Jewish tradition”* (Thomas, pg. 30). It removes the prophetic element of the book and instead gives vague suppositions based on alleged apocalyptic language that is different from plain speech. Its interpretive method is allegorical.

The continuous-historical approach considers Revelation to be *“a symbolic presentation of the total of church history culminating in the second advent”* (Walvoord, pg. 18). It interprets allegorically in order to force the text to refer to historical events from the first century to the present. Since allegory is extremely flexible and history continues to unfold, the interpretations vary widely and continue to change. Walvoord pointed out in 1966 that there were *“as many as fifty different interpretations of the book of Revelation”* using this method. He also cites W.T. Gehman’s comment that in this approach *“variations exist in an almost endless stream,”* and that this *“touch[es] every aspect of the book.”*

It is interesting to note that Abraham Kuyper rejected this method, but in the end did not do any better by interpreting Revelation in a *“devotional and spiritual sense”* (Walvoord, pg. 10).

The timeless-symbolic or idealist position *“has the Apocalypse representing the eternal conflict of good and evil in every age, usually in reference to the particular age in which the interpreter lives”* (Thomas, pg. 31). It interprets allegorically to conclude God reveals in the book basic principles by which He acts and not specific events. It is neither historical or prophetic.

I should point out that this is the approach used by those who contextualize the meaning of a text of Scripture based on contemporary culture and socio-political factors. Contextualization is now also called *“stand-point epistemology”* by which the meaning of Scripture is determined by the place, culture, position and experience of the interpreter instead of the author. It is a form of eisegesis by which you read meaning into the text instead of exegesis by which meaning is determined from out from the text.

The futurist approach recognizes Revelation to be prophecy of the *“things which must soon take place”* as stated in Revelation 1:1 as I discussed earlier. It is the only one that will use the grammatical-historical hermeneutic which interprets the prophecy in a normal literal manner. This is the method associated with the chiliastic or millennial view. It is also the method that most strongly recognizes that *“all Scriptures is inspired by God”* (2 Timothy 3:16) as *“men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”* (2 Peter 1:21). The other methods either easily fall prey to or advocate theories that diminish or eliminate divine authorship. I say this because even those that use these other methods that do hold to divine authorship treat it as if God is incapable of saying what He means and meaning what He says - or that John was not a faithful witness in what he wrote down.

Thomas points out an additional problem that arises from interpreters mixing these methods and giving several examples by which some elements in Revelation are prophetic descriptions and others are allegorical principles. One example is mixing of the idealist and futurist methods resulting in a view in which there is a real prophetic end, but the rest of the book is allegorical by which the signs of the end are present in every generation but God will decide when the real end will come.

## Theological Systems

As I stated earlier, the hermeneutical method used to interpret a Scripture will determine the theology that arises out of it. And I hope the brief discussion of those methods will be helpful to you to recognize the approach being used by a Bible commentator even if they get mixed together. I think it would also be helpful to give you at least a brief description of the major theological systems applied to Revelation since as I pointed out before the pre-supposition of that system will influence or even determine the method of interpretation used.

The various systems are generally described in relationship to its view of the thousand year reign of Christ presented in Revelation 20 with subcategories under those major systems. The three major systems are amillennialism, postmillennialism and premillennialism with millennial derived from the Latin word meaning a thousand, and the earlier term chiliasm derived from the Greek word meaning a thousand. The various millennial views are specifically about the future of humanity on the present earth and the chronology of events related to it.

Premillennialism uses a literal hermeneutic to interpret Revelation as prophetic descriptions. The cataclysmic events preceding Revelation 20 are real and Jesus physically returns. Satan is bound for a thousand years in the abyss and unable to deceive humanity. The first resurrection of those martyred during the tribulation occurs at the beginning of the thousand years and they reign with Him during that period. This reign is usually seen as the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets concerning Israel and Jesus reigning over the world from David's throne in Jerusalem in a restored Israel. Satan is released at the end of the thousand years for a short time and he stirs up a rebellion against God which is utterly crushed and Satan is thrown into the lake of fire along with the beast and false prophet. The second resurrection which follows this is of those who will be judged at the Great White Throne according to their deeds and also cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. Eternity with new heavens, a new earth and a new Jerusalem follow this.

The essentials to be included as a premillennialist is believing Jesus will return to reign for a thousand years, but there are variations in the premillennial camp for not all follow a literal hermeneutic on all scripture passages. An example of this is the non-dispensational premillennialism of David Nevins Lord in the mid-1800's who believed an historical explanation of Revelation was preferable to a futurist view. George Ladd restated this view in the mid-1900's.

Amillennialism has many variations, but the essential element of it is that there is no actual millennium. The kingdom and reign of Christ is spiritual. The future kingdom will be glorious and perfect, but it will be in heaven and not on earth. This view may use an allegorical, spiritual or mystical method of interpretation. The preterist, symbolic, idealist and tradition-historical interpretive systems discussed earlier are all amillennial.

As mentioned earlier, interpretation was usually literal with chiliasm dominate in the early church, but allegorical interpretation and an amillennial view became dominate with Augustine in the fifth century and official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church in the medieval period. The chilastic view was not dead, but it was greatly suppressed. The reformation brought renewed interest in millennialism, but the rebellion by the city of Münster in 1534 which was tied to millennialism was a factor in making Luther and Calvin very suspicious of it. However, the emphasis on a more literal approach to Scripture laid the foundation for continuing interest in millennialism and a revival of premillennialism in the seventeenth century and postmillennialism in the eighteenth century.

Postmillennialism holds that Christian preaching and teaching will reach fruition in the future bringing a millennium in which evil is reduced to a minimum and Christian moral and spiritual influence will dominate so that the church will be central in solving the economic, social and educational problems of society. The millennium is symbolic and so will not necessarily be a thousand years, but it will be followed by the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. Postmillennialism would wax and wane with the political situation rising in the eighteenth century,

declining in the nineteenth, rising again in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and nearly disappearing after two world wars and entering into the cold war. The fall of the Soviet Union brought about a resurgence and it is a popular view among many politically active Christians as support for their fight against government oppression.

### **Structure of Revelation**

There are many different outlines that have been developed for Revelation from simple to complex and confusing to memorable using lots of alliteration. A good outline will help you remember the flow of the book, but that may or may not follow the actual structure of the book. The structure of Revelation follows its stated purpose in verse 1 to reveal to God's slaves "*the things which must soon take place,*" and the instructions given to John in verse 19 to "*Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.*" I have printed a modified version of Dr. Thomas' detailed outline as a separate bulletin insert. The simplified version of this by John MacArthur using this same structure is:

I. The Things Which You Have Seen (1:1-20).

This is the prologue detailing John's commission to write

II. The Things which Are (2:1-3:22).

The letters to the seven churches in Asia

III. The Things Which Will Take Place After This (4:1-22:21)

This includes the scene in heaven, the tribulation period, the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the Millennium, judgment and the eternal state.

We will be going over all the detail of this as we progress through the book. I do want to point out in advance that the structure is more complex than is suggested by a literary outline. For example, while there is a definite sequential chronological flow in the book, there is also parenthetical sections that give background information that explains what is about to happen. An example of this is chapter 12 that gives a symbolic history of Satan's efforts to destroy God's plan of salvation coming through Israel by the birth of the Messiah. There are three sequences of seven judgments, but that is not twenty-one separate judgments for the judgment of the seventh seal is the seven trumpet judgments and the seventh trumpet judgment is the seven bowl judgments. There is also the use of a lot of symbolism such as occurs in chapter 12 that add meaning to the text that will have to be explained. However, keep in mind that symbolism and allegory are not the same. Symbols have established meaning while allegory tends to be limited only by the interpreters imagination. I will be pointing these things out as we go through the text, but I want you to be aware that close attention has to be given to the text in order to understand it properly.

### **John's Salutation - Revelation 1:4-8**

In preparation for next week, lets take a quick look at John's salutation in Revelation 1:4-8. A salutation is an opening greeting that identifies the recipients and author of a letter and usually expression of goodwill. In doing this John emphasizes the truth of the preface in verses 1-3.

Revelation 1:4–8 (NASB95), <sup>4</sup> *John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,* <sup>5</sup> *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—* <sup>6</sup> *and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.* <sup>7</sup> *Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.* <sup>8</sup> *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."*

John identifies himself as the one who writing the letter and he is specifically writing it to seven churches in Asia, a reference to the Roman Province of Asia which is in what is now western Turkey. The specific churches will be identified in chapters 2 & 3. We know from verse 1 that the message being revealed in this letter is meant for “*His slaves*” which we identified earlier as true Christians, those who have been bought with Jesus’ blood and therefore belong to God. John sends a copy this letter to each of the particular seven church in Asia from which it will be spread from place to place throughout the world so that all Christians can be made aware of it.

The greeting itself is a common greeting from Christians to one another and occurs in thirteen of the New Testament epistles. This is deeper than just an expression of well wishing. It is a wish for grace, God’s unmerited favor, to be upon them along with experiencing God’s peace that comes from that. It is by God’s grace that the believer is saved from sin and given a right standing with God (Eph. 2:8). Because the Christian is justified by faith, he can have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). This an experiential tranquility that passes all understanding because it can exist in all circumstances. We shed our burdens and anxiety by casting them on Him for He cares for us (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7).

John then marks out that a threefold source for this greeting. 1) “*From Him who is and who was and who is to come.*” 2) “*From the seven Spirits who are before His throne.*” 3) “*From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*”

At first glance it might be thought that the first source is Jesus as the *one who is and was and who is to come*. The grammatical construction of this phrase shows it to be an undeclinable proper name instead of a description. Who is it? At first glance most people think it refers to Jesus because He has these attributes, however, Jesus is mentioned specifically as the third source of the greeting. This then is a title for God the Father with this expression magnifying the unique eternal nature of God who exists throughout time and outside its boundaries. The present and past expressions of existence would be expected to be followed by a future “*who is to be,*” but instead it is “*who is to come*” that expresses the future. That places an emphasis on the imminent implementation of the prophecies being revealed. God is coming to judge and that could begin at anytime.

The second source of this greeting is “*the seven Spirits who are before His throne.*” Admittedly this is somewhat problematic because it is an unusual title though it occurs three more times in Revelation (3:1; 4:5 & 5:6). Some have thought this refers to angels, but throughout Revelation angels are distinctly called angels and seen in distinct angelic form. In addition, this would place angels side by side with the God the Father and God the Son which would be an improper equating. This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Why is it seven spirits instead of one since the Holy Spirit is usually referenced in singular terms. First, the other references to seven Spirits in the Revelation tie them to God and Christ. Second, John uses symbolism from Zechariah throughout the book. The seven lamps in Zechariah 4:1-10 are tied directly to the prominence of the Spirit’s activity in the world in Zechariah 4:5 (not by might or power, but by my Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts). Revelation 4:5 states directly that the seven lamps are the seven Spirits of God which ties the two together. Another tie is between Zechariah 4:10 and Revelation 5:6 in which the seven eyes of the Lord are stated to be the seven Spirits of God. Why seven? It is symbolically used to express completeness or perfection.

The third source of the greeting is stated directly to be “*Jesus Christ.*” Though usually named second in any formulation of the triune Godhead, He is placed third in this list to facilitate the elaboration on Him that follows - “*the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*” Using the fuller identification of “*Jesus Christ*” emphasizes His glorified humanity. Throughout the rest of the book with the exception of the benediction in 22:21, He will be referred to as either Jesus or Christ.

John’s elaborates the identity of Jesus Christ with three descriptive titles. 1) *The faithful witness.* 2) *The firstborn of the dead.* 3) *The ruler of the kings of the earth.* In the interest of time, I will pick up here

next week about the significance of each of these titles which will lead directly into the doxology given at the end of verse 5 and into verse 6.

## **Conclusions**

I recognize that introductory material for a book can seem overly academic, yet is crucial to both understanding the book and its authority in our lives. Revelation is a message from God the Father to Jesus the Son given through an angel to John who wrote it all down for us who are slaves of God. The blessing promised in reading and heeding the book can only come if you believe it actually is from God so that you will have a serious response to it. If you believe it is the work of mere humans, then it is simply the religious musings of man which may be interesting, but without any authority.

The same is true if you believe the message is so unclear as to be beyond reasonable comprehension. That is the tragedy of the methods of interpretation that rely on allegory, mysticism or spiritualize it. Only the grammatical-historical method lets the text speak for itself with the presumption that God knows how to communicate in an understandable way to His slaves for whom it is written. Literal interpretation does allow us to receive the grace and peace of God.

Dr Robert Thomas, Revelation 1-7; An Exegetical Commentary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1992

Dr. John Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, A Commentary by John F. Walvoord. Moody Press, Chicago, 1966

Sermon Notes: *January 12, 2025*  
Introduction to The Apocalypse, Part 2 - Revelation 1:4-5

## Review & Introduction

Apocalypse means to “uncover” - but it also now has the connotation of “\_\_\_\_\_”  
Dionysius challenged the authorship of Revelation and advocated \_\_\_\_\_ interpretation  
The authorship of Revelation is well attested externally and internally that it is John the \_\_\_\_\_  
Revelation 1:1–2 - the human author, the apostle John, was only bearing \_\_\_\_\_ to what God revealed  
Christians are properly \_\_\_\_\_ of God - we have been purchased with the blood of Christ who is our master  
The “things that must happen” are what Jesus told in the \_\_\_\_\_ Discourse and Daniel was given in prophecy  
This must happen soon / the time is near is often used to reject the \_\_\_\_\_ view of Revelation  
It is the same / similar to statements by Jesus, apostles & prophets - it refers to the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_  
Hearing, reading & heeding brings a \_\_\_\_\_ in motivation repentance and the pursuit of holiness

## Hermeneutical Approaches

“Hermeneutic” simply refers to the method used to determine \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ can determine theology and hermeneutic  
Preterism: Assumes all events in Revelation \_\_\_\_\_ by AD 70 when Temple is destroyed.  
It \_\_\_\_\_ the prophetic elements of Revelation substituting vague suppositions - allegorical hermeneutic  
Continuous-historical: A symbolic presentation of church \_\_\_\_\_ culminating in the second advent  
\_\_\_\_\_ approach allows almost endless interpretations that change as history unfolds.  
Timeless-symbolic or idealist: It represents the timeless conflict of good and evil in every age - \_\_\_\_\_  
Contextualize - same / similar to stand point epistemology. Interpretation based on \_\_\_\_\_ / experience  
Futurist: Revelation is \_\_\_\_\_ of things that must take place. Literal / grammatical-historical  
Many interpreters will \_\_\_\_\_ their methods creating additional confusion and unique interpretations

## Theological Systems

Theological presuppositions will direct the hermeneutic that is used in order to \_\_\_\_\_ that theology  
Premillennialism: Jesus physically returns \_\_\_\_\_ to setting up His millennial kingdom  
There are \_\_\_\_\_ in this view because not all follow a literal hermeneutic on all passages  
Amillennialism: has many variations but its essential elements is \_\_\_\_\_ millennium  
Uses allegorical / mystical / spiritual interpretation to make the kingdom & reign of Christ only \_\_\_\_\_  
Became dominant over chiliasm in the 5<sup>th</sup> century due to Augustine & \_\_\_\_\_ situation  
Postmillennialism: Christianity will bring in a millennium ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) of suppressed evil & elevated good  
Jesus returns \_\_\_\_\_ the millennium of undefined length, Jesus returns & the dead are resurrected to be judged  
This view would wax and wane depending on the socio-political \_\_\_\_\_ of the time

## Structure of Revelation

Many outlines developed from simple to complex, from confusing to \_\_\_\_\_ alliteration

The structure of Revelation follows its stated purpose in 1:1 and \_\_\_\_\_ to John in 1:19

I. The Things Which You \_\_\_\_\_ Seen (1:1-20). (The prologue detailing John's commission to write)

II. The Things which \_\_\_\_\_ (2:1-3:22). (The letters to the seven churches in Asia)

III. The Things Which Will Take Place \_\_\_\_\_ This (4:1-22:21). (This includes the scene in heaven, the tribulation period, the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the Millennium, judgment and the eternal state).

The structure is more \_\_\_\_\_ than suggested by the literary outline

Chapter 12 gives a symbolic \_\_\_\_\_ of Satan's efforts to destroy God's plan of salvation & God's protection

The 7<sup>th</sup> seal brings the 7 trumpet judgments. The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet brings the 7 bowl judgments.

There is a lot of symbolism, but symbols have \_\_\_\_\_ meaning while allegory allows imagination

## John's Salutation - Revelation 1:4-8

John is the one writing the letter to the 7 churches in the Roman province of \_\_\_\_\_ (western Turkey)

The message is meant for \_\_\_\_\_ Christians, but they go to these 7 churches first to be sent out from them

The greeting is a common to Christianity - a wish to stand in God's grace and \_\_\_\_\_ His peace

John marks a threefold source for this greeting

The "*one who is and was and who is to come*" - a proper \_\_\_\_\_ for God the Father expressing He is eternal

Present (*who is*); past (*who was*); future (*who is to come*) - expressing \_\_\_\_\_ of the prophecies

*The Seven Spirits* - the \_\_\_\_\_ - see Revelation 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; Zechariah 4:1-10;

\_\_\_\_\_ - faithful witness; firstborn of the dead; ruler of the kings of the earth

## Conclusion

The blessings of reading Revelation only come to those that \_\_\_\_\_ it - which requires believing it is from God

Methods of interpretation that \_\_\_\_\_ its message diminish the blessing and receiving God's grace & peace

## KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

**Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and

look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word "Apocalypse" or "Revelation" is used. Talk with your parents about the importance of the method of interpretation used in order to properly understand the Bible.

## THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is the origin of Revelation and how did its message get to its human author? What is your response to the truth that Christians are slaves of God? What are the *things which must happen*? What does it mean that those things will happen soon, are near? Describe and evaluate each of the following hermeneutical approaches to Revelation: Preterist; Traditional-historical;

Continuous-historical; Timeless symbolic / Idealist; Contextualized; Futurist. Describe the basic tenants of the following theological systems and the methods of interpretation that support them: Amillennial; Premillennial; Postmillennial. What is the difference between allegory and symbolism? To whom is John writing? To whom is the message intended? What is the meaning and significance of the salutation given (vs. 4). From whom is the salutation coming from? What is the identity of the "seven Spirits of God?"