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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

We are going to start our study of Revelation. There are many other good, godly Christians who have different interpretations of the book of Revelation, and that’s okay! The main thing is Jesus Christ is coming back again and the details are not as important as the fact that he is going to return. Ever since Tertullian, the first pre-millennialist, there has been a succession of Bible believers who have understood and interpreted this book the way I will be sharing it with you.

The parallel between Genesis and Revelation

The word of God, the Bible, is a *total* completion; it is a unit. It is not 66 disjointed books. There is a marvelous unity to the word of God that begins with the book of Genesis and ends with the book of Revelation. Even though they were written thousands of years apart, Genesis and Revelation are sister books. For instance, in Genesis we read about the creation of the first heaven and the first earth. The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In Revelation, the first heaven and the first earth pass away and we read about the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. That’s the parallel.

In Genesis we read about Paradise lost. Adam and Eve were created in a perfect environment and because of their rebellion and their choice to sin; they lost that state of paradise. There are a lot of humanists today in our land that would tell you if we could just create a perfect environment for men and women to live in, man would overcome all his sin. That’s exactly wrong! Because in a perfect environment man sinned. So Genesis teaches paradise lost. Revelation, on the other hand, teaches paradise restored, because as we’re going to see tonight, the last part of the book of Revelation pictures a time in the future when paradise will be restored to those who know and love God.

In Genesis, man is driven from the Tree of Life because of sin. Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden and God even stations cherubim there to guard the entrance to it. In Revelation it is just the opposite. Man is invited back to the Tree of Life. “Come, drink from the river of life. Come and eat from the tree of life.”

Satan makes his entrance in Genesis. He comes on the scene for the first time and in Revelation we learn about Satan’s exit. I like that the Bible doesn’t have a devil in the first two chapters and doesn’t have a devil in the last two chapters. He’s dealt with and he’s done away with. In the book of Genesis, by the way, Satan’s doom is pronounced. In the book of Revelation, Satan’s doom is executed—it is fulfilled.

In Genesis we read about the first tears. They occurred because of sin. God put the curse upon man and said, “You’re going to have to earn your money and earn your food by the toil and sweat of your brow. You’ll be heartbroken. There will be sorrow in childbearing. There are going to be tears.” And all throughout the history of mankind it is a trail of tears. Tears were introduced in the book of Genesis but in the book of Revelation we read about the last tears because the Bible says, “God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.” Isn’t that a great promise? Won’t you be excited to live in a place where there won’t be any crying, where there won’t be any tears and no more sorrow?

In Genesis we read about the first death. God says, “You can eat of any tree in the Garden but the day you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die!” And they did die spiritually. Then, Cain and Abel were involved in the first murder, the first death. But we are told in Revelation there will be no more death.

In Genesis we read about the first Adam’s wife Eve. It was the first Adam who got us in trouble but in Revelation the focus is the second Adam’s wife—the church—the bride of Christ, because the Bible says Jesus Christ is the second Adam. What Adam messed up, Jesus Christ fixed up. You could say the history of mankind is a history of being formed then being dis-formed by sin and then being transformed by Jesus Christ.

That’s kind of a parallel between Genesis and Revelation. By the way, Genesis and Revelation are the two most attacked books of the Bible. There are a lot of people who will tell you the book of Genesis is nothing but a myth and that’s why some teachers laugh if their students try to say, “I believe the heavens and the earth came into existence because God created them.” There are those who try to tell you all you’ll find in the book of Genesis is myth. On the other hand, some try to tell you the book of Revelation is mystery. One is a myth and the other is a mystery. One you can’t believe and the other is so complicated you can’t understand it. Both of those are wrong!

I like what Dr. Vance Havner used to say, “If the book of Genesis is a myth, I am myth-taken and myth-understood and I’m myth-tified.” I like what Dr. R. G. Lee used to say. “If the Bible is a myth, then a canary bird can fly across the Atlantic Ocean with the Washington Monument tied to its tail.” The Bible is not a myth! It is much more accurate than any newspaper or any science book we have today. So some say the book of Genesis is a myth and others will say the book of Revelation is a mystery and you can’t understand it! I’m here to show you that you can easily understand the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:1: “The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant, John who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it because the time is near.”

Let’s take apart those first few verses. Consider the title of the book. It is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” If you have a King James Bible and you look at the heading above the book, it probably says something like this: “The Revelation of St. John the Divine.” The titles for the book are not inspired by God. Some scribe just added those hundreds of years later. Incidentally, chapter and verse divisions were not in the original language either. They were added hundreds of years later. The title of this book is not “The Revelation of St. John the Divine.” The title of the book is the first words you see there, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

One of my pet peeves is people who called it “Revelations”—plural. Any time you hear someone call it, “Revelations,” you know they know hardly anything about the book. What does revelation mean? The word, *revelation*, is the word, *apokalupsis*, where we get our word,

“apocalypse.” It’s a word that means, to unveil, to unwrap. Imagine the city of Dallas commissioned an architect to sculpt a beautiful statue for the front of some public building and they covered the area where he was working with a large canvas. The artist works inside for months making the sculpture and nobody could see it. It was wrapped up with canvas. He finishes his work and finally the time comes for the unveiling of that statue. The crowd is gathered and the band is playing. The canvas still covers the statue. At the given sign, someone pulls a rope and the canvas covering falls off the statue and it is *apokalupsis* it is revealed and everyone can see what it looks like. That’s what that word, *revelation* means. It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ.

If you are interested in the book of Revelation because you want to know what’s going to happen in the future you won’t be rewarded. That’s not the purpose of the book. Its purpose is to reveal Jesus Christ to you! That’s the whole point of the book. Every book in the Bible is about Jesus but this book specifically says, “to *reveal* Jesus Christ, to *unveil* Jesus Christ” to you. If you stick with me during this study, you’re going to know more about Jesus Christ than you ever knew before. He’ll be unveiled for you.

Keep reading. “It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants.” That’s the second thing. This book is given to the servants of Jesus Christ. It’s not given to anyone else. There are fortune tellers and some who call themselves modern prophets who try to predict the future. They try to study the book of Revelation to find out what’s going to happen in the future and they don’t understand it. Why? It’s not written to them; they’re reading somebody else’s mail. This book was addressed to the servants of Jesus Christ. That means you have to have a servant’s heart to understand it. As I have said, some people study this because they are what I call “prophecy junkies” and they just want to know what’s going to happen in the future. “Tell me what the third eye on the fourth head of that beast means” or something. That attitude will never be rewarded; only if there is a servant’s attitude.

Remember the movie called “The Omen”? It was Hollywood’s attempt to try to take the book of Revelation and make it become real. There was something about the Antichrist in there and you know what the dumbest part of the movie was? They had somebody opening a Bible, and supposedly reading from the book of Revelation and they were reading something that doesn’t even appear in the book of Revelation and it rhymed in English. Anytime something is written in Greek and translated into English, it’s never going to rhyme. Do you get it? Hollywood was trying to take it and base a movie on it. They tried, but they missed it a hundred miles because the book wasn’t written to Hollywood, and it wasn’t written to somebody who just wants to figure out the future—it was written to the servants of Jesus, and if you don’t have a servant’s attitude, you won’t understand it.

Next it says “to show his servants what must soon take place.” You say, “Wait a minute. When was this book written?” About 90 A.D “It’s almost 2,000 years later and it hasn’t happened yet why does the Bible say it will soon take place?” That word which translates to *will soon take place* literally means that when it begins, it will occur with great rapidity! When the cycle is set in motion, it will all take place rapidly and quickly. Things are coming to a head. We may not know it, but they are. Have you ever rewound a film projector? At the beginning the film rewinding goes rather slow, but as it gets toward the end, it goes faster and faster and faster and

faster and faster until finally the end of that film just whips out! That’s what that word literally means—things are going to be put into motion, and once they get put into motion it will all happen quickly.

I happen to believe with all my heart that we are living in a time when these things are going to be put into motion. Why? Because Revelation says a lot about the nation of Israel. Until 1948 it was completely impossible to understand it. I’ve read what these great preachers of 100 years ago had to say about the book of Revelation. For instance, as great a man as he was, Dwight L. Moody didn’t understand Revelation, because he kept trying to say Israel was “the church.” Because there was no Israel a hundred years ago. Most of you know in 70 A.D. the nation of Israel as we know it was wiped off the face of the earth by the Romans and did not become a nation again until 1948, when many of us were alive! Because there is an Israel today I believe that’s the key event that has triggered these things into motion. So when the Bible says it will shortly take place, it means when it starts, it’s going to happen quickly.

It says in verse 1 “He sent his angel.” It literally says, “he signified it he testified it.” The word says he used signs and symbols to teach him. In order to understand the book of Revelation you have to know there are a lot of symbols in here. Some people say, “You can’t take the Bible literally! You have to take the Bible symbolically!” There’s a word for that—*baloney!* It is a ridiculous statement. The symbolic parts of the Bible—take them symbolically. But look for the literal truth behind the symbols. The literal parts of the Bible take them literally but these people who say, “You can’t take the Bible literally!” haven’t studied the Bible very clearly.

In the book of Revelation there are many symbols, so you have to understand the symbols. Let’s study one of the symbols in Revelation 12:3. This is just one example of many. “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.” What is that? That sounds like something you would dream after eating raw cabbage and ice cream, riding a roller coaster and sleeping on a waterbed—a bad nightmare. You ask, “Do you believe there is such a thing as a red dragon like that?” No. I think it is a symbol. Skip down to verse 9, where most of the symbols are explained. “The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” Some people say, “Satan isn’t real. He’s just symbolic in the Bible.” Oh, no. Satan is real! The symbol is a dragon—the reality is Satan, himself. You have to understand what these symbols represent. That’s why it’s very important to go back and study what the apocalyptic symbols of the Jews were during the time this was written, because if you don’t understand that, it will make very little sense to you.

Let me make a modern day application. I don’t think this is going to happen, because I think Jesus is going to come back, but let’s just say a thousand years from now in the future, the earth is still as it is now and archeologists are digging in the ancient ruins of what was once called Texas. They find remnants of a newspaper dated November, 1992. On the remnant is a large drawing of a donkey with a baseball bat, that is hitting an elephant on the head. If you don’t know the symbols, it doesn’t make sense. One archeologist says, “I know what that means. Back in ancient Texas, they used to have circuses and one of the acts in the circus was donkeys who could go out and beat up on elephants. That’s what that means!” Another archeologist says, “No. I don’t think so. You see it’s symbolic. Do you see the baseball bat? Baseball was a popular

game and what this cartoon means is that back in 1992 the donkeys beat the elephants in the World Series. That’s what it means!” Both of them would be wrong! One of the archaeologists, who studied the symbols of America looks at it and says, “I know what that means! The donkey is a symbol for the Democratic Party and the elephant is a symbol for the Republican Party. What this cartoon says is that in the 1992 presidential election, the Democrats defeated the Republicans.” And that, of course, is the correct interpretation, but if you didn’t know the meaning of the symbols, the picture wouldn’t make sense. That’s why it’s so very important as you understand the book of Revelation that you understand what the symbols meant in the lives of the Jews in those days.

Remember what it said back in Revelation 1:1? “He sent his angel to his servant, John.” Which John are we talking about? We are talking about the John who was the disciple of Jesus, one of the twelve disciples. Tradition says he was the youngest of the disciples, perhaps the closest friend to Jesus, because he’s often referred to in his own gospel account as “the one whom Jesus loved.” He’s the one who laid up against the chest of Jesus at the Last Supper and asked him who would be the one who would betray him. Tradition tells us all of the disciples died a martyr’s death except for the apostle, John, who was persecuted under the Roman emperor, Domitian. Tradition says John was to be publicly executed by boiling in oil. Tradition says they threw the aged apostle in a vat of boiling oil, but he didn’t die. He was terribly burned and terribly disfigured but he didn’t die. There was a law that said if you were unsuccessful in executing someone, you couldn’t try again. So instead of re-executing him, he was exiled to the little island of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea, where he died of natural causes. While John was on the Island of Patmos, living in recluse, almost like a hermit, God gave him this vision of the Revelation.

I. WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN (the past)

It says in verse 2 he is testifying to everything he saw. John saw everything in this book. What did he see? He saw the “word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” In order to understand the book you have to understand the “key verse.” The key to understanding the whole book of Revelation is 1:19; it explains why John divided the book into three parts. Understand that John is writing down what he saw and this is what Jesus says to him: “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.” The King James says “hereafter.” When Jesus appears to the apostle John he says, “There are three things I want you to write down, John. I want you to write down what you have just seen.” That’s the first part. What is that? The vision of Jesus Christ. We’re going to be studying this in the next few weeks. John is there worshipping the Lord on the Lord’s Day, on a Sunday, and suddenly he hears a voice behind him and he turns around and he sees Jesus! Chapter 1 of Revelation is the only physical description of the appearance of Jesus in the Bible of what he looks like. You may be surprised but John sees him and he falls at his feet like a dead man. Jesus touches him and picks him up. Then he gives him this message. He says several things to him. “John, this is what I want you to write down. I want you to write down what you have just seen—the vision—I want you to describe me to all the people out there who will read this book.” When you see Jesus Christ with the eyes of faith how does he appear to you? Do you still picture Jesus, like he is pictured in the Christmas pageants that we do? Long hair, beard, blue eyes, fair skin? Do you think when you first see Jesus when he comes to rapture the church, he’s going to look like that still? I think you

are in for a surprise because what we are going to see will be a *glorified* Jesus Christ. He’s going to look different than most of us imagine. John saw him and he was so awed by his power and majesty, he fell down like a dead man. But that’s the first part and it’s just a brief part of the book “write the things that you have seen.” That’s past. “What did you just see, John? Write it down!” That’s the shortest part of the threefold division of the book. It just covers chapter 1:1-20.

II. WHAT IS NOW: THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The second part, which is key to the book, is “Write what is now.” Look at verse 19 again “Write what you have seen,” that’s the past. Then “write what is now”—the present. That’s the seven churches at the beginning of chapter 2. In chapters 2 and 3, there is a letter to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. They were actual churches during the time John wrote this. But I believe according to the character of prophecy, these also represent churches today and Christians in churches today and all churches of all times. Why? Because of the number seven. You have to understand the Jews had a practice of assigning meaning to most numbers.

To the Jews, the number one was the number of “unity.” “Hear, O Israel. The Lord thy God, the Lord is one God.” Two to the Jews was the number of “witness.” A thing had to be established in the mouths of two witnesses or more for it to be true. In the book of Revelation we are going to be introduced to two witnesses. The number three in the Jewish scope of thinking was the “divine” number. That’s why God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Holy, Holy, Holy, the number of the Trinity. The number four was the number of our planet, the earth. That’s why we have winds that come from the four directions, the four points on the compass, the four corners of the earth. The number six was man’s number, because man was created on the sixth day. We’re going to see later in the book that the number six has meaning—666; three sixes, the number for man trying to be God (and the number three was the divine number). Seven is the number for “perfection” and man is not quite perfect. Man just measures up to a six! Do you remember a few years ago men used to look at girls and say, “She’s a ten!” I guess girls would do the same thing. I want to tell you there’s no such thing as a ten. The highest any person can get is a six. Six is the number of man. Seven, of course, is the number of perfection. It’s a number that means “completion” or “a unit.” That’s how the Bible speaks in the book of Revelation of the “seven spirits surrounding the throne of God.” That’s a picture of the unity and the perfection of the one spirit of God. That’s why when we come here to seven churches—it’s talking about a totality of church life.

There are seven sevens in the book of Revelation. There are seven beatitudes, seven statements which say, “Blessed is he...” and of course there are the seven churches. We’re going to see the main part of the book of Revelation involves the opening of seven seals. Seals like wax seals on a scroll you open read. Then the next seal leads into the blowing of seven trumpets and each trumpet announces something which leads into the pouring out of seven bowls or vials of wrath. There are also seven prominent characters in the book of Revelation. and there are seven new things God promises. There are seven series of sevens in the book of Revelation. Don’t think that’s by accident. The Jewish mind was really into this idea of Gematria, the power of numbers. The number ten, for instance, was the number of “completion” in the sense of “human

completion.” That’s why they counted to see that a baby had ten fingers and ten toes as we do. It talks about the reign of Christ—a thousand years. 10x10x10. Twelve was the number of “governmental perfection,” that’s why there were twelve patriarchs, apostles and that’s why after Judah hanged himself, the apostles felt the compulsion and the need to go ahead and get a twelfth apostle. Why? They had to have that sense of administrative perfection.

I believe these seven churches represent all the churches of all times. There is a belief called “dispensationalism.” Maybe you have heard it takes a little different angle on all of this and they say these seven churches represent seven church ages periods of time. For instance, they would say, “We are living in the age of the Laodicean church.” I personally don’t believe that teaching. I believe today you can find some Laodicean Christians. I believe you can find some Ephesian Christians today. I believe you can find some Philadelphian Christians today who have an open door of opportunity before them. As we preach through, that that’s a powerful message! A lot of people always come out for the first message on Revelation—but they start dropping like flies when you hit the seven churches, because it’s preaching to them. When you quit preaching and you go to meddling and start talking about dead Christians and start talking about lukewarm Christians that make God sick, Christians say, “I want all this future stuff. I don’t want you preaching at me!” That’s the second part of the book “Things that are right now!” when I say now, I mean today.

III. WHAT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER

The third part of the book is “what will take place later” and that is the main portion of the book, beginning with chapter 4:1 all the way through the end of the book. It’s talking about the future things that have not happened yet today, but will happen in the future. In Revelation 4:1, John says, “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ This is in the same words in Greek as the ones found in 1:19, “the things that shall be hereafter,” “the things that shall happen later.” The same words are there in 4:1, “I will show you what must happen later.” It is the picture of what will happen next that will set God’s prophetic clock back into action. There is a series of events that will take place in the last portion of the book of Revelation. I believe they are all in the future. Let me give you five of them quickly:

1. The rapture

The rapture of the church, when Christians are taken out of this world. That’s what John says in chapter 1, “I heard a sound like a trumpet” does that sound familiar to you? “Behold, I’ll show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.” I Thessalonians verse 4 says, “the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet them in the air at the sound of the trumpet.” There are some people who believe Christians are going to be on earth during the time of the Tribulation. I don’t believe that, because I believe in chapter 4, verse 1 we’re taken out of this place. In the first three chapters in Revelation you find “the church, the church, the church.” Then in chapter 4:1—whoosh! We’re out of here! Revelation never mentions the church again. I told you earlier the word *rapture* although it doesn’t appear in English in the Bible it is the Greek

word *harpadzo* found in I Thessalonians, chapter 4 when it says, “we shall be caught up together.” it comes from the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible which is the word *raptio*. That’s where we get our word “rapture.” That’s the next thing that’s going to happen on God’s prophetic calendar. At any moment, Jesus Christ could come in the clouds and the Christians could be caught up to be with him and that will set all these events into motion that we see beginning in chapter 4, verse 1.

2. The tribulation

Next will be the Tribulation. There will be seven years of Tribulation. You say, “Where do you get “seven” years?” I will explain all of it when we get there but it is what is called “Daniel’s seventieth week.” In the Old Testament, Daniel prophesied there would be seventy weeks in which God would sum up and complete everything in his plan. Sixty-nine of those weeks have already happened but the 70th seven year period has not yet happened. It’s like we are living right now between the 69th and the 70th week and when Jesus comes to rapture the church, the clock starts again and that last seven year period will take place. The first three and a half years of that seven-year period is not going to be too bad. In fact, it’s almost going to be like a heaven on earth, almost like a Utopia, to begin with. But then the last three and a half years are going to be terrible.

If you want to read about, turn to chapter 6:15. We’ll study this in detail later. In 6:15, there is going to be a time when people of the earth hate God and rebel against Him. “Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’” Have you ever wondered how God can put up with all this mess that’s going on here? When is God going to punish sin? Hang on. Let’s just be thankful he is slow to anger now! The time is going to come when he is going to punish sin.

Chapter 9:6 says it’s going to be a terrible time for the people who are alive here on the earth. “During those days men will seek death, but they’ll not find it; they’ll long to die, but death will elude them.” People will want to commit suicide: God’s not even going to let them do that! That’s how terrible it is going to be. You would think because God keeps pouring out punishment, judgement, punishment, wrath, judgement, that they would fall on their knees and they would repent wouldn’t you think that? No! “Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts,” (9:21). The “magic arts” is the word *pharmaceia* meaning, “pharmacy drug abuse.” “They did not repent of their murders, their drug abuse, their sexual immorality or their thefts.” Doesn’t that sound like our culture today? It’s going to be even worse then!

And there is going to be this one person who comes on the scene in 13:5 whom we call the Antichrist. He’s called “the beast.” He’s going to be the world leader during the time of Tribulation. “The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.” that’s three and a half years. “He opened his mouth to blaspheme God and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints,” Those are the Tribulation saints, which I’ll

explain in a moment. “and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast— all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.” During the time of Tribulation, this charismatic man will come on the scene as a world leader and he’s going to provide peace to the world. It never has been technologically possible for there to be one world leader until this generation. But it is possible now. We have the communication technology. We have the transportation technology. We were the first generation to watch a war in real time. It is technologically possible for one man to be the world leader. Every time you hear some of these politicians start talking about the “New World Order” and “One World Monetary System,” or “One World Economy,” that may not be the Antichrist talking, but it’s all building toward this idea of a one-world government led by one man—the Antichrist. (You can read more about it in Matthew 24)

3. The battle of Armageddon

The third thing that will take place is the Battle of Armageddon. At the end of that seven-year period, Jesus Christ is going to come back with the saints. At the rapture of the church, He comes back in the clouds and Christians are caught up to be with the Lord in the air. There’s a seven-year time of Tribulation on the earth when we’re in heaven with him but at the Battle of Armageddon he will come back to planet earth. The Bible talks about that in 16:15. Jesus says, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed. Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.” That’s a common word today. I am told every major newspaper in the United States reserves what they call “Armageddon type” for when something big happens. The bigger the event, the bigger the headlines in the newspaper: WAR STARTS; PRESIDENT ASSASSINATED; WAR ENDS. But there is a type size every newspaper in the world is reserving for Armageddon for when it happens and it’s called “Armageddon typeset.” Because they believe that somehow, sometime, something like this is going to happen.

What does Armageddon mean? *Ar* in Hebrew, actually *Har*, in English transliteration means “mountain.” *Megiddo* is a place in central Israel. It means “the mountain of Megiddo.” If you look at your Bible map sometime, that is nothing more than what’s called “the plain of Jezreel.” If you have ever been to the Holy Land, you can go to the plain of Jezreel. It is a beautiful, white valley area and the Bible says that’s where the last battle is going to take place: at the mountain of Megiddo, Har-mageddon.

In chapter 19:11, Jesus is going to come back with the saints. John describes the Second Coming of Jesus to earth. “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True [Jesus] with justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is “*Tu logos Tu Theo*” (the Word of God. Jesus.) “The armies of heaven were following him” That’s us! We’re there! Saddle up your horses. Let’s go! “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with

which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

“KING OF KING AND LORD OF LORDS”

Some of you are saying, “I want to go to heaven and sit in my little cabin there in the sky, but I don’t really want to fight in this battle if you want to know the truth. When I get to heaven, I would just as soon stay there! Do you know what I mean?” Don’t worry about it. It’s going to be a much shorter battle than even the Persian Gulf. You won’t even have a weapon; you won’t need a weapon! There will only be one weapon used and that’s the Word of God. He’ll speak it! And one word will defeat all of those armies, nuclear arsenals, chemical warfare, space technology *one word*. Believe me. The Word of God is sharper and quicker than a two-edged sword. All Jesus will have to do is to speak just speak! Do you ever listen to that beautiful hymn by Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”? It talks about Satan. One whole verse is devoted to Satan and it talks about how “one word shall fell him.” One word shall fell the devil! Knock him down! And it’s the word that Jesus will speak at his Second Coming at the Battle of Armageddon.

4. The millennium

What happens after? The Millennium. (20:4) *Mille* meaning “thousand,” *annum* meaning “years.”—one thousand years. John says, “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.” Here it is. “They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Three times in that passage he talks about reigning with Christ one thousand years. The Bible teaches that when Jesus comes back at the Battle of Armageddon he is going to set up an earthly kingdom for a thousand years and we will reign with him. People say, “That is weird to me!” It is a great message of the word of God. It talks about the time when the lion will lie down with the lamb when men will beat their swords into trimming shears and all that that time of perfect peace and prosperity when all the nations will come before Jesus. We sing about it! “And the government shall be upon his shoulders.” Has that ever happened yet? Not yet, but it will! Jesus Christ is going to set up his literal kingdom on earth for a thousand years.

That’s where these different millennium words come in. Some people say, “I am post-millennial” which means they are saying, “I believe there will be a thousand years of peace and prosperity on the earth and after that thousand years Jesus is going to come. There are some Christians who believe that. Some very prominent TV personalities hold to this view. That by our own efforts, we can bring in the Kingdom of God and after a thousand years of perfection on the earth, then Jesus will come. That’s post-millennial. Some people are what’s called “a millennial” which means. “no millennium.” They just say all of this is just symbolic, spiritual. It’s not *really* going to happen. Then there are those who believe as I do, that Jesus is going to come to earth before the millennium we’re what’s called “pre-millennial.” I believe Jesus is going to come back before His thousand year reign on the earth. Some people just say, “I’m pro-millennial. I’m just for it!” I’m for it too. Somebody else says, “I’m pan-millennial. It will just

all pan out in the end." That's true but I honestly believe there's going to be a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth and when we get to that point, I will describe it to you from the prophecy of Isaiah, and it will make sense.

5. Paradise for eternity

The final thing, of course, is paradise for all eternity. You can read about that in chapter 21 and chapter 22. "He [Jesus] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away." Don't you just long for that? Isn't there something in your heart that makes you homesick for heaven? It's going to happen! "No longer will there be any curse." (22:3) Can anybody tell me what the last word in the Old Testament is? *Curse*. That's the story of the whole Old Testament: the curse brought on by sin. I'm so glad the last chapter of the Bible says there's going to be no more curse. "The throne of God and of the land will be in the city and the servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun for the Lord God will give them light. They will reign forever and ever!"

CONCLUSION

We talk about the last words of Jesus. We think it was the last words on the cross. Those weren't his last words. We think about the Great Commission before he ascended into heaven as being his last words. Do you want to know what his last words were? Look at chapter 22:20, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'" That's the last words Jesus left us. He's coming soon. I kind of like what John had to say. "AMEN. Come on, Lord Jesus!"

OUTLINE

Introduction: The parallel between Genesis and Revelation

Genesis

1. Creation of first heaven and earth
2. Paradise lost
3. Man driven from the tree of life
4. Satan’s entrance
5. First tears
6. First death
7. First Adam’s wife: Eve

Revelation

1. Creation of new heaven and earth
2. Paradise recovered
3. Man invited to tree of life
4. Satan’s exit
5. Last tears
6. No more death
7. Second Adam's wife: church

The devil says Genesis is "myth" and Revelation is "mystery."

Key: 1:19- John was told to write:

I. WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN: A Vision of Jesus (vs. 1:1-1:20)

This first section describes the past—how John saw Jesus

II. WHAT IS NOW: THE SEVEN CHURCHES (vs. 2:1-3:22)

This section represents all churches of all the ages up to this present time.

III. WHAT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER (vs. 4:1-22:21)

1. The rapture (vs. 4:1)
2. The tribulation (vs. 6:15-17) (See Matthew 24:15)
3. The battle of Armageddon (vs. 16:16, 19:11)
4. The millennium (vs. 20:4)
5. Paradise for eternity (vs. 21-22)