

REVELATION

A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events

The Salutation

Revelation 1:1-8 NET

The Introduction to the Revelation

Review

What is the meaning of Eschatology?

- Eschatology is the study of the last days.

What is Hermeneutics?

- Hermeneutics is the principles, laws and methods of interpretation.

What is Amillennialism, Premillennialism and Postmillennialism?

- Amillennialism rejects the literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth.
- Premillennialism believes Christ will reign on earth for 1,000 years after His Second Coming.
- Postmillennialism believes Christ's Second coming will occur after the 1,000 year reign of peace.

The Introduction to the Revelation

Four Basic Rules of Interpretation

The Golden Rule of Interpretation:

- *When the plain sense of Scripture makes **common sense**, seek no other sense.*

The Law of Double Reference:

- *This law observes the fact that often a passage or a block of Scripture is speaking of two different persons or two different events that are separated by a **long period of time**.*

The Law of Recurrence:

- *In some passages of Scripture there exists the recording of an event followed by a second recording of the **same event giving more details** to the first.*

The Law of Context:

- *A text apart from its **context** is a pretext.*

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What is a dispensation?

- It is made up of two Greek words. The first is oikonomieo and means to manage, regulate, administer or to plan. The second Greek word is aion, it means “age” – the element of time.

Dispensations:

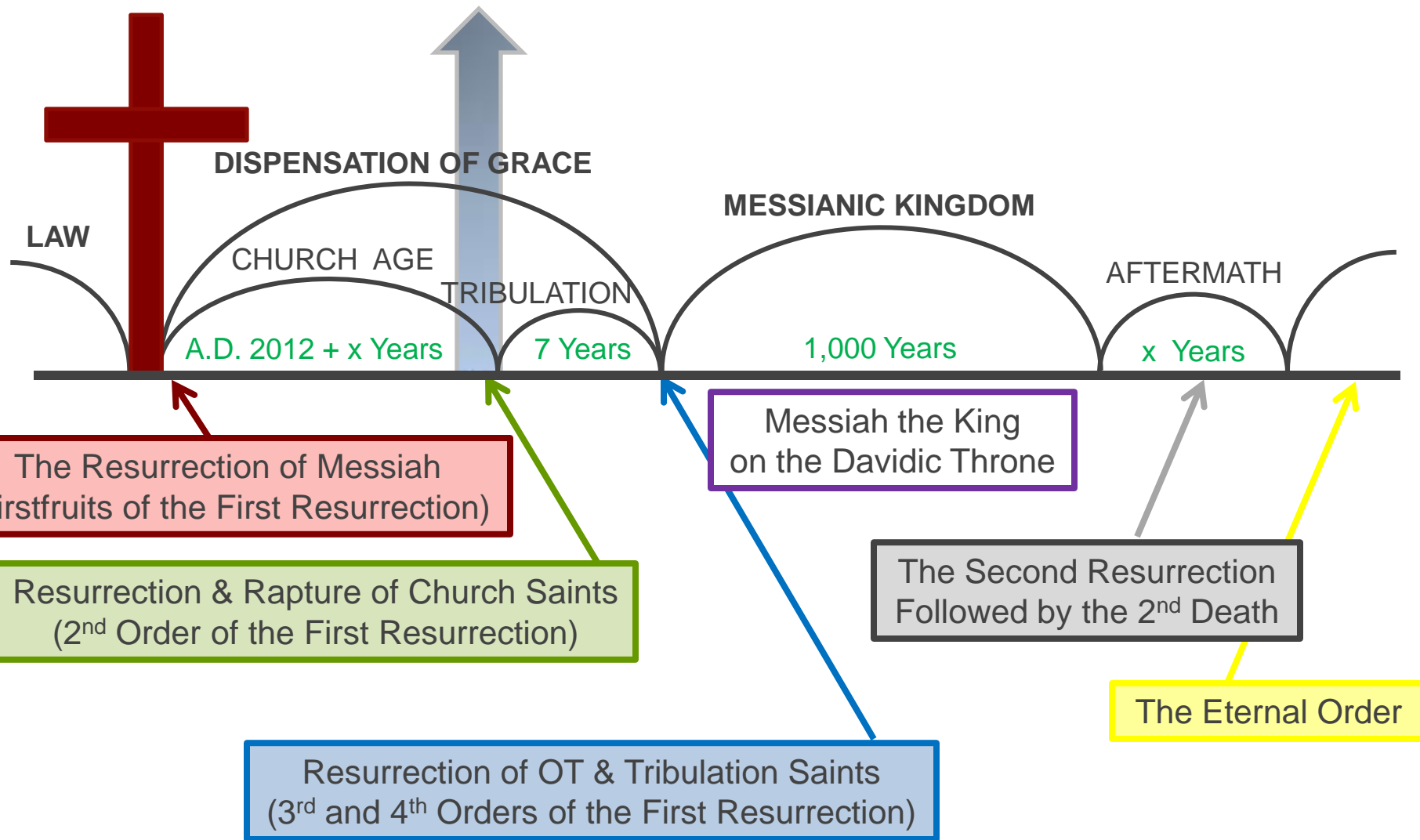
- Dispensations separate periods of time in which God “**dispenses**” His will in a specific and unique way, based on a covenant.

There are seven dispensations:

- The Dispensation of Innocence (**Gen. 1:28-3:8** before the Fall) – Edenic Covenant.
- The Dispensation of Conscience (**Gen. 3:9-8:14** immediately after the fall) – Adamic Covenant.
- The Dispensation of Civil Government (**Gen 8:15-11:32**) – Noahic Covenant.
- The Dispensation of Promise (**Gen 12:1-Ex 18:27**) – Abrahamic Covenant
- The Dispensation of Law (**Ex 19:1-Acts 1:26**) – Mosaic Covenant
- The Dispensation of Grace (**Acts 2:1-Rev 19:21**) – New Covenant
- The Dispensation of the Kingdom (**Rev 20:1-10**) – New Covenant

Introduction to the Book of Revelation

The Outline of Eschatology



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Four Basic Rules of Interpretation

From the previous slide when does eschatology proper begin?

- Eschatology proper begins with the sixth dispensation. The cross, which ended the fifth dispensation, the Dispensation of the Law, also began the sixth, the Dispensation of Grace.

Name the two major divisions of the Dispensation of Grace.

- The first is the Church Age. Which began at _____ and will continue until the _____.
- The second is the Great Tribulation, which will last for seven years, and will be the last seven years of the Dispensation of Grace.

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Four Basic Rules of Interpretation

According to Revelation 1:19 the book can be divided into 3 sections:

- What John saw...Rev. 1:9-20
- What is...Rev. 2:1-3:22
- What will be...Rev. 4:1-22:21

What is the difference between an allusion/reference and a quote? How many times does Revelation refer back to the Old Testament?

- The book of Revelation has no direct quotations from the Old Testament, but it has approximately 550 references back to the Old Testament.

What chapters in Revelation have totally new information?

- Only the last two chapters deal with things that are totally new.

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Revelation 1:1-3 NET

- 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must happen very soon. He made it clear by sending his angel to his servant John,
- 1:2** who then testified to everything that he saw concerning the word of God and the testimony about Jesus Christ.
- 1:3** Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy aloud, and blessed are those who hear and obey the things written in it, because the time is near!

What “process” did it take to get “the revelation” to John?

- ❖ The source is God, the Father.
- ❖ God the Father gave it to God the Son, Jesus the Messiah.
- ❖ From the Son, it was given to an unnamed angel.
- ❖ From the angel it was given to the Apostle John. John was commanded to write it down.
- ❖ John was divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ The book of Revelation was put into writing to be conveyed to the believer.

Why? Was any other book documented like this?

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Why would studying this book of prophecy have a conditional promise of blessing?

- ❖ Much of this book is based on references to the Old Testament so a proper study of the book of Revelation would result in a more comprehensive knowledge of the whole Bible.
- ❖ Studying prophecy gives on a love and longing for the return of the Messiah.

The Salutation

Revelation 1:4-8 NET

- 1:4** From John, to the seven churches that are in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from “he who is,” and who was, and who is still to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
- 1:5** and from Jesus Christ – the faithful witness, the firstborn from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has set us free from our sins at the cost of his own blood
- 1:6** and has appointed us as a kingdom, as priests serving his God and Father – to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen.
- 1:7** (Look! He is returning with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes on the earth will mourn because of him. This will certainly come to pass! Amen.)
- 1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God – the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come – the All-Powerful!

The Salutation

Revelation 1:4-8 NET

Revelation 1:4a From John, to the seven churches that are in the province of Asia:

“From John.” What do we know about John?

- ❖ He is the son of Zebedee and brother to James.
- ❖ He was a fisherman by trade.
- ❖ Wrote 5 books.
- ❖ One of the inner circle (Peter, James and John).
- ❖ Only apostle still living at the time of this writing (90 +).
- ❖ Only apostle to die of old age.



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Revelation 1:4-8 NET

Revelation 1:4a From John, to the seven churches that are in the province of Asia:

To whom is this book being written to?

- ❖ To “**the**” seven churches that are in the Roman province Asia. Modern day Turkey.
- ❖ John use the Greek definite article *the*, indicating specific selection.
- ❖ History shows that there were more than just these seven churches in Asia. For example, the Church at Colossae.

So how are these seven churches (with the definite article) to be understood?

- ❖ The number seven signifies completeness throughout Scripture.
- ❖ These are specific churches that represent all churches. This is a message to the whole church. All believers are to learn from what will be written to the seven churches.

Why these seven churches?

- ❖ Before the close of the first century, churches had problems.
- ❖ They provide a pattern to church history as we will see.

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Revelation 1:4-8 NET

Revelation 1:4b-5a Grace and peace to you from “he who is,” and who was, and who is still to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, **1:5** and from Jesus Christ – the faithful witness, the firstborn from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth.

John sends his greetings. Based on the above, who is the primary author?

- ❖ The primary author is the Trinity. “From” is used 3x.
- ❖ He who is, and who was, and who is still to come is the eternal God.
- ❖ Seven spirits = Holy Spirit. In context, the book is presented as coming from three sources.
- ❖ Jesus Christ, the Son. So John is the secondary author.

Why seven spirits for the Holy Spirit?

- ❖ The number seven, occurs 54 times in the book of Revelation.
- ❖ In the Bible seven is associated with perfection, completion and fulfillment (**Gen. 2:2**; **Ex. 20:10**; **Lev. 14:7**; **Acts 6:3**).
- ❖ There is a parallel to the seven-fold ministries portrayed by **Isaiah 11:2**.
- ❖ **1.)** The Spirit of the Lord. **2.)** The Spirit of Wisdom. **3.)** The Spirit of Understanding. **4.)** The Spirit of Counseling. **5.)** The Spirit of Might. **6.)** The Spirit of Knowledge. **7.)** The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

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Revelation 1:4-8 NET

Revelation 1:5a and from Jesus Christ – the faithful witness, the firstborn from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth.

What are the three titles of Jesus Christ and what does each stress?

- ❖ Faithful witness (Prophet), firstborn of the dead (Priest), and ruler of the earth (King).
- ❖ Faithful witness – He is the perfect prophet/spokesman for God.
- ❖ Firstborn of the dead – reference to the fact of the resurrection. He is the first to be resurrected with an everlasting body. Jesus Christ is God's guarantee of our resurrection and glorification.
- ❖ The king – His prophetic role after His second coming.

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Revelation 1:5b-6 To the one who loves us and has set us free from our sins at the cost of his own blood **1:6** and has appointed us as a kingdom, as priests serving his God and Father – to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen.

John turns to glorify the Son with praise and thanksgiving. Why (5 reasons)?

- ❖ **First**, because He loves us. “Loves” is present tense – **constantly** loves us.
- ❖ **Second**, because He literally **loosed** us from our sins by His blood. The Greek verb is *luō*, “to untie, set free, release.” It stresses that man, apart from Jesus Christ and His work on the cross is in bondage, chained to his sin problem: both its penalty (physical, spiritual, and eternal death) and its power (weakness and domination by a sinful nature).
- ❖ **Third**, because He made us to be a **kingdom**. Kingdom is singular. We are such now (God is to rule believers corporately), but in the future Christians will also reign with Christ on the earth.
- ❖ **Fourth**, because He made us to be **priests** unto God the Father. Priests is plural. Each of us have an individual position, responsibility and purpose in this kingdom.
- ❖ **Fifth**, because to Him be the **glory and the power** for ever and ever.

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Revelation 1:7 Look! He is returning with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes on the earth will mourn because of him. This will certainly come to pass! Amen.

Verse 7 gives us the theme of the book of Revelation. Which is...?

- ❖ The return of Jesus to this earth is the central theme.
- ❖ Revelation will deal with events leading up to the Second Coming, events accompanying the Second Coming, and events following the 2nd Coming.

Significance of “He is returning with the clouds”?

- ❖ Jesus Christ will return physically to earth in the same way He ascended into heaven (**Acts 1:9-11**).

Every eye will see Him? All will mourn because of Him?

- ❖ He will **physically** return. All those alive at the end of the Tribulation will see Him (**Matt. 24:30**).
- ❖ His first coming was only seen by a **few**.
- ❖ All humans (Jews and Gentiles) will mourn because of Him.
- ❖ The Greek word for mourn is *koptō* and means literally “*to beat the breast in wailing and mourning.*” For some it will be the mourning of **repentance**. For others it will be the mourning over the **judgments** of sinners.

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Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God – the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come – the All-Powerful!

What does this verse mean – Alpha/Omega, etc?

- ❖ The alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
- ❖ From an alphabet you make words, and Jesus Christ is called the “Word of God”—the full revelation and intelligent communication of God. He is the only alphabet you can use to reach God.
- ❖ Jesus describes Himself as the Eternal One, encompassing the beginning and the end. He is the over-all, the sovereign God Who is in control of history and He will bring to pass the events described in Revelation.

Knowing “these things” how does it make you feel toward the events that are happening in the world today (USA, Syria, Israel, Iran, Egypt, etc.)?

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John Walvoord has an excellent summary of these opening verses.

Jesus Christ is the central figure of the opening eight verses of Revelation. As the Source of revelation He is presented in verse 1. As the Channel of the word and testimony of God He is cited in verse 2. His blessings through His revealed word are promised in verse 3. In verse 5 He is the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He is revealed to be the source of all grace who loves us and cleanses us from our sins through His shed blood. He is the source of our royal priesthood who has the right to gather in Himself all glory and dominion forever. He is promised to come with clouds, attended with great display of power and glory, and every eye shall see the One who died for men. He is the Almighty One of eternity past and eternity future. If no more had been written than that contained in this introductory portion of chapter 1, it would have constituted a tremendous restatement of the person and work of Christ such as found in no comparable section of Scripture.

John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1966, p. 40.