

Welcome to the Revelation Seminars. You are about to embark on what will be one of the most satisfying and challenging experiences of your life. The book of Revelation and the Bible will come alive. And, many have said that these seminars have brought greater meaning to their lives. This is exactly what Revelation promises.

THERE ARE **BLESSINGS** IN THIS BOOK

The theme of this book is Jesus Christ. Some of the most important messages that God has ever given are found in this book. Some feel that it applies mainly to the past or the future. Others say that it is a closed or sealed book and not meant to be understood by people today. The truth is, it is the "revelation of Jesus Christ." It is not a closed book.

Who was John?

John left his work as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. He travelled widely, preaching and teaching for the Saviour. In the latter part of the first century, when John was an old man, he was summoned to stand trial for his faith. It was Emperor Domitian's intention to wipe out Christianity. John was banished to the small rocky island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. (Revelation 1:9) John wrote the book of Revelation under the most forbidding and discouraging circumstances.

The Revelation — The Word of God

The Revelation is "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Revelation 1:2. Here are some important facts about this last book of the Bible, the Word of God:

Revelation is an apocalypse:

Like the rest of the New Testament this book was written in the Greek language. In Greek the word we translate as "revelation" is "apocalypse." Even the most casual reader of the Bible will quickly see that the style of this book is unlike most other New Testament writings. The entire book is written in a symbolic style. It is similar to the parables Jesus Christ told. Jesus used figurative language to protect His teachings and followers from those who were intent on destroying Him and His people. However, He never hid the meaning of His teachings from His true followers. (Read Matthew 13:10-12.)



Q1 **What is the scriptural title of this book?**
Revelation 1:1

A

Q2 **How did John receive this revelation?**
Revelation 1:1

A

God gave it to

Then Jesus gave it to

The angel gave it to

Q3 **What does John call that which he saw and wrote down?** Revelation 1:2

A

and

Q4 **To read and study is not enough. What must we do if we are to be blessed by this revelation of Jesus Christ?** Revelation 1:3

A

In the Old Testament there are a number of books that employ the apocalyptic style for which the parables and the Revelation of Jesus are famous. One of these books is Daniel. We shall discover that the Old Testament apocalyptic writings contain valuable keys to help us understand the symbols of Revelation.

Revelation is the final chapter of the Bible:

One writer has observed, "In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end." - E.G.White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585. Most basic concepts in the Bible can be found in this Revelation. However, it does not attempt to prove any doctrine or Biblical truth. Other New Testament books do this. It simply assumes that its readers understand the teachings and symbols of the Bible and therefore they will understand Revelation.

To understand Revelation we need a good working knowledge of the rest of the Bible. It can be seen as the final chapter and summary of the Bible. Through these Revelation Seminars you will not only develop a good grasp of Revelation's message, but you will also gain an understanding of the basic themes of the whole Bible.■

THE SEVEN CHURCHES



Q5 Name the seven churches to which John was told to send the Revelation? Revelation 1:4,11

A

EPHESUS

The city of Ephesus was already ten centuries old in John's day. It became the most important city in the Roman province of Asia, occupying a strategic position on a harbour near the mouth of the Cayster River. It stood at the junction of several key trading routes on the main road from Rome to the Orient. It was famous for its banking associations and temples. The great temple of Artemis or Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Today, this once affluent, proud pagan city lies in ruins. The ruins of the huge semicircular theatre are on the western slopes of Mount Pion. It is estimated that it could have seated 24,500 people. This was probably the scene of the riot against the preaching of the apostle Paul. (See Acts 19:23-41.)

Boats travelling from Patmos would have arrived at Ephesus first. Imagine the excitement when Christians in Ephesus learnt that a message had been received from their old pastor - the apostle John. Imagine the

intense interest as the Revelation was read to them. And, the first readers understood the symbols of Revelation for they were symbols used in the Bible. Revelation was relevant to those first readers.

SMYRNA

The original city of Smyrna was destroyed by the Lydians over 500 years before the time of Jesus Christ. Apparently Alexander the Great of Greece ordered the rebuilding of the city. This city, on Mount Pagos, in the centre of Izmir today, grew to be a rich coastal town. In 133 B.C., it became part of the Roman province of Asia and in time became a strong centre of the emperor cult.

The Christians at Smyrna suffered severe persecution for they refused to worship any other than their Creator and Saviour. In Revelation, the Lord Jesus had special messages of encouragement for them. They were reminded that Jesus their Saviour had suffered and died, but now was alive. They were encouraged by Jesus. "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10.

The church elder, Polycarp, was burnt at the stake near the city stadium.

PERGAMUM

Behind the modern city of Bergama, in the Caicus River valley, rises a very steep 330 metres high hill. Over this hill were built the theatres, temples and homes of Pergamum. Late last century the ruins of this city were excavated by the German archaeologist Karl Humann. It has been found that Pergamum was a very affluent and influential city. It boasted a library which vied in size with the Alexandrian Library.

A Christian church was established among the massive temples in that city. The book of Revelation was sent to the members there. Jesus Christ had a special message for them. He warned them of the influences about them for He declared, "I know where you live - where Satan has his throne." Revelation 2:13.

THYATIRA

Modern Akhisar is the site of the old city of Thyatira. Very little now remains of Thyatira which was famous for its trade with pottery items, woollen and linen goods, and its leather and copper products. One of Paul's first converts at Philippi was a merchant from Thyatira, a woman by the name of Lydia. (Acts 16:11-15)

The Revelation was sent by John to the members of the Christian church in Thyatira. They were solemnly warned of coming judgments on members who followed pagan beliefs and practices. (Revelation 2:20-23.)

SARDIS

In the seventh century before the time of Jesus Christ the city of Sardis was the capital of the Lydian kingdom. Very little remains today, on the slopes of Mount Timolus, of this once very wealthy city. However, adjacent to the two

remaining 22 metre columns of the fourth century B.C., temple of Artemis, are the ruins of a little Christian church of the fourth century A.D.

A Christian church was established in Sardis in the first century. In the Revelation the members of that church were urged to "wake up" to the spiritual opportunities that were theirs. (Revelation 3:3)

PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia was situated in a very fertile area where grains, olives and grapes are grown today. A few sections of the ancient city wall, in among the homes and gardens of Alashehir, are the only remains to be found today. It was apparently a very beautiful city, sometimes referred to as "little Athens." In Revelation, Jesus Christ highly commended the Philadelphian Christians for their faith.

LAODICEA

After the city of Laodicea was destroyed by the Turks in the thirteenth century the ruins served as a quarry for the modern city of Denizli. Consequently there is almost nothing at Laodicea today. However, in New Testament times the Laodiceans were rich and self-sufficient. When their city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60 the Laodiceans refused Roman help and rebuilt their city out of their own resources. The city was famous for its production of glossy black wool, black garments and medicinal powder.

The Christians in Laodicea were portrayed by Jesus Christ, in Revelation, as being "lukewarm" in their attitude towards Him. The city water was supplied from the hot springs of Pamukkale which was situated about eight kilometres away across the Lycus River valley. By the time the water reached Laodicea it was insipid, lukewarm and sickly. Revelation was sent to the believers in Laodicea with a special message to meet their spiritual needs.■

DOES GOD HAVE A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR US TODAY?

Scanning the horizon of history we discover that God has revealed special and appropriate messages for people facing crisis times. Before the great flood, before the destruction of Sodom, and before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, God had a message of warning that was relevant to the crisis being faced. Then, in the Revelation He had a special message for the seven churches. Does God have a special message for us in this book?

Revelation was written for the first century:

The whole of Revelation was addressed to the believers in the seven churches. Those believers represent believers in all ages everywhere.

Revelation was written for us: We will discover that the Revelation is very significant to us. It has a special message for those who live just before the return of Jesus Christ.



Q6 **The central themes of Revelation are found in chapters 12-14. In Revelation 14:6-12 we have the *SPECIAL MESSAGE* that God has for us. It is in the form of messages from three angels. Read these messages through. What does the first angel have to proclaim to the whole world? Revelation 14:6**

A

If we are going to really understand the *SPECIAL MESSAGE* that God has for us we need to understand the eternal gospel and the whole of the Revelation!☑

my

response...

The special message of Revelation is an interdenominational and international message. It is a message for all. It is a message for you. The "eternal gospel" is the good news of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Jesus Christ died to pay the cost or penalty for all of the evil we have ever thought or done. He then rose out of the grave and promises eternal life to all who choose it through Him.



Revelation is the story of Jesus Christ and what He has done, and is going to do, for us. In these seminars we will study Revelation verse by verse and theme by theme. Do you choose to "take to heart" what Jesus reveals in Revelation?

