

prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” Hebrews 1:1-2). This book is last because there is nothing more we need to hear from Jesus Christ until that great and glorious day - the day Jesus Christ returns!

Outline

Since Revelation is apocalyptic in nature, it does not lend itself to immediate chronological sequence of the future. In this one revelation John the Apostle sees the events of humanity from the cross/resurrection to the return of Christ and the final judgment. It is as if John is climbing a spiraling staircase in Revelation - drawing us closer to that day for which we pray... “Come, Lord Jesus!” (22:20)

- I. Introduction (1:1 - 3:22)
 - a. Prologue (1:1-8)
 - b. Commissioning of John (1:9-20)
 - c. Letters of Preparation to the Seven Churches (2:1 - 3:22)
- II. The Prophetic Message (4:1 - 22:5)
 - a. Inaugural Vision of Heaven (4:1 - 5:14)
 - b. First Prophetic Vision - Seven Seals (6:1 - 8:5)
 - c. Second Prophetic Vision - Seven Trumpets (8:6 - 11:19)
 - d. Interregnum: The cosmic war between Christ and Satan (12:1 - 14:20)
 - e. Third Prophetic Vision - Seven Bowls (15:1 - 16:21)
 - f. The Conclusion: The End and the New Heaven and New Earth (17:1 - 22:5)
- III. Epilogue (22:6-21)

Other Resources

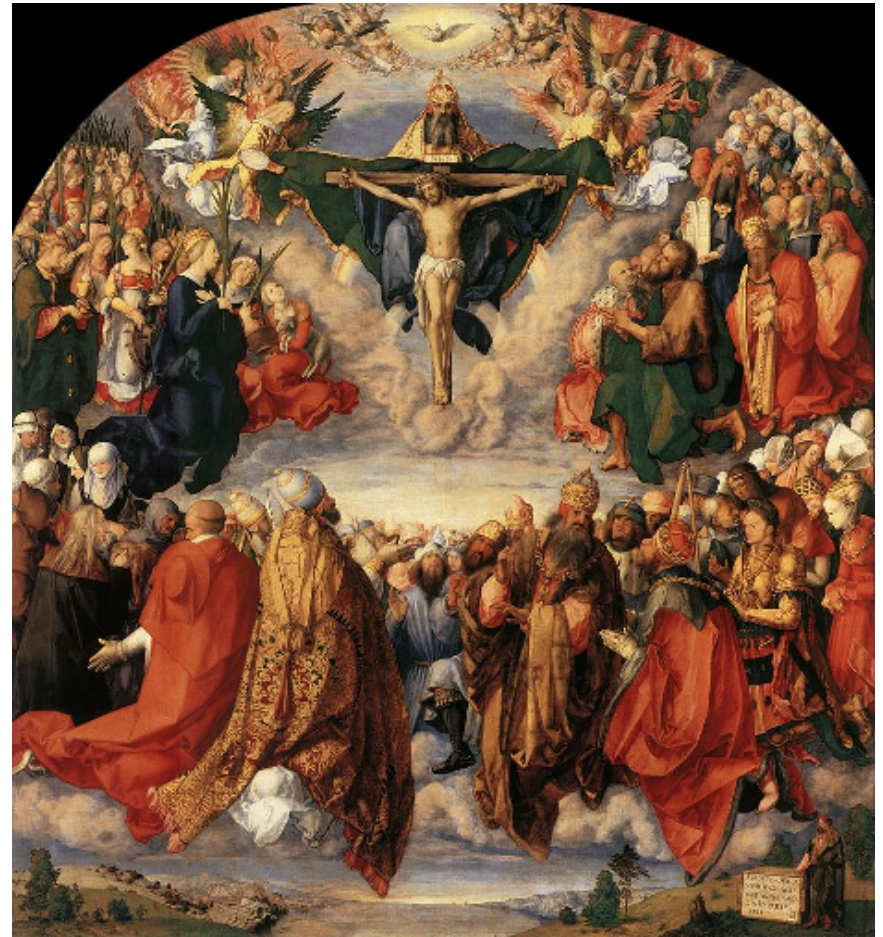
The Case for Amillennialism by Ken Riddlebarger. (\$13.59 from Amazon)

Revelation Commentary by Rev. Louis Brighton

The End Times: A Study of Eschatology and Millennialism by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (LCMS)

Email Questions / Concepts to: William.mueller4@gmail.com

The Revelation of Jesus Christ



Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School
Adult Bible Study

Cover artwork is “Adoration of the Holy Trinity” by Albrecht Durer (1511) - reflecting themes and ideas in Revelation

Title

The title of this book is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Please note the word is *singular* - revelation. This book bears the mark of one singular revelation of Jesus Christ. It is given to show what “must soon take place.”

Author

Four times in this book the author identifies himself as John (1:1,4,9; 22:8). From the time of the first centuries on, the early church identified this with John, son of Zebedee (Matthew 10:2), one of the members of the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples. There are some other Biblical scholars - some dating back to the 4th Century - who view the language and style of Revelation to be completely different than the other books in the New Testament that were authored by him.

There are two likely explanations of this. First, John is probably advanced in age (he could be approaching 80-90 years old) - and whose style of writing doesn’t change over the years? Second, and this is perhaps more profound, the style of writing in Revelation is like that of someone who is quickly writing. It’s as if John, having seen this revelation of Jesus Christ, is quickly writing it down so as not to forget anything!

Date of Writing

Revelation was written when Christians were entering a time of persecution. The two periods most often mentioned are the latter part of Nero’s reign (a.d. 54-68) and the latter part of Domitian’s reign (81-96). Most interpreters date the book c. 95. (A few suggest a date during the reign of Vespasian: 69-79.) John testifies he wrote this on the island of Patmos.

Purpose of Writing

John writes to encourage the faithful to resist staunchly the demands of emperor worship. He informs his readers that the final showdown between God and Satan is imminent. Satan will increase his persecution of believers, but they must stand fast, even to death. They are sealed against any spiritual harm and will soon be vindicated when Christ returns, when the wicked

are forever destroyed, and when God’s people enter an eternity of glory and blessedness. Revelation shows us the suffering the Church will endure and the faith the Church will live by. The exalted Jesus Christ is the glory of the Church in her suffering - she is His Bride! It is to encourage the Christian to remain faithful (2:10) because in the end, Jesus Christ wins!

Literary Form

For an adequate understanding of Revelation, the reader must recognize that it is a distinct kind of literature. Revelation is apocalyptic, a kind of writing that is highly symbolic. Although its visions often seem bizarre to the Western reader, fortunately the book provides a number of clues for its own interpretation (e.g., stars are angels, lampstands are churches, 1:20; “the great prostitute,” 17:1, is “Babylon,” 17:5,18; and the heavenly Jerusalem is the wife of the Lamb, 21:9-10).

Interpretation

It sometimes appears that interpreters of Revelation lose all kind of sense. Revelation does provide the opportunity for the student of God’s Word to “cut their teeth” - so to say. Since it is apocalyptic, there will be a whole host of numbers and symbols to deal with. It must be remembered that Revelation is God’s Word revealed to His people of every generation.

Therefore, it will always have application to every generation. Revelation provides the opportunity to apply these Principles of Biblical Interpretation:

- 1) Scripture interprets Scripture
- 2) Scripture does not contradict Scripture
- 3) Literal, grammatical sense unless Scripture itself tells us not to (such as in apocalyptic literature)
- 4) Whole purpose of Scripture - call to repentance, call to faith, call to faithful living in Jesus Christ

Place of Revelation in Canon

It should not surprise us that the early church, when they began to order the books of the New Testament, placed Revelation as the last book of the New Testament and, therefore, of the Bible. It is most likely the last to be written, from a chronological perspective. But more than that, it is also the last *theologically*. Revelation longs for the return of Christ. Hebrews had set us up for this (“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the