

# ***Living Word Fellowship Church***

## **An Expository Explanation of Revelation**

Summary of Chapters 1-13

Pastor Paul Cannings, D.Phil.

### **I. Introduction**

Revelation is written after all the churches were functional over a period of maybe sixty to seventy years. Each church was most likely impacted by an apostle who walked with the Lord, and most of the churches were planted by the apostle who was unusually born, Paul. Before the last apostle died, the apostle John, Christ opened his eyes to see not just what the beginning of the church looked like (since the apostle John started with Christ) but what the ultimate end would be. So, the Bible began with a family, and the Old Testament ends with God's response to a nation who failed Him. A nation that was birthed from the family who descended through Abraham. The New Testament begins with the establishment of churches (the new nation unto God; 1 Peter 2:9-10) and ends with another apostle, a prophet who tells us how we can fail Christ once again. This failure now leads to Christ taking over how God plans to finish all the activities of Satan, who, from the 'tree of good and evil' to his infiltration of the church, finds his end.

### **II. Summary Outline**

A. The Church; a Nation Unto God (1 Peter 2:9-10):

1. The Church of Ephesus:

a) Strengths:

- I. Don't tolerate evil men.
- II. Willingly test false teachers.
- III. Commit to Christ so that their endurance is sure.

b) Weakness:

- I. Left their first love (Matthew 22:36-40).
- II. The church of Ephesus was challenged to love each other right before Revelation was written. Here is what John has to say; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9-10; 3:16-24; 4:1-21.

2. The Church of Smyrna :

a) Strengths:

- I. They are in poverty, but in God's eyes, they are rich (great contrast with those who claim to be rich, Laodicea, but are poor (3:17).
- II. They are constantly under attack by Satan, but they keep the faith.
- III. Their faithfulness provides them with the 'Crown of Life.'

b) Weaknesses:

- I. No weaknesses listed.

3. The Church of Pergamum:

a) Strengths:

- I. Despite Satan's attacks, they did not deny the faith. Pergamum was where Satan had his throne.
- II. Antipas endured persecution and kept the faith so he would be honored.

b) Weaknesses:

- I. They allowed false teachings in the church and did not stop it.
- II. They allowed the church to have immorality and did not address it.

4. The Church of Thyatira

a) Strengths:

- I. Unlike the church of Ephesus, this church had an agape love.
- II. They were committed to service.

III. They were committed to preserving through trials.

b) Weaknesses:

I. They tolerate Jezebel, her teaching, and how she leads people astray and does nothing.

II. Because they tolerate Jezebel, it causes them to allow immorality to run rampant in the church and do not seek to stop it.

5. The Church of Sardis:

a) Strengths:

I. This church had a few people committed to serving God.

b) Weaknesses:

I. This church had an exciting worship service and was the church to come to in Sardis but it was not committed to faithful fulfilling what God charged them to do.

6. The Church of Philadelphia:

a) Strengths:

I. They have kept the Word.

II. Christ says He loves them for their commitment to His Word no matter what they went through.

III. Fundamentally, Christ respects them for holding fast in overwhelming attacks.

b) Weaknesses:

II. Because of their commitment to the Word, no weaknesses are listed.

7. The Church of Laodicea:

a) Strengths:

I. No strengths listed.

b) Weaknesses:

I. Completely dependent on their wealth.

II. Their service is lukewarm.

III. Their shame will be exposed.

B. Christ Establishes Himself on Earth – chapter 4-11:1-10:

1. Chapter 4:

- a) His throne – chapter 4:1-4.
- b) His power, might, and glory that is exposed leads to worship – chapter 4:5-11.

2. Chapter 5:

- a) Christ, the crucified Lamb, presents Himself to open the seals – 5:1-10.
- b) Christ the Lamb is then exalted – 5:11-14:

3. Chapter 6:

- a) Seals 1-6 are broken as the Lamb executes judgement unto the earth.

- I. At the breaking of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, those martyred for the purposes of Christ call out for justice from under the altar. The Lamb tells them that time is coming.

- II. There is an interlude after the 6<sup>th</sup> seal is broken.

4. Chapter 7:

- a) Christ tells four angels to hold until He has cared for those 'bond-servants of our God' who He will seal on their foreheads.

I. The 144,000 Jews.

II. *“A great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands.”* (vs. 9)

5. Chapter 8:

a) The interlude ended in chapter 7, so the 7<sup>th</sup> seal now comes into play.

b) Just like with the other seals where angels were sent out on horses, the 7<sup>th</sup> seal there are angels, but this time they have seven trumpets.

I. Before these seven angels executed their mission on earth, another angel came and worshipped the Lamb.

c) The six of seven angels with the seven trumpets go out across the earth to execute the Lord's justice for all the evil that has taken place and is taking place.

I. The first three judgments were on the earth.

II. The other three were on the people who lived on the earth. No matter how much terror was executed on the earth, mankind was not repentant (9:20-21).

III. We then have another interlude before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet from the 7<sup>th</sup> angel is released.

6. Chapter 10 - interlude:

a) We are told about the 'little book.' We must remember that it is little, meaning God chooses to conceal some of the information the Apostle John is being told, so we do not know everything, but we do know most of what is going to take place.

7. Chapter 11 – interlude continues:

a) Knowing that Satan will come out of the Abyss, the Lamb protects those who have His seal (7:3; 9:4) by placing them in the inner courts of the temple.

b) Two Witnesses come down from heaven to begin punishing those who come to the temple but have no heart for God – 11:3-6.

I. The witnesses are attacked by 'the beast' which came out of the Abyss, Satan empowered beast.

II. 'The beast' wins the war, but after killing them, the witnesses return to life and ascend to heaven.

III. Satan is now introduced, but before he begins his attacks, we learn about the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet.

8. Chapter 11:15-19:

a) The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet led by the 7<sup>th</sup> angel announces the powerful reign of Christ that will last forever. Notice that this is done before Satan starts to reign terror against the church and those upon the earth from chapters 12-13 and then intermittently until chapter 19.

9. Chapter 12:



a) The red dragon attacks the woman, she represents the church. The church remains protected (11:1-6) that the witnesses protected, so now Satan wants to destroy it. He apparently wants to destroy those who protect the church. No matter his attempts on the woman, he cannot destroy her, so he goes to heaven. When he goes to heaven, the following is revealed:

I. He has been accusing us before God day and night (11:10). This is the primary reason Christ sits at the right hand of God.

II. Christ's blood reigns, so even though we are not perfect, our sins are constantly forgiven when we confess them (1 John 1:5-7).

III. Those martyrs for Christ will always be respected and rewarded.

IV. Once Satan is cast down, he will be vengeful and vicious.

## 10. Chapter 13:

a) Because Satan is now cast down from heaven and can no longer access heaven, he decides to rule the earth. He does so with three beasts.

I. The main beast is the dragon. I believe this is the same as the red dragon of chapter 12 who attacked the church (the woman). He controls two other beasts:

- One of the beasts comes out of the sea and rules kingdoms throughout the entire earth.

- This beast, like a leopard, makes war with the saints of God (vs.7). These saints will remain committed to the Lord, which only intensifies the war against them.

- There is another beast that comes out of the earth. His focus is to create a worldwide worship service so that everyone worships the first beast. He will:

- Ø Deceive the earth with signs and wonders.

- Ø He will try to demonstrate he has the power of life.

- Ø He will demand that everyone wear 666, and if they don't, they could not do business.

### **III. Conclusion**

Satan has no power to supersede God's plans. He does everything to destroy God's plans only to become more frustrated, angry, and destructive. Chapter 13 begins with Christ's intervention and slowly processes Christ reestablishing Himself once again without the help of the church. At the same time, He protects the church saved through the Tribulation period. Christ is the Redeemer from Genesis 3:15 to the end of Revelation.