

The essence of the book of Revelation

I have to prepare a lot of presentations throughout my career. I learned that writing a good presentation needs an introduction and a summary in the front. It is very important to draw a big picture early. The content has to be clear and precise. Short precise content can make the audience follow the flow of the material. Finally, a conclusion or final remark is needed to finalize the thoughts. The book of Revelation has a lot of contents, and a lot of deep theoretical matters. Thus, I try to present the book of Revelation in an easily understandable and a condensed form like my typically document/ppt flow.

The book of Revelation was written by apostle John when Christians were entering a time of persecution shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection. The time period is around AD 90 to 95. There are different views in the interpretation of this book such as preterists, historicists, futurists and idealists. However, the fundamental truths of this book do not significantly depend on particular way of interpretation. The major points of this book remain the same.

1) The introduction and summary

- a) Revelation chapter 1 verse 3 can be read as the opening statement, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud 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".
- b) The calling is Rev. 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." God calls each of us to be back with Him.
- c) The theme of this book is to call Christians to stand firm although there are persecutions. God is in control and He will come to destroy Satan. Be faithful and you will be rewarded. There are many plagues described in this book but also there are 7 blessings (Rev. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7 & 22:14). God's followers will be blessed and be with Him in the end times.

2) The essence of the contents

There are different ways to summarize the book. One of the way is to divide the book into events that have happened and still applicable today, and the events that will happen.

- a) The past and present: Messages to the 7 churches.
Chapters 2 and 3 cover the messages to the 7 churches at that time. It described the positives and negatives of those churches. Today, Christians

and churches can also be categorized as the characteristics of those churches. These messages can help us to know our weaknesses and to correct ourselves.

b) The future:

1. The worship in heaven have been described in chapters 4 and 5. The description of the 7 seals starts at chapter 6. The first six seals, which are plagues, are religious deception, war, famine, diseases/calamities, persecution and heavenly signs. Chapter 7 has an inset about God has sealed 144,000.

The 7th seal opens up the 7 trumpets which starts at chapter 8.

2. The major description on the 7 trumpets are in chapters 8 & 9. These 7 plagues contain various destructions on earth. The key point of these plagues is to serve as a warning to the sinners and a call to repent. There is another inset after the 7 trumpets till the end of chapter 14. Note, the insets in Revelation are not in time sequence.

3. The last 7 plagues or called the 7 golden bowls are described in chapters 15 and 16. These plagues are wrath of God. There is another inset in chapters 17 and 18 on Babylon, the false church.

Christians often call the period of the three sets of plagues the 7 years of tribulation.

3) The Conclusion

God's holy people will attend the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). The ending describes the second coming of Christ which is in the later part of chapters 19 and chapter 20. He as the king of kings and lord of lords will conquer Satan and to judge. The resurrected Christians will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:6). Then the new Heaven and new Earth is described in chapter 21. God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them.

4) The Final Remark

The final remarks are stated in Rev. 22:12-21. The final statement is summarized in verse 12 as "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done." The final calling, similar to the initial calling, is in verse 17 as "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

If you have not accepted Jesus as your savior, do it today. If you did, follow Him closely and stand firm in your faith. You will be rewarded.