

**THE SEER, THE SAVIOR,
AND THE SAVED**

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

THE SEER, THE SAVIOR, AND THE SAVED

A NEW

- Commentary
- Workbook
- Teaching Manual

James D. Strauss

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DEDICATION

I live daily by the vicarious efforts of others! I pray God's rich and abiding blessings upon my mother and father, who have graciously and ceaselessly sacrificed that I might continue to obtain an adequate education for the Glory of Christ.

Wayne and Janet Shaw have opened their home and hearts to me. They are stewards par excellence! They have supported me both spiritually and financially. My prayer is that I will be able to finish many literary projects which I have already started, and thus produce concrete results of their unending confidence in me.

There is no way that I can express, in mortal language, my gratefulness to my wife Jewel and our two little Godsend, Joye Lu and Jeanen Kay. They have helped beyond all my capacity to repay or even express. There is only one vindication of the things they have never received, and the time which was theirs that I have taken from them, because of my prolonged schooling, and that is that it will bring much glory to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to declare that I live daily by the vicarious labors of others.

PREFACE

Emphasis in This Study

1. Word and Phrase Study will be emphasized because it is most fruitful for an initial study.
2. We will try to show O.T. source of imagery however, the O.T. does not always help in determining its significance in The Revelation.
3. We shall often take a position which is exegetically possible but not necessary the only position, without going into the critical grounds.
4. We shall take notice of various English translations but the basic text is the R.V. of 1901.
5. Notes and appendices will be provided to make available bibliographical data for further study.
6. Keep constantly in mind that many things cannot be settled about the message and often the imagery of the Book of Revelation even if we were writing a more technical work. We must have epistemological (source of knowledge) humility about many of the secrets of the book which have not yet been yielded up.
7. The Basic Message of the Book is clear, so we will strive not to become lost in minute details.
8. We shall provide an extended annotated bibliography on the Revelation in appendix of this study.
9. To the advanced student of the Word it will be apparent that we have been dependent on the great works of Charles, Swete, Beckwith, *et al.*!

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION

I. *The Title:*

1. The oldest, extant form of the title of this book was *Apocalypse of John*.
2. The Greek word *apokalypsis* has the same meaning as the Latin root from which we get the word *revelation*.
3. The title is singular (*Revelation*) not plural (Revelations).
4. While the title of the book as it stands in our 1901 A.V. translation is *The Revelation of John*, it does not mean that the book is about John, or that origin of the revelation is John. Jesus Christ is both the revealer and the one revealed.

II. *The Revelation and Apocalyptic Literature:*

1. Apocalyptic Literature was a type of literature which contained secret, hidden teaching which was not to be disclosed to the uninitiated - (only those who belonged could know).
2. Liberal scholarship tries to connect *The Revelation* with this very prevalent type of literature. A body of literature came into being and was called *The Apocrypha*. The book of Revelation is certainly in the lineage of this type of non-canonical literature. But the difference lies in the fact that *The Revelation* is in direct lineage with the inspired Apocalyptic Literature of The Old Testament, i.e., the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah respectively. One need not appeal to nonbiblical Apocalyptic Literature in order to account for its unique form and imagery. *The Revelation* is the book of this form in The New Testament. This accounts for the difficulties many find as they begin studying this inspired work for the first time.

III. *The Authorship and the Canon:*

1. The first to refer definitely to the book as from John was the Justin Martyr (c. 140 A.D.).

2. Irenaeus (c. 180 A.D.) assigns the book to the Apostle John repeatedly and without question.--Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was the disciple of the Apostle John.
3. Papias (c. 130 A.D.) is quoted as referring the book to John.
4. It was questioned by the sect of the Alogoi (about 190 A.D.) who assigned it to Cerinthus the Gnostic.
5. Later, Dionysius of Alexandria (250 A.D.) made a study of the language and style and asserted that it could never have been written by the author of the fourth Gospel.
6. Many have suggested that John the Presbyter wrote the book.
7. The Reformers rejected it as not being apostolic.
8. However, we can be sure that the ancient tradition is overwhelmingly in favor of John the Apostle as the Author.
9. The modern negative critical view admits several possibilities of authorship:
 - (a) If the Apostle John wrote the Gospel and Epistles of John, then John the Elder may have written the Apocalypse.
 - (b) If the Elder wrote the Gospel and Epistles, then the Apostle may have written *Revelation*.--Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.*, 1900-1950, p. 98, suggests that he was a Christian prophet of Asia Minor, (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1951).
10. The basis for the modern critical view:
 - (a) The style and vocabulary of *Revelation* is very much like that of the Gospel and epistles.--The Greek is barbarous and ungrammatical (See Charles Volume I, Introductory Section).
 - (b) The ideas and thought of *Revelation* are different from those of the other Johannine writings.
11. Arguments for John the Apostle as author:
 - (a) Godet and Alford contend that the similarities of these writings far outweigh the differences.--Consider *Word*, (19:13); *Lamb* (5:6); *water of life* (22:1).
 - (b) Many of the differences can be explained by the fact that the book is of a different character apocalyptic.

- (c) The so-called defects of style and grammar may well have been the advanced age of John, and the content of what John desired to say.
 - (d) In addition, the claim of Rev. 1:9, that the author was exiled on Patmos, is referred to John the Apostle by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius.
12. Because of the style and grammar of the book, some have suggested an early date such as 68, 69 A.D.—The pre-supposition is that by the time he wrote the Gospel he had learned better Greek.
 13. Others date it at the time of Trajan, 112 A.D.
 14. However, the traditional date places the writing of the book under Domitian (81-96 A.D.)
 - (a) Eusebius says that John was sent to Patmos during the latter part of Domitian's reign.
 - (b) Irenaeus also places the book at the same time as does Clement of Alexandria.
 - (c) It is also declared that John was 90 years of age at the time of the exile. (--Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.*, p. 98.)
 15. These facts give reason for us to date the Apocalypse at 95-96 A.D.:
 - (a) It fits in with the decadence of the churches of that day.
 - (b) It fits Domitian's policy of punishment by exile.
 - (c) It fits the Domitianic type of persecution which grew out of the refusal of the Christians to engage in emperor worship.

IV. *Ways of Interpreting The Revelation:*

- (a) *Preterist*—past - fulfilled largely in destruction of Jerusalem and fall of Roman Empire.
- (b) *Continuous-Historical*—survey of history of the church.
- (c) *Spiritual*—symbolical, figurative; teaches triumph of good over wickedness.
- (d) *Futurist*—Largely predictive of future events - See Thiessen, *Introduction to the N.T.* pp. 323-327; Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan - was a very capable Evangelical Scholar.

Also see the following Words on *Interpretation*: The only extant early commentary on The Revelation available in English was written by Victorinus, Bishop of Patavium, died 303 A.D. This commentary is found in volume seven of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, pp. 344-360.

Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of St. John, Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, New York, 1919. This is the finest commentary produced by American scholarship.

E. E. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*; or, a Commentary on the *Apocalypse, Critical and Historical*, four volumes - 5th rev. edition, London, 1862. He has a 400 page history of the interpretation of The Revelation - indispensible!

William Lee, *The Revelation of St. John*. In The Anglican Commentary - edited by F. C. Cook. N.T., volume 4, New York, 1890. Exhaustive survey of the different interpretations of chapter beginning or a disputed passage beginning with the Fathers.

Frederich Bleek, *Lectures on The Apocalypse*, ed. by T. Hossbach, 1875. Contains excellent 50 page "History of the Use of the Apocalypse in The Church."

1. Introduction, 1:1-8
2. The Patmos vision of Christ, 1:9-20
3. Christ and the churches, chaps. 2, 3
 - (a) Letter to the church in Ephesus, 2:1-7
 - (b) Letter to the church in Smyrna, 2:8-11
 - (c) Letter to the church in Pergamos, 2:12-17
 - (d) Letter to the church in Thyatira, 2:18-29
 - (e) Letter to the church in Sardis, 3:1-6
 - (f) Letter to the church in Philadelphia, 3:7-13
 - (g) Letter to the church in Laodicea, 3:14-22
4. Christ and the Great Tribulation, chaps. 4-19
 - (a) The seven seals, 4:1-8:1
 - (b) The seven trumpets, 8:2-11:18
 - (c) The seven persons, 11:19-14:20
 - (d) The seven bowls of wrath, chaps. 15, 16
 - (e) The fall of Babylon, chaps. 17, 18
 - (f) The second coming of Christ, chp. 19.

5. Christ and the Millennium, chp. 20
 - (a) The binding of Satan, 20:1-3
 - (b) The millennial reign, 20:4-6
 - (c) The loosing and final doom of Satan, 20:7-10
 - (d) The Great White Throne Judgment, 20:11-15
6. Christ and the Eternal State, 21:1-22:5
 - (a) The new heaven and the new earth, 21:1,2
 - (b) The new conditions, 21:2-8
 - (c) The new Jerusalem, 21:9-22:5
7. Conclusion, 22:6-21.

V. *Peculiarities:*

1. This is the last book of the Bible—the consummation of God's revelation and of God's plan of the ages.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>Genesis depicts:</i> Paradise Lost Creation of Heaven and earth Earthly Paradise of God Satan's appearance, sin's beginning The rise of Babylon Man estranged from God 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (b) <i>Revelation depicts:</i> Paradise Regained The new heaven and earth Heavenly paradise Satan punished, sin wiped out The doom of Babylon Man re-united with God
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2. This is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret, and yet it was written to be understood (an unveiling, a revelation).
3. Its place among the apocalyptic books of the Bible
4. The special blessing promised to those who read and obey the book, 1:3.
5. The pattern of sevens which runs throughout the book.
6. The unique letters to the seven churches.

IV. *The Basic Pattern of the Revelation:*

1. The book is mainly made up of 4 series of sevens generally with various parenthetical sections interspersed.
 - (a) The seven churches
 - (b) The seven seals
 - (c) The seven trumpets
 - (d) The seven bowls of wrath
2. The pattern of the presentation of the last three sets of sevens is the same:

Seals Trumpets Bowls of Wrath

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|------------|------------|
| (a) The first six units | Ch.6 | 8:2-9:21 | 15:1-16:12 |
| (b) The paranthesis | Ch.6 | 10:1-11:14 | 16:13-16 |
| (c) The seventh unit | 8:1 | 11:15-18 | 16:17-21 |

3. The use of the O.T. in the Book of the Revelation.

- (a) Various reckonings of the number of O.T. references in Revelation have been given.
- (1) Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.* op. cit. p. 97, says the Apocalypse has over 500 references to the O.T.
- (2) Swete is referred to by Toy, *Quotations in the N.T.* as saying that the 404 verses of the Apocalypse contain 278 O.T. references.
- (3) Merrill Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957. See excellent chapter XI, The O.T. Background of Revelation, pp. 101-116.
- (4) Westcott and Hort', *Greek New Testament* gives over 500 references and allusions to O.T. in The Revelation.
- (5) Wm. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Baker Book House, 1952, chap. 6, pp. 57-73.

VII. *The Nature of the Book:*

1. A book of symbols, 1:1

- (a) This is implied by the word "signified"—to show by signs (1:1).
- (b) These visions and symbols are given, not to show how these things look, but to teach certain truths concerning the person or event depicted.—Not that we are to imagine Christ standing encircled by literal candlesticks, but we are to see the truth that He is in the midst of the churches.
- (c) Ezekiel and Zechariah likewise contain this apocalyptic characteristic.

2. A book of prophecy, 1:3

- (a) John is a prophet following the tradition of the O.T.
- (b) We must go back to the O.T. prophetic books in order to fully understand the symbols of the book—Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Revelation.