

Revelation Class
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Week 1: Introduction to Revelation & the Four Views

What can I do in preparation for the class?

- Familiarize yourself with the terminology and vocabulary.
- Read and reread the chapters ahead of time.
- Write down questions ahead of time pertaining to that week's content.
- If you're really ambitious choose a book recommendation and read it while taking the class.

What is Dispensational Theology and why is it important to the interpretation of Revelation?

What is Covenant Theology and why is it important to the interpretation of Revelation?

Detailed Summary of Each View of Revelation

Historicist View

- **Proponent:** Various (e.g., Martin Luther, John Calvin).
- **Core Principles:** Revelation outlines the continuous unfolding of church history from the apostolic era to the second coming of Christ, with prophecies corresponding to major historical events, periods of persecution, and the rise/fall of empires (e.g., seals, trumpets, and vials as historical sequences).
- **Dating of Revelation:** AD 90s (post-AD 70).
- **Timing of Events:** Progressive throughout church history (past, present, ongoing to future).
- **Great Tribulation:** Various historical periods of persecution (e.g., under papal Rome or other empires).
- **Millennium (Rev. 20):** Often symbolic of the church age or a long period leading to Christ's return; can be amillennial or postmillennial in some variants.
- **Hermeneutic Approach:** Historical-progressive, with symbols representing real historical events and eras.

Preterist (past) View

- **Proponent:** Kenneth L. Gentry Jr.
- **Core Principles:** Understands the events of Revelation in large part to have been fulfilled in the first centuries of the Christian era—either at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (under Nero) or at both the falls of Jerusalem in the first century and of Rome in the fifth century. In effect the book was written to comfort Christians, who suffered persecution from both the imperial cult and Judaism. Emphasizes historical context and "soon" language (e.g., Rev. 1:1).
- **Dating of Revelation:** AD 54–68 (pre-AD 70).
- **Timing of Events:** Primarily past (1st & 5th century fulfillment).
- **Great Tribulation:** Fulfilled in AD 70 siege of Jerusalem.
- **Millennium (Rev. 20):** Symbolic of church age or spiritual reign.
- **Hermeneutic Approach:** Historical-literal, with symbols tied to 1st-century events.

Idealist View

- **Proponent:** Sam Hamstra Jr.
- **Core Principles:** Revelation uses symbols to depict timeless spiritual truths about the continuous struggle between good and evil, God and Satan. Not tied to specific historical events, applicable to all eras of the church. Includes some future elements like Christ's return.
- **Dating of Revelation:** Not central (timeless).
- **Timing of Events:** Timeless/archetypal (ongoing spiritual realities).
- **Great Tribulation:** Symbolic of ongoing persecution.
- **Millennium (Rev. 20):** Symbolic of spiritual victory over evil, leans amillennial.
- **Hermeneutic Approach:** Symbolic/allegorical, multivalent symbols.

Classical Dispensationalist View

- **Proponent:** Robert L. Thomas, John Nelson Darby, C. I. Scofield, Tim LaHaye
- **Core Principles:** Strict literal interpretation of future events, with Revelation (chs. 4–22) prophesying end-times judgments, Tribulation, and Christ's return. Distinguishes eras of history (dispensations). Distinct differences between the prophecies made about Israel in the OT and the church in the NT must be maintained (two people of God). Critiques other views for inconsistent hermeneutics. Premillennial and futurist. Believe in pretribulation rapture.
- **Dating of Revelation:** AD 90s (post-AD 70).
- **Timing of Events:** Primarily future (end times).
- **Great Tribulation:** Literal future 7-year period.
- **Millennium (Rev. 20):** Literal future 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ.
- **Hermeneutic Approach:** Grammatical-historical-literal, minimal symbolism unless explained, already/not yet interpretation.

Progressive (Modified) Dispensationalist View

- **Proponent:** C. Marvin Pate.
- **Core Principles:** Emphasizes "already/not yet" tension: The former witnessed the inauguration of the kingdom of God, while the latter will result in its full realization. Some prophecies fulfilled in Christ's first coming, others await future fulfillment. Blends apocalyptic, prophetic, and epistolary genres; sees Israel and the church as united in faith under the New Covenant (one people of God). Premillennial.
- **Dating of Revelation:** AD 90s (post-AD 70).
- **Timing of Events:** Mix of past, present, and future.
- **Great Tribulation:** Partially fulfilled in 1st century, but ultimate future event.
- **Millennium (Rev. 20):** "Already" in heaven post-resurrection; "not yet" on earth (future literal 1,000-year reign).
- **Hermeneutic Approach:** Literal with symbolic elements, "already/not yet" eschatology.

Which view has dominated the masses? _____

Which view has dominated biblical scholars? _____

Any theology that does not live with a sense of the immediate return of Christ is a theology that takes the edge off the urgency of faith. But any theology that does not cause us to live as though the world will be here for thousands of years is a theology that leads us into social irresponsibility.

~ Tony Campolo

Next Week: Revelation 1 – The Vision of the Risen Christ

WEEK-BY-WEEK SYLLABUS SUMMARY

Week 1: Introduction to Revelation & the Four Views

Week 2: Revelation 1 – The Vision of the Risen Christ

Week 3: Revelation 2 – Letters to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum

Week 4: Revelation 3 – Letters to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

Week 5: Revelation 4 – Throne Room of Heaven

Week 6: Revelation 5 – The Lamb and the Scroll

Week 7: Revelation 6 – The Six Seals

Week 8: Revelation 7 – The Sealed Saints & Great Multitude

Week 9: Revelation 8-9 – The Trumpet Judgments

Week 10: Revelation 10-11 – The Little Scroll & Two Witnesses

Week 11: Revelation 12-13 – Woman, Dragon, Beasts

Week 12: Revelation 14-16 – Harvest & Bowl Judgments

Week 13: Revelation 17-18 – Fall of Babylon

Week 14: Revelation 19 – Return of Christ

Week 15: Revelation 20 – Millennium & Final Judgment

Week 16: Revelation 21-22 – New Heavens, New Earth; Final Review

The Seven Dispensations of Dispensational Theology

#	Dispensation	Time Period	Key Responsibility	Human Failure	Judgment	Key Scriptures
1	Innocence	Creation → Fall	Obey God; do not eat from the tree	Disobedience (Fall)	Expulsion from Eden; death	Gen. 1–3
2	Conscience	Fall → Flood	Live according to conscience	Widespread wickedness	The Flood	Gen. 4–8
3	Human Government	Flood → Babel	Govern justly; protect life	Pride and rebellion	Confusion of languages	Gen. 9–11
4	Promise	Abraham → Sinai	Trust God's promises	Bondage in Egypt	Enslavement	Gen. 12–Exod. 19
5	Law	Sinai → Cross	Obey Mosaic Law	Persistent disobedience; reject Messiah	Exile & judgment	Exod. 20; Gal. 3
6	Grace (Church Age)	Pentecost → Rapture	Believe in Christ; walk by faith	Apostasy & unbelief	Great Tribulation	Acts 2; Eph. 2:8–9
7	Kingdom	Second Coming → Eternal State	Obey Christ the King	Final rebellion	Final judgment	Rev. 20–22

Memory Aid: I – C – G – P – L – G – K

Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law, Grace, Kingdom

“To administer the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:10)

Covenant Theology – One Page Overview Chart

Covenant	Participants	Key Promise / Purpose	Scripture References	Fulfillment in Christ
Covenant of Redemption	Father, Son, Spirit	Plan of salvation established before creation	Eph. 1:4–11; John 6:37–40	Christ appointed Redeemer of God's people

Covenant	Participants	Key Promise / Purpose	Scripture References	Fulfillment in Christ
Covenant of Works	God & Adam (humanity's head)	Life through perfect obedience	Gen. 2:16–17; Rom. 5:12–19	Fulfilled by Christ's perfect obedience
Covenant of Grace	God & redeemed humanity	Salvation by grace through faith	Gen. 3:15; Eph. 2:8–9	Fully realized in Christ
Adamic Covenant	God & humanity	Promise of redemption after the Fall	Gen. 3:15	Christ as the promised Seed
Noahic Covenant	God & creation	Preservation of the world	Gen. 9:8–17	Stability for redemptive history
Abrahamic Covenant	God & Abraham	Seed, land, blessing to nations	Gen. 12:1–3; Gal. 3:16	Christ is the true Seed
Mosaic Covenant	God & Israel	Law reveals sin; guides God's people	Exod. 19–24; Gal. 3:24	Christ fulfills the Law
Davidic Covenant	God & David	Eternal King on David's throne	2 Sam. 7:12–16	Christ the eternal King
New Covenant	God & His people	Forgiveness, new heart, Spirit	Jer. 31:31–34; Luke 22:20	Instituted by Christ's blood

Key Covenant Theology Truths

- **One unified plan of redemption** centered in Christ
- **One people of God** across both Testaments
- Biblical covenants are **administrations of the Covenant of Grace**
- Christ fulfills every covenant promise (2 Cor. 1:20)

“This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” — Luke 22:20

Theological Framework for Eschatology

CATEGORY	DISPENSATIONALISM	PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM	COVENANT THEOLOGY
Hermeneutic	Literal	Literal + Progressive	Typological

CATEGORY	DISPENSATIONALISM	PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM	COVENANT THEOLOGY
Israel & Church	Separate	Distinct but related	One people
OT Promises	Future literal	Already/Not Yet	Fulfilled in Church
Kingdom	Future earthly	Present & future	Present (spiritual)
Millennium	Premillennial	Premillennial	Amill/Post
Rapture	Pre-trib	Various views	Usually not taught

Classic Dispensationalism:

God has distinct administrations; Israel and Church are separate.

- **Literal-grammatical interpretation** of Scripture (especially prophecy)
- **Strong distinction between Israel and the Church**
- God has **separate programs** for Israel and the Church
- Old Testament promises to Israel will be **literally fulfilled** in a future earthly kingdom
- The **Church Age** is a “mystery” not revealed in the OT (Eph. 3)
- Emphasis on a **pre-tribulation rapture**
- **Millennial kingdom** is literal and earthly (Rev. 20)

Progressive Dispensationalism:

Same framework, but more continuity and Christ-centered fulfillment.

- Still uses **literal-grammatical-historical interpretation**
- **Israel and the Church are distinct but related**
- Some OT promises are **already partially fulfilled** in Christ
- The **Davidic Kingdom** is inaugurated but not consummated
- The Church participates now in spiritual blessings promised to Israel
- Future national restoration of Israel is still affirmed
- Generally premillennial (rapture timing varies)

Covenant Theology:

One unified redemptive plan; Church fulfills Israel’s promises.

- **One people of God** (Israel and the Church unified)
- OT promises are **fulfilled in Christ and the Church**
- Heavy emphasis on **typology and fulfillment**
- The Church is the **true Israel**
- Generally **amillennial or postmillennial**
- Sacraments (baptism & Lord’s Supper) replace OT signs

I. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGICAL TERMS

Eschatology – The study of “last things”: death, judgment, resurrection, heaven, hell, and the consummation of God’s kingdom.

Last Days / Latter Days – The period inaugurated by Christ’s first coming and culminating in His return (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2).

End of the Age – The conclusion of the present world order before the final judgment (Matt. 24:3).

Consummation – The final fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan.

Already / Not Yet – The tension that God’s kingdom is present now but not fully realized until Christ’s return.

II. KINGDOM OF GOD TERMS

Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven – God’s sovereign rule; present spiritually now and fully realized in the future.

Messianic Kingdom – The reign of the Messiah, fulfilled in stages through Christ.

Davidic Kingdom – God’s promise that David’s throne would be eternal (2 Sam. 7).

Theocratic Kingdom – God ruling directly over His people.

III. CHRIST’S RETURN

Second Coming (Parousia) – The visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ in glory.

Parousia – Greek term meaning “presence” or “arrival,” used of Christ’s return.

Appearing (Epiphaneia) – Christ’s glorious manifestation at His return.

Revelation (Apokalypsis) – The unveiling of Jesus Christ in glory.

Day of the Lord – A time of divine judgment and salvation, often associated with the end times.

IV. RESURRECTION & JUDGMENT

Resurrection – The bodily raising of the dead.

First Resurrection – Interpreted variously: either spiritual regeneration or bodily resurrection of believers (Rev. 20:4–6).

Second Resurrection – The resurrection of unbelievers unto judgment.

General Resurrection – The resurrection of all humanity.

Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat) – Judgment of believers for rewards, not salvation (2 Cor. 5:10).

Great White Throne Judgment – Final judgment of the wicked (Rev. 20:11–15).

Books – Records of deeds.

Book of Life – Record of those who belong to God.

V. TRIBULATION & END-TIME SUFFERING

Tribulation – Severe distress preceding Christ’s return.

Great Tribulation – An intense period of suffering associated with the end times (Matt. 24:21).

Time of Jacob’s Trouble – A period of distress for Israel (Jer. 30:7).

Birth Pangs – Increasing signs pointing to the end (Matt. 24:8).

VI. RAPTURE TERMS (INTERPRETIVE CATEGORY)

Rapture – The catching up of believers to meet Christ (1 Thess. 4:17).

Harpazo – Greek word meaning “to seize or snatch away.”

Pre-Tribulation Rapture – Believers taken before the Tribulation.

Mid-Tribulation Rapture – Believers taken in the middle of the Tribulation.

Post-Tribulation Rapture – Believers taken at Christ’s return after the Tribulation.

VII. MILLENNIAL VIEWS

Millennium – The “thousand-year” reign mentioned in Revelation 20.

Premillennialism – Christ returns before the Millennium.

Historic Premillennialism – Church goes through tribulation; Christ returns to reign.

Dispensational Premillennialism – Distinction between Israel and the Church; often includes pre-tribulation rapture.

Amillennialism – Millennium is symbolic of Christ’s present reign.

Postmillennialism (two types, liberal and biblical) – Christ returns after a golden age of gospel success.

There are two types, liberal and biblical. The liberal is associated with the “social gospel” in an attempt to cleanse mankind of social evils like poverty, racism, disease, war, and injustice. The biblical view is rooted in optimism concerning the future triumph of the gospel.

VIII. ISRAEL & THE NATIONS

Remnant – Faithful believers preserved by God.

Zion – Jerusalem; symbol of God’s people and kingdom.

IX. SATANIC & ANTAGONISTIC FIGURES

Antichrist / Antichrists – Those opposing Christ (1 John 2:18).

Man of Lawlessness – Satan-empowered figure opposing God (2 Thess. 2).

Babylon – Symbol of worldly, idolatrous systems opposed to God.

Mystery of Lawlessness – Ongoing rebellion against God.

X. FINAL STATES

New Heavens and New Earth – Renewed creation where righteousness dwells (Rev. 21–22).

Eternal Life – Everlasting fellowship with God.

Second Death – Eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:14).

Lake of Fire – Final place of judgment for Satan and the wicked.

Heaven – Eternal dwelling place of God's people.

Hell (Gehenna) – Place of final punishment.

XI. INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORKS

Hermeneutic – Art and science of biblical interpretation.

Dispensational Theology – Interpretive system that views God's works through distinct economies or dispensations (aka historical eras or epochs), during which God administers His will and relates to humanity in different ways, often emphasizing a literal reading of prophecy, a clear distinction between Israel and the Church, and premillennial eschatology.

Covenant Theology – Interpretive system that views the Bible's overarching narrative through the structure of God's covenants with humanity—primarily the covenant of works (pre-Fall obedience) and the covenant of grace (post-Fall redemption through Christ)—stressing continuity between the Old and New Testaments, with the Church seen as the spiritual continuation of Israel.

Futurism – Most of Revelation refers to future events.

Preterism – Many prophecies fulfilled in the first century.

Historicism – Revelation unfolds throughout church history.

Idealism – Revelation portrays timeless spiritual realities.

XII. HOPE & ASSURANCE TERMS

Blessed Hope – The return of Christ (Titus 2:13).

Perseverance of the Saints – Believers endure to the end.

Watchfulness – Living in readiness for Christ's return.

Glorification – Final transformation of believers into Christlikeness.

Temple Areas & Furniture (Biblical Description)

AREA	FURNITURE / FEATURE	LOCATION	PURPOSE	KEY SCRIPTURES
Outer Court	Bronze Altar (Burnt Offering)	Center of court	Sacrifice for sin; atonement	Exod. 27:1–8; Lev. 1

	Bronze Laver / Bronze Sea	Between altar & sanctuary	Priestly washing; cleansing	Exod. 30:17–21
Holy Place	Table of Showbread	North side	God’s provision; 12 tribes	Exod. 25:23–30
	Golden Lampstand (Menorah)	South side	Light; illumination	Exod. 25:31–40
	Altar of Incense	Before the veil	Prayer & intercession	Exod. 30:1–10
Veil	Inner Veil	Entrance to Holy of Holies	Separation due to holiness	Exod. 26:31–33
Most Holy Place	Ark of the Covenant	Center	God’s throne; covenant	Exod. 25:10–22
	Mercy Seat (Atonement Cover)	On the Ark	Atonement by blood	Lev. 16:14–15

Ark Contents

- Tablets of the Law (Exod. 25:16)
 - Aaron’s Rod (Num. 17:10)
 - Jar of Manna (Exod. 16:33)

CONTEXT	TEMPLE TYPE	PURPOSE
Rev. 4–10, 15	Heavenly Temple	True dwelling place of God
Rev. 1–3	Temple imagery	Church as lampstands
Rev. 11	Earthly Temple (future or symbolic)	Preservation & witness
Rev. 21–22	No Temple	God dwells fully with His people

Revelation 21:22

“I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

Revelation does not replace the Jewish temple—it *completes* it.

- Earthly temple = **shadow**
- Heavenly temple = **reality**
- Eternal state = **God Himself**