

Reflections from Revelation_Episode 6_ A Divine Outline | Rev 1:19 (J Hampton Keathley III)

J Hampton Keathley III says, "God does not intend for the truth of this book to be sealed to man. He intended the church to study and understand the message of Revelation."

"I suppose there is no book in the New Testament which has been as neglected and as controversial as this book, at least in some quarters. Some suggest that revelation is impossible to interpret. Others claim it should not even be in the New Testament much less studied and read."

As part of the New Testament Canon the book of **Revelation should be studied**, even though it may be hard book to interpret because it is full of visions.

Some divide the contents of the book around four key visions:

1. The vision of the Son of man among the seven churches (**Rev 1-3**)
2. The vision of the seven sealed scroll, the seven trumpets, the seven signs, and the seven bowls (**Rev 4:1-19:10**)
3. The vision of the return of Christ and the consummation of the age (**Rev 19:11;20:15**)
4. The vision of the new heaven and new earth (**Rev 21-22**) (JHK)

These visions at times are hard to understand and must be interpreted to apply to our lives.

- We must humbly pray and ask God for help to understand the interpretations as we study "One's method of interpretation is crucial to a correct interpretation of Scripture because without a correct method, the Bible becomes putty in the hands of the interpreter." (JHK)

Revelation 1:19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

Donald Barnhouse said, "The key that will unlock many doors in the book of revelation is this 19th verse of the first chapter."

Chuck Smith says about this verse: "The key to the book of revelation is found here."

Revelation 1:19 provides us with a 'Divine Outline' to guide us through our study of Revelation

The book of Revelation is arranged in this three-part structure:

1. The things which you have seen-**Rev 1**
2. The things that which are-**Rev 2-3**.
3. The things which will take place after this- **Rev 4-22**

"From one point of view, this is the most important verse in the book, since the failure to recognize its announcement of three divisions will bring confusion in the interpretation of many other visions that follow."

Donald Barnhouse

"To my knowledge, the Book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that contains an inspired outline of the contents." Warren Wiersbe

Principle of scripture interpreting scripture:

- Compare other scripture throughout the whole biblical text
- **Example:Rev 1:20** interprets what John saw in **verses 12 and 16** (seven stars and lampstands)
- Interpret Revelation by other keys verses

Hermeneutics - a method or theory of interpretation

"Hermeneutics is called a science because it follows rules that guide and control the interpreter. It is called an art because it requires skill and practice to apply the rules correctly as in any skill." (JHK)

- We must continue to apply these biblical rules and interpretations throughout the book
- It may be hard to put all the pieces together but all the pieces are needed

"No other new testament book poses more serious and difficult interpretive challenges than Revelation. The books vivid imagery and striking symbolism have produced four main interpretive approaches." John MacArthur

Four main interpretive approaches:

1. Preterist Approach

- From the Latin word “praeter” meaning “past”
- States that everything in the book of revelation took place in the first century (during Roman Empire)
- Full Preterist and partial Preterist
 - Full Preterists take all the predictions in Revelation as referring to the past having been fulfilled between 64 A.D and 70 under Nero’s reign, including the resurrection of believers and the second coming of Christ.
 - Partial preterists believed that only the predictions about the tribulation in chapters 6-18 have been fulfilled and not yet fulfilled is the resurrection of believers and the second coming of Christ.
 - The idea is that John is dealing with the war between the church and Rome. He wrote the Saints to comfort and encourage them in their time of persecution.

Argument to the Preterist approach:

- John state seven times that he is writing prophecy
- “It is impossible to see all the events in Revelation as already fulfilled. The second coming of Christ, for example, obviously did not take place in the first century.” John MacArthur
- Warren Wiersbe says, “Certainly the book had a special value to those enduring Roman persecution, but it’s value did not cease with the close of the Apostolic Age.”

2. Historical Approach:

- Views the fulfillment of church history as seen in the symbols of Revelation
- Revelation viewed as outlining the course of history with the prophetic program covering the whole of history from apostolic times to the end of the age
- In this theory the book is unfolding itself all throughout the present age

Argument to the Historical approach:

- Searching history to find events that parallel those in Revelation can result in crazy predictions and interpretations
- John MacArthur says “This interpretive method robs Revelation of any meaning for those to whom it was written.”

3. Spiritual Approach (idealist or allegorical)

- Abandons the idea of prophecy completely and uses Revelation as a symbolic presentation of the conflict between Christ and Satan
- Rejects the idea that John writes about actual events instead claiming that he is dealing only with basic spiritual principles.
- Views the book as containing no historical allusions or predictive prophecy
- Views the predictions in Revelation as allegorical and symbolic of the ageless struggle between good and evil

Argument to the Spiritual approach:

- John tells us he is writing prophecy.
- Though many spiritual principles are presented in symbolic form, Revelation deals with real events that will one day take place
- In this view Revelation becomes merely a collection of stories designed to teach spiritual truth and does not have a prophetic voice

Norman Geisler says “If this view is correct, the second coming and resurrection must also be allegorical, which is heresy. If other sections of the Bible (like Christ’s death and resurrection) are allegorized, it undermines our salvation.”

(Rev1:4) “To the seven churches in Asia.” “The whole book is addressed to seven historical churches in the providence of Asia minor. This fact should prevent anyone from saying that Revelation is nothing more than a piece of poetic idealism.” j Hampton Keathley

4. Futurist approach

- Emphasizes that Revelation is prophecy
- Views **Rev 4-22** as a scenario of events that will transpire on earth and in heaven
- Recognizes the prophecies of John as future (**Revelation 1;19**) and literal
- The book's symbols and figures of speech are used to convey this literal meaning.

Warren Wiersbe says, "If Revelation is not to be interpreted as prophecy, then God has not given the church a book in the New Testament to explain the future of the world, the course of events, the victory of the church, the judgment of sin, and the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies found in the Old Testament. This is unthinkable."

Norma Geisler says "Revelation is the most prophetic of all new testament books. John calls himself a prophet (**Revelation 22:9**) and refers to this book as a prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19)"

"There are several reasons for the futuristic approach. The prophecies found in this book have simply not taken place. There is nothing in history that comes close to the events of the majority of the book. For instance; no judgments in history have ever equaled those depicted in chapter 6, 8, 9, and 16, but in these chapters, these judgments are presented as things that will occur. The resurrection and judgment of chapter 20 have not occurred, but are clearly presented as future facts. Obviously, the great anticipation of the book, Christ's visible return as portrayed in chapter 20 has also not taken place. -j Hampton Keathley

Our study will look at Revelation as prophecy and having a Futuristic Approach

Rev 22:7 says "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

John Wolvard says, "This outline harmonize beautifully with the concept that most of Revelation (beginning in chapter 4) is future, not historic or merely symbolic, or simply statements of principles."

The Divine Outline

3 sequential stages: (Rev 1:9)

1. Future time of tribulation lasting seven years which corresponds to Daniel's 70th week (**Dan 9:26-27**) in the time of Jacob's trouble (**Jer 30:7**) in **Revelation 6-18**.
2. Tribulation period ends and Messiah's 1000 year kingdom on earth is established with the second coming of Christ in **Revelation 19:1-20:6**.
3. Transition from time to eternity, from the millennial to eternity future with final judgment of Satan and all unbelievers throughout time, followed by the inauguration of the new heaven and new earth in **Revelation 20:7-22:21**. (John MacArthur)

"Revelation outlines God's program for human history. What began ages ago in the first century will ultimately be completed in the new creation". Warren Wiersbe

Remember what the book of Revelation is all about: The Majesty of Jesus! King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering evil, Restoring and Redeeming

"Good and godly students differ on the meaning of the details of the book. Four broad interpretations have been suggested" -Warren Weirsbe

Responding to Differing Approaches to Revelation:

- **Walk In Love- ROM 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.**
 - People that have a different approach deserve our love and respect
 - They are NOT STUPID or IGNORANT
 - They are our brothers and sisters
 - Many of them have taken time to study many hours over these things
 - A different approach doesn't mean they don't value the bible or that they don't love Jesus

“Which of the four, then, really interpret the book? Impressive names are associated with each. We will give our own view, frankly and briefly; but let not our frankness be mistaken as dogmatism or disrespect.” J Sidlow Baxter

- **It is ok to have different interpretations...because in the end we all believe Jesus is returning!**

Don't let these hard details of interpretation (conflict) cause you not to study this book

Some passages of scripture and areas of doctrine are more difficult and hard to be dogmatic on, but this does not mean that we are beyond our grasp or that we should ignore them. -j Hampton Keathley

2 Tim 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

“Specific knowledge in anticipation of God’s future program is an incentive to holy living and commitment to Christ.” John Wolvard

- If you don't agree with this interpretation allow this time to learn one view
- We will still be looking to Jesus through our study and you will get to see His Character through our time
- Walk in humility and love and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us more about Jesus.

Psalm 86:11 Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.

Our goal in this study is to worship the Lord Jesus as we learn more about His Majesty so as we study God's Word together let's make the focus Him and not our interpretations.