

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation: Introduction | Session 1 | Notes

1. Is the Church in the Book of Revelation?

Many people do it, but please don't be one of them. Don't try and find the church in the book of Revelation. To be fair, the word church or churches is mentioned 20 times in 19 verses in the book. So, in theory the church *is* in the book of Revelation. But what church is it talking about?

The word *church* is always translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*¹ which technically means a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place—it means, ***an assembly***. Whenever you and I use the word *church* we have to define what it is we mean. In several places in the New Testament, the apostle Paul gives the *Church as we know it today* a specific name: He calls it, and us, ***The Body of Christ*** (Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 12:27; Ephesians 4:12). The ***Body of Christ***, therefore is the *ekklesia* (assembly) of believers in Jesus Christ which we belong to and who have accepted the gift of everlasting life and are *saved by grace through faith* (Ephesians 2:8,9). This *Body* that we are a part of is distinct and different from all the other assemblies.

Unfortunately, it has been programmed into us by well-meaning pastors, educators, theologians, books and commentaries that the Body of Christ, as we understand it is everywhere in the New Testament (there are 114 uses of the word church or churches in the NT). Even when a passage doesn't use the word church so many people insert into into the book of Revelation, and what they mean is the Body of Christ. Here are a few examples you may not understand now, but will later when we get to the appropriate passage:

- The **four and twenty elders** in chapters 4 and 5 are said to be *the Body of Christ*.
- The **144,000** in chapter 7 are said to be *the Body of Christ*.
- The **great multitude** in 7:9 is *the Body of Christ*.
- The **woman clothed with the sun** in chapter 12:1 is *the Body of Christ*.
- The **wife** is *the Body of Christ* in chapter 19:7.
- The **New Jerusalem** in chapter 21 is *the Body of Christ*.
- The **“seven churches”** are *the Body of Christ*.

We will see these inferences to the Body of Christ are all incorrect. For the sake of these study notes and to alleviate confusion, when I'm talking about *the church you and I belong to*, I am going to refer to it as the **BOC** (Body of Christ). The BOC has been *read into* (eisegesis) the book

¹ Except in one instance (Acts 19:35) where the KJV translators, for some reason translated the Greek word, *hierosulos*, which is from a root word that means *a sacred place* and has no relation to any form of the way we understand *Church* today.

of Revelation and the result is complete confusion causing people to give up reading it, and the book to be neglected.

In the New Testament, the word Church rarely means Body of Christ. The twenty times the word church is used in the book of Revelation, I will argue through this study, it never means, *the BOC*. And it is not referring to “Us”. Rather, I will propose that the church/churches in Revelation always refer to *Jewish assemblies*.

The BOC is not the subject of the Revelation. Why is that? The BOC will have been raptured during the events of the Revelation. If we make that assumption from the beginning, that the BOC is not in Revelation, and test it all the way through, I think we will discover the book will make much more sense.

2. The Title of the Book.

It is not ***The Revelation of St. John the Divine*** as the KJV titles the book; that is man’s title for it. Some translations call it simply ***Revelation*** or ***The Revelation to John***. I think there are at least sixteen different titles for the book in as many translations, but Scripture is inspired by God and in the text itself we see the actual God-given title: ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ***. The Greek word for revelation is *apokalupsis*, which is why the title of ***The Apocalypse*** is also sometimes given to the book. In its verb form the word apocalypse means ***to unveil*** (*apo*=away from; *kalumma*=a veil). Apocalypse means ***to take away the veil***. We might use the word *reveal*, like parents who often go to great extremes to reveal (unveil) if they are having a boy or a girl (by the way, those are the only two choices). In the case of this book, it is the **unveiling or the visible manifestation of a person, Jesus Christ**. But unlike when Jesus manifested himself in the Gospels, in the Revelation he will appear in *power, and in glory; and for judgment of the earth*.

It is not a book of numerous Revelations, but one ***Revelation***. Therefore, when we refer to the book, to be accurate and to keep it short we can call it **The Revelation**.

3. Revelation is a Complement of Genesis.

There are no less than 285 references to the Old Testament which gives the book a close connection with Israel. With so many OT references it is undoubtedly written about the people of the Old Testament who are the subjects of its history. And with so many OT allusions and references the Jewish mind may grasp it much easier than Gentile Christians who do not have an OT background. For anyone wanting to understand the Revelation, the Jewishness of the book has to be taken into account if we ever hope to understand it.

It complements the first book of the Bible, Genesis.

- Genesis is the book of the Beginning; Revelation is the book of the End.
- Genesis records the first Creation; Revelation the New Creation.
- Genesis describes the curse which came upon the earth; Revelation tells how the curse will be removed.
- Genesis shows Satan's first revolt; Revelation documents his final revolt.

The parallels go on and on; The Earth created, the Earth passed away; The Sun to govern the day, no need for the Sun; Entrance of sin, the end of sin; Man driven from the garden, man restored; Tree of life guarded, right to the Tree of Life granted; Sorrow and suffering, no more sorrow; etc., etc.,

The Body of Christ is not in Genesis, the Body of Christ is not in The Revelation. To even look for the Body of Christ in The Revelation is in my opinion to pervert the literal understanding of the book.

4. A Simple Outline of The Revelation.

A primary reason people don't read or even try to understand The Revelation is because it seems so complicated. I think it is man who has made it that way. In reality, the book (inspired by the Holy Spirit) is quite simple. Here is an outline in its simplest form:

Chapter 1 – Introduction.

Chapters 2, 3 – The people on the Earth.

Chapters 4:1 – 20:15 – Visions (This contains seven parts).

Chapters 21:1 – 22:5 – The people on the New Earth.

Chapters 22:6-21 – Conclusion.

There are a lot of details between those lines, especially in the chapters on *Visions*, but if you think of the book like this it will help you see that the plan of The Revelation is straight forward!

Chapter 1, Verse 1—

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, is the divine title of the book as we have already seen. The Greek word is *apokalupsis*; unveiling, revelation, manifestation. When used of a person it always denotes that he is visible (1 Corinthians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is taking the *veil* of the future and lifting it for us to see. Because of that we are going to take this book literally; for why would God unveil something and then have us have to guess as to what it means? Whenever Jesus meant to hide something, he would speak in parables. This book is an *unhiding* so to speak.

Which God gave him, God who is on His throne is revealing the future to us through Jesus Christ, and as we will see judgment is about to be executed.

To show His servants, these are not Christians in the Body of Christ, but those of Israel. The term servant is not used of those in the Body of Christ in Paul's epistles (letters). In fact, Paul says, in Galatians 4:7, "*Wherefore thou (each individual in the Body of Christ) art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*" And, while we can argue that Christians are certainly servants of Christ, it is not our title as to our standing in Christ before God. Sons can be servants, but servants are not sons.

Things which must shortly come to pass, this was written 1,900 years ago and they have not come to pass. The Greek word for **shortly** is *tachos*, it is a *speed* word, not a *time* word. We get our English word *tachometer* which reveals the RPM (rotations per minute) of the shaft or disk in a motor. This verse tells us that when these events of The Revelation take place, they will occur with speed! Romans 9:28 says, "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the Earth." Business as usual will not continue forever, God will accomplish His plan and do it quickly.

And sent and signified, "Sent" is in the verb for: *apostello: Having sent*. We are familiar with the noun form *apostle: One who is sent*. We shouldn't look at the Revelation as a bunch of signs and symbols no one can understand. Most of the signs in the book are Divinely explained (e.g. 1:16, 20).

By His angel unto His servant John, Like Abraham, Moses, Paul, and others, John was selected by God for this special message to his fellow-servants.