

For Further Reference

This presentation:

- www.gettysburgseminary.org/mhoffman

For a Bible study on Revelation

- www.CrossMarks.com

For an interesting online presentation

- www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

What is an Apocalypse?

- A type of Caribbean style music
- What happens when the moon blocks the sun's light
- Transliterates a Greek word meaning uncovering or revealing

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

What is the title of this book we are studying?

- Revelation ... or Revelations?
- Apocalypse
- Apocalypse of John
- Apocalypse of Jesus Christ

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

Which of the following figures have *not* been associated with the number of the "beast," 666 of Revelation 13.17-18 ?

- Ronald Wilson Reagan **6 letters in each name**
- Bill Gates **Jack Van Impe and computers**
- Mikhail Gorbachev **'Peacemaker' with birthmark**
- The Roman political system **I(1)+V(5)+X(10)+L(50)+C(100)+D(500)**
- John F. Kennedy **666 votes and head wound**
- The Pope **By Luther; JP2's head wound**
- Caesar Nero **Gematria > 666 or 616**
- All of the above

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

To what does the "144,000" of Revelation 7.1-8 and 14.1-5 refer?

- 144,000 Christian Jews who will be divinely protected from the tribulation and serve as evangelists to the world
- 144,000 "heavenly class" Christians who will be raptured first and have a judging role in the Kingdom of God. (JW)
- The number of Jews—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel—who believe in Christ and provide a witness to the faithfulness of God
- The wholeness and completeness of God's promises to Israel (12 x 12 x 1000)

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

How is the Antichrist described in Revelation?

- The “little horn” of the fourth beast Cf. Daniel 7-8
- A reference to “false Christs” Matthew 24.5,23-24
- The “lawless one” 2 Thessalonians 2.3-4, 8-10
- Human teachers who are supposedly Christian but who are false and deceptive 1 John 2.18, 22; 4.3; and 2 John 7
- The Antichrist is not mentioned in Revelation “The beast from the sea” in 13.1 and 17.1-18??

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

To what does Armageddon of Revelation 16.16 refer?

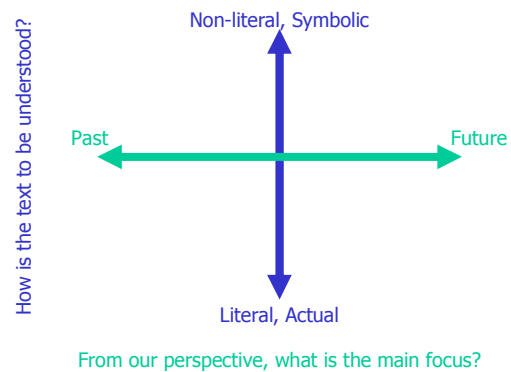
- Any of a family (Dasypodidae) of burrowing edentate mammals found from the southern U.S. to Argentina and having the body and head encased in an armor of small bony plates
- From the Hebrew “Har Megiddo,” meaning, the Mount of Megiddo
- The place called Megiddo in northern Israel where, because of its strategic location, many battles were fought in ancient times, but it is a plain, not a mountain
- The mythical place where the last battle would be fought

Are You Ready... for a Quiz?

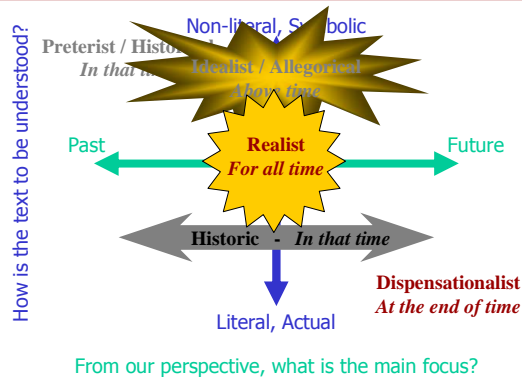
According to Revelation when does the “Rapture” occur?

- In 4.1 (“Come up...”) before the tribulations
- In 11.12 (“Come up...”) during the tribulations
- In 11.15ff or 14.14ff after the tribulations
- There is no reference to a “rapture” in Revelation
- The word comes from the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4.16-17, where, in describing the resurrection and return of the Lord, Paul says that “we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (Latin: *rapio / raptum*) in the clouds together with them [the dead in Christ] to meet the Lord in the air.”

How Do You Read Revelation?



How Do You Read Revelation?



How Do You Read Revelation?

Symbolism

NUMBERS

- 3 spiritual world
 - 4 created order
 - 7 perfection, completion (7=3+4)
 - 10 totality
 - 12 Israel, the people of God (12=3x4)
- multiples of these numbers are also symbolic
(144,000=10x10x10x12x12)

How Do You Read Revelation? *Symbolism*

COLORS

White	Victory
Red	War & Strife
Black	Famine & Suffering
Pale	Death (i.e., gray-yellow, the color of rotting meat)

How Do You Read Revelation? *Symbolism*

ANIMALS

Beasts, Dragon	satanic powers
Lamb	animal of sacrifice
Lion	King
Eagles & Oxen	superior animals of their kind
Horns	power (multiple horns=multiple rulers)

Context of Revelation

- Written by John, a prophet
- Written during reign of Emperor Domitian, ca. 95AD
- Written in time of tension between the Christians and the Roman Empire and even some persecution
- Written from island of Patmos (offshore of Ephesus)
- Written to seven churches in Asia (modern Turkey)





SARDIS

Context of Revelation			
CHURCH	COMMENDATIONS	CONDEMNATIONS	ADMONISHMENTS and PROMISES
Ephesus 2.1-7	Toil; patient endurance; cannot tolerate evildoers; tested false apostles; bearing up for sake of my name; not grown weary; hate works of Nicolaitans	Abandoned the love you had at first	Remember; repent; do the works you did at first <i>permission to eat from tree of life</i>
Smyrna 2.8-11	Have affliction and poverty but really are rich		Do not fear to suffer; beware of devil, prison, affliction; be faithful until death <i>and I will give you crown of life</i>
Pergamum 2.12-17	Holding fast to my name; did not deny your faith	Some hold to teaching of Balaam / Nicolaitans (eat food sacrificed to idols, practice fornication)	Repent <i>given hidden manna and white stone with secret name</i>
Thyatira 2.18-29	Works, love, faith, service, patient endurance	Tolerate Jezebel who teaches fornication and eating food sacrificed to idols	(To the faithful) hold fast <i>I will give the morning star</i>
Sardis 3.1-6	Some who are worthy	Think you're alive, but you're dead; works are not perfect	Wake up; strengthen what remains; remember what you received and heard; obey it and repent <i>will not blot out; will confess your name</i>
Philadelphia 3.7-13	Have little power but have kept my word and not denied my name		Hold fast <i>keep you from trial; make you a pillar; name</i>
Laodicea 3.14-22		Neither hot nor cold but lukewarm; think they are rich but are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, naked	Buy from me gold and white robes and salt; be earnest and repent <i>come in and eat; give place on throne</i>

Outline of Revelation	
1.1-8	Prologue
1.9-20	Vision of Christ
2.1-3.22	Letters to the Seven Churches
4.1-5.14	Vision of the Throne of Heaven
6.1-8.5	The Seven Seals
7.1-17	Visions of Hope
8.6-11.19	The Seven Trumpets
10.1-11.13	Visions of Hope
12.1-14.20	Seven Portents
15.1-16.21	The Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God
15.2-8	Vision of Hope
17.1-20.3	Prelude to the End
20.4-22.17	The End: New Heaven, Earth, and Jerusalem
22.18-21	Epilogue

An Approach to Revelation

- As a theological treatise...
- As a poetic document...
- As a pastoral message...

reflecting on...

THE END !?!

- ◆ What does it mean to confess Jesus to be the “Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end”?
- ◆ What are Christians to think about “the End”?
- ◆ How does the book of Revelation provide healthy, non-anxious ways of facing suffering, death, and the End?

THE END !?!

Contrast

- ◆ “I Wish We’d All Be Ready” (DC Talk)
 - I wish we’d all been ready
 - There’s no time to change your mind
 - The Son has come and you’ve been left behind
- ◆ “All Ready” (PFR)
 - I’ll live and I’ll love
 - Take less than I give for I have enough
 - Believe that in time You’ll see that
 - I’m already

A SYSTEMS APPROACH

- Revelation was written to *congregations* of Christians
- Revelation deals with the interactions of the group/ congregation with the larger society
- Revelation deals with the interactions between members of the group/congregation

How does an individual (or group) respond to conflict, anxiety, and dysfunction?

THE MARKS OF A HEALTHY CONGREGATION

- Respond to anxiety (rather than react)
- Accept differences (rather than deny)
- Focus on their strengths (rather than weaknesses)
- Manage conflict (rather than avoid it)
- Leaders seek to challenge people (instead of only comforting them)
- Leaders recognize that the disease process is enabled (instead of the work of a single agent)
- Leaders focus on mission (instead of "getting along," the past, survival, or some other "thing" or issue)
- Leaders promote health through their presence and functioning (instead of through their skill or technique)

From *Healthy Congregations Study Guide*, Peter L. Steinke (Lutheran Brotherhood: 1997) page 9

Healthy congregations *respond to anxiety*

Context of Revelation:

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- Written in time of tension between the Christians and the Roman Empire and even some persecution

Healthy congregations *respond to anxiety*

1.9: I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

2.9: To Smyrna: "I know your affliction and your poverty... Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested..."

6.9-11: Those slaughtered for the word of God cry out, "How long?"... They were told to rest a little while longer...

Healthy congregations *respond to anxiety*

Revelation provides a healthy, non-anxious reading/vision of the future.

Healthy congregations *accept differences*

Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

- Ephesus: Apathy
- Smyrna: Faithful in Affliction
- Pergamum: Struggling
- Thyatira: Sick
- Sardis: Dead and Decaying
- Philadelphia: Faithful in Routine
- Laodicea: Sold Out

Differences acknowledged but same message affirmed:

**Wake up! Remember! Repent! Obey!
Do not fear... Hold fast!**

Healthy congregations focus on their *strengths*

What / Who is the source of strength?

JESUS in Revelation:

- 1.9-20: Vision of Christ
- 5.1-14: Praise to the Lamb
- 14.1-5: The Lamb and the 144,000
- 19.11-21: The Rider known as Faithful and True and The Word of God
- 22.7,12-13,16,20: "I am coming soon!;" the Alpha and Omega; the "bright morning star"

Healthy congregations focus on their *strengths*

5.1-6: Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the **Root of David**, has **conquered**, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a **Lamb** standing as if it had been **slaughtered**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Healthy congregations focus on their *strengths*

Focus on strengths by numbering the evils...

The Seven Seals

The Seven Trumpets

The Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God

... in contrast to the immeasurable goodness of God

The 144,000

7.9-10: After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands..., saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Healthy congregations *manage* conflict

Revelation is all about standing firm
in the face of conflict.

Christians are not delivered *from* conflict,
but delivered *through* it by being
given the vision to understand it in
its proper context.

In healthy congregations, leaders seek to *challenge* people

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: 6.1-7

Warfare
Slaughter
Famine
Death



In healthy congregations, leaders seek to *challenge* people

The Little Scroll: 10.8-11

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 10:9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, "Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth." 10:10 So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. 10:11 Then they said to me, "You must prophesy again about/against many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

In healthy congregations,
leaders seek to *challenge* people

The Two Witnesses: 11.1-14

- Authority to prophesy
- Protected
- Authority over sky, waters, plagues
- Killed, bodies left in street, nations rejoice
- Raised up

In healthy congregations, leaders recognize
that the disease process is *enabled*

- The Red Dragon: 12.1-8
- The First Beast: 13.1-10
- The Second Beast: 13.11-18
- “Babylon the great, mother of whores
and of earth’s abominations”: 17.1-18

In healthy congregations,
leaders *focus on mission*

Outline to the Book of Revelation

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In healthy congregations,
leaders *focus on mission*

In Revelation, the mission is the reign of God.

The vision of that mission produces worship.

For now, for later, and for ever, the question is:

Whom will you worship?

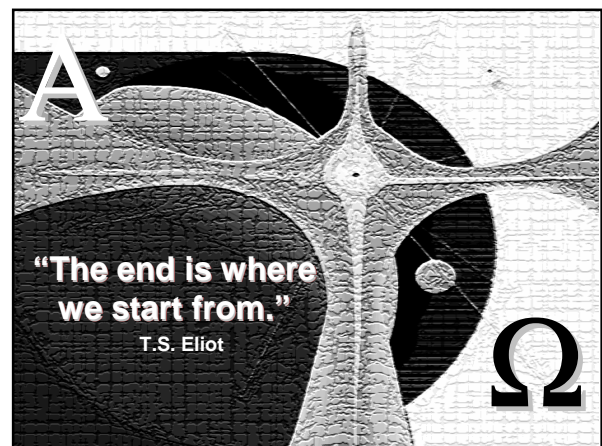
Whose songs will you sing?

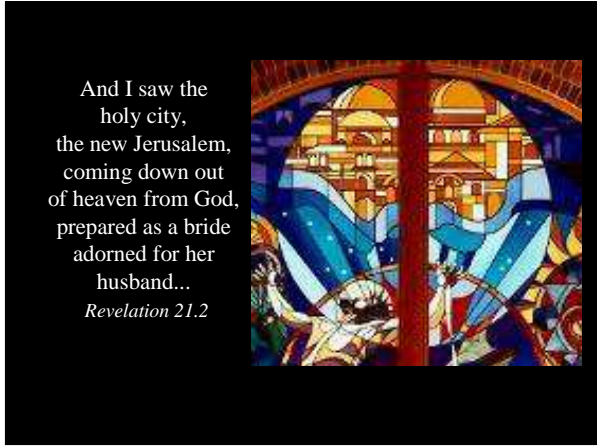
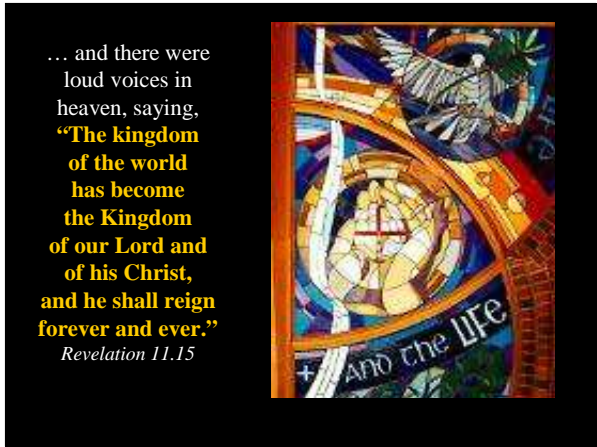
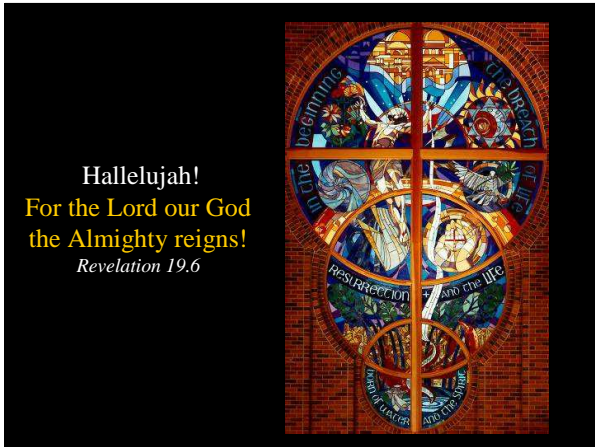
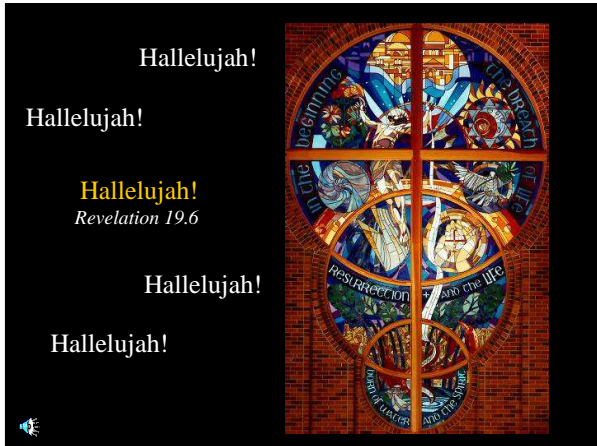
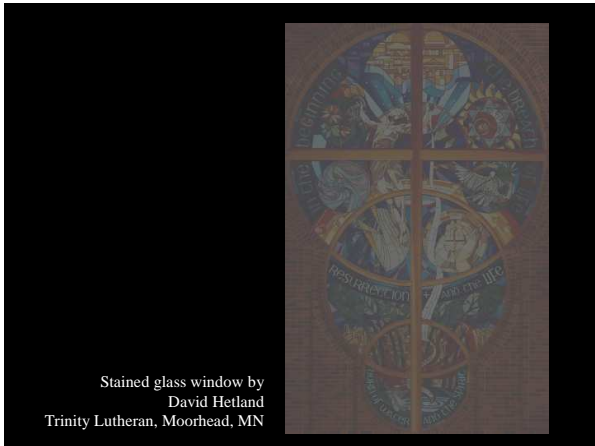
In healthy congregations, leaders promote
health through their *presence* and functioning

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

***“Behold, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them as their God;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
God will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain
will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”***

Revelation 21.3-4





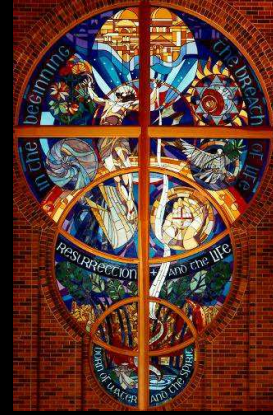
Then the angel showed me
the river of the water of life,
bright as crystal,
flowing from the throne
of God and of the Lamb

Revelation 22.1

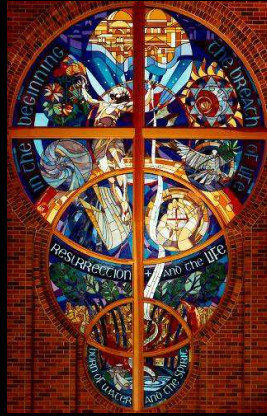


I am the
Alpha
and the
Omega,
the beginning
and the
end.

Revelation 21.6



The Spirit and the bride say,
"Come."
And let everyone who hears say,
"Come."
And let everyone
who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift...
The one who testifies
to these things says,
"Surely I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
Revelation 22.17, 20



Hallelujah!
Revelation 19.6

