

Introduction to Revelation

- **Author-** the apostle John
- **Date/Setting-** 90's during reign of Domitian
- **Audience-** 7 churches in modern day Turkey



What is Revelation?

Revelation – a prophetic apocalyptic letter

- **Apocalyptic**- an 'unveiling' of God's work in history; highly symbolic
- **Prophecy**- speaks about the future; also gives word from God to His people telling them how He expects them to act in their current situation
- **Letter**- written to address the situation 'on the ground' in 7 churches in Asia Minor in the 90's AD

How to interpret Revelation

- **Preterist-** Revelation was written in 1st century to seven 1st century churches and therefore its content is restricted to the 1st century – it's all past
- **Futurist-** beginning in ch4 all of Revelation is focused on the few years leading up to Jesus' return; it's almost all future
- **Spiritualist/Idealist-** Revelation is highly symbolic and not to be taken literally; it depicts the timeless battle between God and Satan and we need to look for principles we can apply to our lives
- **Historicist-** Revelation is laying out major moves of history from John's day to the End; attempts to identify symbols in Revelation with historical people/institutions

How we will interpret Revelation

Eclectic approach

- Taking 1st century context seriously- original audience had to understand it (it is a letter to them first)
- Recognizing that events in Revelation are still unfulfilled (it is prophetic); also taking into account dual fulfillment of many Biblical prophecies - prophecies in Revelation can have a 1st century fulfillment and an End Times fulfillment
- Taking symbolism seriously, but not literally (it is apocalyptic)

Central message

Regardless of how things look on the ground:

- God is always at work overcoming Satan/evil and establishing His Kingdom
- God expects His people to remain faithful to Him and His purposes even to the point of death
- God will win in the End and reward His people

What must soon take place?

- **Romans 13:11** And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.
- **2 Peter 3:8-9** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Blessed are those who take to heart...

- **James 1:22** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
- **Matthew 7:24 and 26** Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.