

Book of Revelation: Not as Mysterious as You Might Think

The book of Revelation was not meant to be a mystery, but to be understood. Its name means “what is revealed,” not “what was hidden.”

However, there are some basic keys to understanding it. These are the same keys to understanding all revelation in the Bible. We will begin our study of this book with the first of these keys—the first statement made in Revelation:

‘The Revelation of Jesus Christ’

The book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ, period. Possibly the biggest reason why there is much confusion about this book is because people try to see it more as a revelation of the Antichrist or of the events prophesied in it. These are important, but only as part of the revelation of Jesus. We must view everything through Him, rather than trying to see Him through everything else.

Just as some get distracted from the River of Life by the tributaries that feed it, many get diverted from the main revelation of this book by majoring on minors. Some of these sub-themes are fascinating, but as our friend Peter Lord likes to say, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” Even as we seek to understand the sequence of events and different manifestations of evil in Revelation, we see them in relation to the ultimate purposes of God in Christ.

This is not just key to understanding this book, but to understanding the Bible, and indeed all understanding. As we are told in Colossians 1:16-17:

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

All things were made through Him and for Him. All things are held together by Him. As we are told in one of the most important verses in the Bible:

“... making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth” (Eph. 1:9-10, MEV).

It is all about Jesus. To fully understand the creation or events of history, we must see from this perspective. All things work toward the ultimate purpose of God—the summing up all things in His Son.

To understand our own lives we must see through this key. Everything in our life was allowed to lead us to the Son and to have our life summed up in Him. All events in Revelation work toward that end. Jesus is the lens we must look through to understand everything.

So why is there so much about the Antichrist and the great evils that come upon the earth in Revelation? As bad as they may seem, they too will lead toward the ultimate purpose of God—the redemption, reconciliation, and restoration found in Jesus alone. The “man of sin” is a personification of the sin of man. In this vision, we see the ultimate result of sin and rebellion, causing us to know that this is not what we want to do again.

To understand our times, we must stay focused on Jesus and what He is doing. We need to understand the evil and the unfolding of events, but even more we must understand the work of God. In the midst of all the evil, the city of God is being built. So we keep our attention more on Him than we do on the Antichrist or all the evils. Even these will work toward a

greater revelation of Jesus by revealing the depth of the depravity of fallen men—exposing the depth of our need for the Savior.

Ultimately, the entire history of man on earth will be one of the greatest revelations of God—His grace, mercy, goodness, and power of love over death. This Revelation given to John was the foretelling of how the final stages of God's plan will work out. {eoa}

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