

New Testament Survey NTS.12

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ



Logistics & Learning Objectives:

1. Learning Objectives. Participants will gain a high level understanding of:
 - a. The Book of Revelation
 - b. The Seven Churches
 - c. Approaches to interpreting the Book of Revelation
2. For more information please visit www.studioscriptura.com

The New Testament Survey

seeks to presents Christianity's core tenets and doctrines for all that are interested in learning about Christianity. We seek to provide tools for believers to build a strong foundation and thereby help them bolster their faith in Christ. We seek to be purposeful and diligent in teaching the foundations of our beliefs, so we can earnestly contend for our faith.





Key Sources:

1. **New King James Version. 1988. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.**

What's Going On?



The Book of Revelations - Background & Outline



1. **Historic Context:** The degree to which the Christians to whom John writes were being persecuted is debated. Some believe a widespread, intense, officially promulgated persecution, More recent scholars posit that Christians were indeed being persecuted by the general populace and that the government may have been behind some of the persecution.
2. **Revelation** (1:1–20).
 - a. The opening verses of Revelation appear to suggest three different genres in this book: apocalypse (1:1), prophecy (1:3), and epistle (1:4)
 - b. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,” Revelation 1:1
 - c. “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” Revelation 1:12-13a, 17
3. **The messages to the seven churches** (2:1–3:22). “John is commanded by the risen Christ to address messages to seven churches in seven cities within the Roman province of Asia.



● The Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1–3): addressed by John, some founded by Paul

— Route of the Via Egnatia

0 100 km.
0 10

0 50 km.
0 50 miles

The Seven Churches of Revelation

- Ephesus (three kilometers southwest of present-day Selçuk in İzmir Province, Turkey) - A church that labored diligently for the Gospel and eschewed both evil and doctrinal impurity but is reprimanded because it had "left its first love!"
- Smyrna (Izmir is the 3rd most populous city today in Turkey) - A church poor in terms of material wealth and persecuted for Christ; the Church of Smyrna is encouraged to "not have fear."

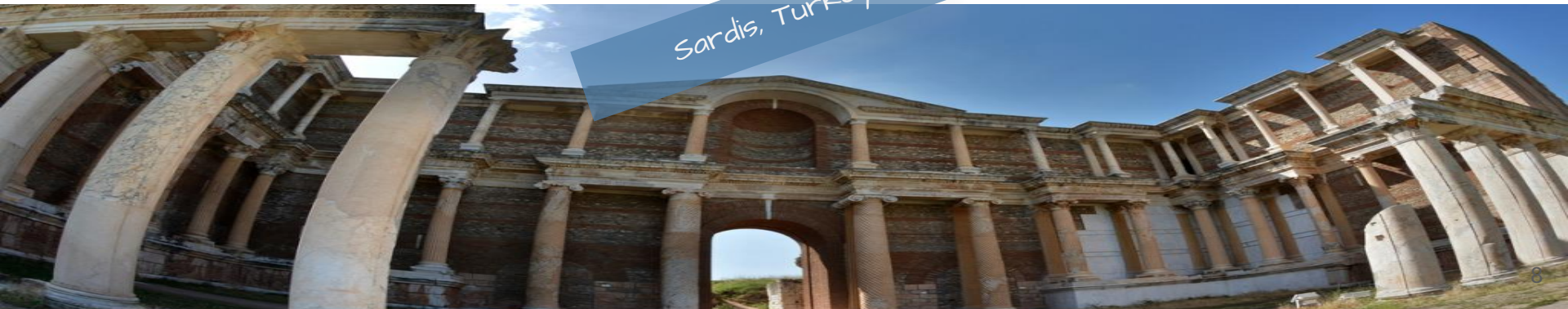
Modern-day Izmir, Turkey

This & following 3 slides from
"Survey of Christian Theology
- Eschatology"



The Seven Churches of Revelation *(continued)*

- Pergamos (located in the modern-day Izmir Province of Turkey) - The church who held fast to the name of Christ but allowed false doctrines and accepted sexual immorality in the church.
- Thyatira (now the modern Turkish city of Akhisar) - A church known for its works, love, and patience - but also allowed false teachers and sexual immorality into the church.
- Sardis (near Salihli, in Turkey's Manisa Province) - The dead church that only had a remnant of true believers.



Sardis, Turkey

The Seven Churches of Revelation *(continued)*

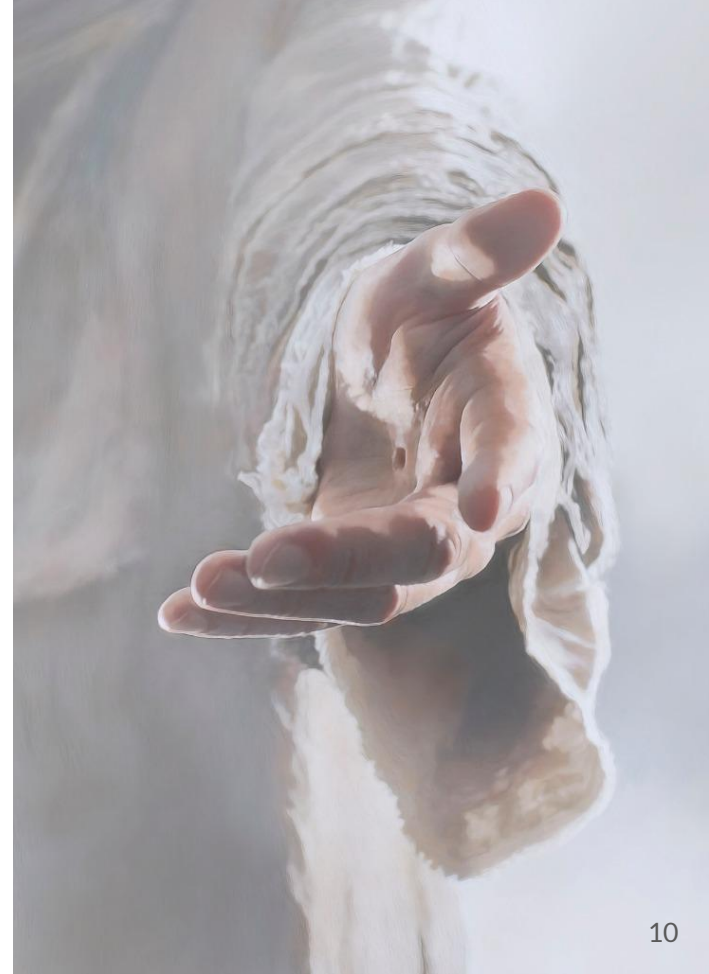
- Philadelphia (a town and district of Manisa Province in the Aegean region of Turkey) - The church that persevered, kept His Word, and did not deny His name.
- Laodicea (near the modern city of Denizli, Turkey) - The church that rested in its wealth but was naked before God. Because it was lukewarm in faith, God firmly rebuked them: "I will spit you out of my mouth!"

Archeological remains of the main street of Laodicea, Turkey



The Seven Churches of Revelation *(continued)*

- **Ephesus** The hardworking apostolic church
- **Smyrna** The heavily persecuted postapostolic church
- **Pergamum** The increasingly worldly church after Emperor Constantine made Christianity virtually the Roman state religion
- **Thyatira** The corrupt church of the Middle Ages
- **Sardis** The church of the Reformation with a reputation for orthodoxy but a lack of spiritual vitality
- **Philadelphia** The church of modern revivals and the global missionary enterprise
- **Laodicea** The contemporary church has become lukewarm due to affluence and apostasy



The Book of Revelation - Background & Outline *(continued)*

4. A vision of heaven (4:1–5:14). "John is taken up to heaven in the Spirit, where he sees the sovereign God seated on the throne and receiving worship."
5. **Three series of sevens:**
 - a. **The seven seals (4 Horsemen)**(6:1–8:5):
 1. white horse - conquest (6:1–2), 2. fiery red - slaughter (6:3–4), 3. black horse - famine (6:5–6), 4. pale horse - death (6:7–8), 5. martyrs crying out for justice (6:9–11), 6. natural disasters, signifying the "wrath of the Lamb" (6:12–17), 7. silence in heaven and introduction of the seven trumpets.
 - b. **The seven trumpets** (8:6–11:19):
 1. hail and fire from heaven (8:7), 2. a mountain thrown into the sea (8:8–9), 3. a great star falling from the sky (8:10–11), 4. astronomical changes (8:12–13), 5. destructive locusts (9:1–12), 6. a huge conquering army (9:13–21) 7. The Kingdom Proclaimed (11:15)



The Book of Revelation - Background & Outline *(continued)*



c. **The seven bowls** (15:1–16:21):

1. "painful sores" "on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image" (16:2), 2. a turning of the sea into blood (16:3), 3. a turning of the rivers and springs of water into blood (16:3–7), 4. scorching heat from the sun (16:8–9), 5. destruction of the beast's dominion (16:10–11), 6. the drying up of the Euphrates River and the coming of evil spirits in preparation for "the battle on the great day of God Almighty" at Armageddon (16:12–16), and, 7. climactically, the "it is done" earthly destruction."

The Book of Revelation - Background & Outline *(continued)*

6. **The Triumph of Almighty God** (17:1–21:8). “These visions describe and celebrate the triumph of God in the world, as His sovereignty, seen by John in heaven in chapter 4, is now manifested in the world - and the world to come.”
7. **The New Jerusalem** (21:9–22:9). “This section has many parallels with the angelic vision in 17:1–19:10. 7 In his vision, John sees the “bride, the wife of the Lamb,” in the image of a new Jerusalem, whose features and dimensions are described in considerable detail (21:9–21).”
8. **Epilogue** (22:10–21). “John is promised that the message contained in the visions he has seen is “trustworthy and reliable” and that there will be reward for those who are faithful and true. This reward is brought by Jesus himself, who is “coming quickly.”



The Book of Revelation - Approaches to Interpretation



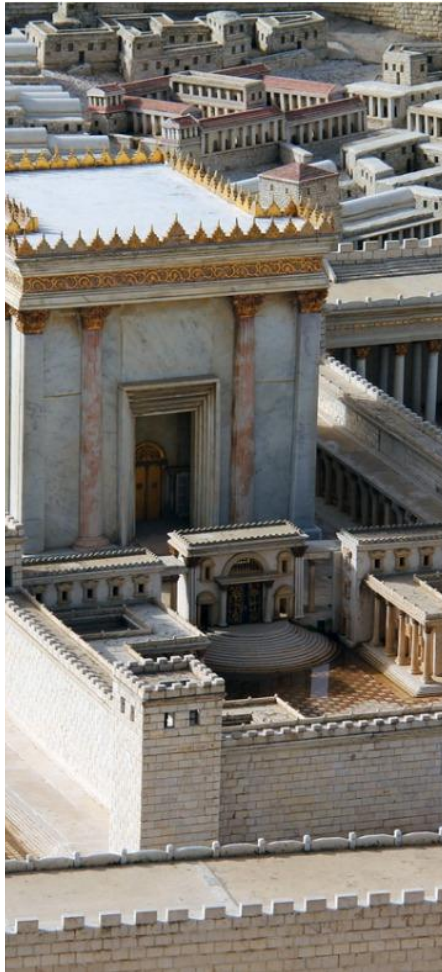
- A. **The Preterist approach.** “The visions of John grow out of and describe events in John’s own day.”
- B. **The Historical approach.** “Revelation is a sketch of history - was popular with the Reformers enabling them to identify the beast in the Revelation with the papacy.”
- C.  **The Futurist approach.** “Holds that everything in the Book of Revelation from chapter 4 to the end finds its fulfillment in the very last days of human history.”
- D. **The idealist approach.** “The symbolism in Revelation is designed to help us understand God’s person and ways with the world in a general way, not to enable us to map out a course of events. Revelation, then, teaches us the action of great principles and not special incidents.”

The Book of Revelation - Summary

- Revelation reminds us of the authority of Jesus, the reality and severity of evil, of the demonic forces that are active in history, the perseverance of the saints, and HIS return and kingdom.
- "Revelation is a book with: a prophetic **program** (1:19) enigmatic **proclamations** (having mysterious meaning; see 13:18) a dramatic **plot** and climactic **plan** (see 11:15) cataclysmic **pronouncements** (chaps. 6–18) an apocalyptic **presentation** (revelations) a polemic **purpose** (anti-"Babylon") ... Hebraic **phraseology** (278 of 404 verses are from the Old Testament)." Geisler
- The Book of Revelation must be understood in context of the entire biblical narrative.



What Did Jesus Say About the End of the World



Jesus' preaching often focused on the distinctive theme of the *imminence* of the **Kingdom of God**.

Already..

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**'" Luke 17:20-21

But Not Yet...

"For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the **kingdom of God comes.**" Luke 22:18

What Did Jesus Say About the End of the World *(continued)*

Three important chapters (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) are referred to as the ***Olivet Discourse***. These chapters are spoken by Jesus from the Mount of Olives and are just days before His trial and crucifixion.



HIS return:

Preceded by great tribulation

Indefinite Timing

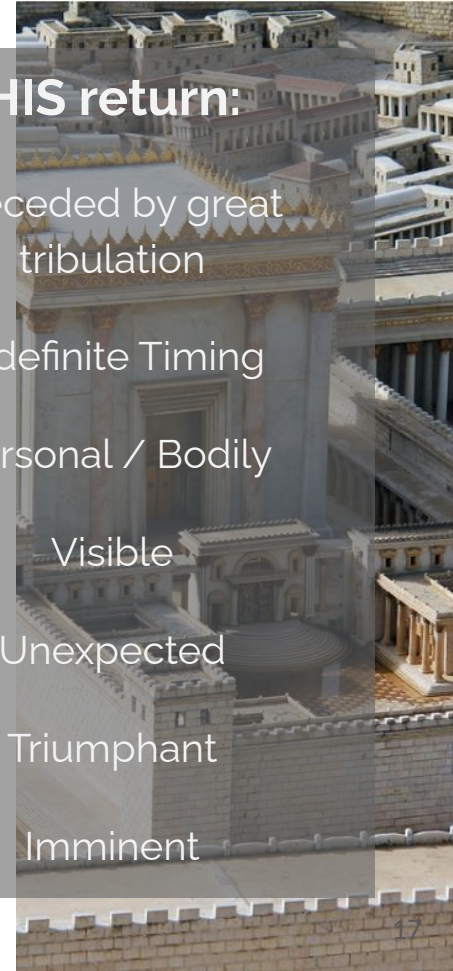
Personal / Bodily

Visible

Unexpected

Triumphant

Imminent



What Did Jesus Say About the End of the World *(continued)*



What Did Jesus Say About the End of the World *(continued)*



Don't be deceived by false teachers and don't establish detail timelines when studying the end times:

"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you.'" Matthew 24:4

"If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:24

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." Matthew 24:36

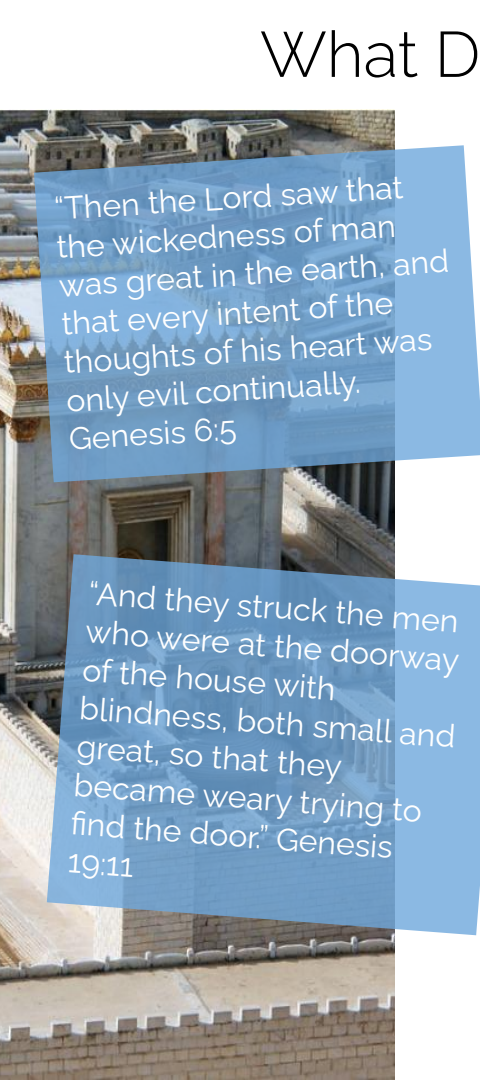
Be ready for a significant change in society:

"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will **grow cold.**" Matthew 24:12

Be ready for persecution:

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake." Matthew 24:9

What Did Jesus Say About the End of the World *(continued)*



"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
Genesis 6:5

"And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door." Genesis 19:11

As it was in the days of Lot ... days of Noah

"And as it was in the days of **Noah**, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of **Lot**: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30

A time of great tribulation will arrive:

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."
Matthew 24:21

Be watchful:

"Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming - in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: *Watch!*" Mark 13:35-37

So ... How Will the World End?



Christians will be locked out of all aspects of banking, payment systems, and global commerce:

15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13:11-17

This & following slides from
"Survey of Christian Theology -
Eschatology"

So ... How Will the World End? *(continued)*

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Revelation 12:11

"And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son/child. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'" Revelation 21:6-8

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Revelation 22:20



1. What did you learn about the Book of Revelation this evening/morning?
2. Of the methods discussed, which is the better/best approach to interpreting the Book of Revelation? Why?
3. What are some of the key themes/messages that Jesus gives us about His imminent return?
4. With the coming end of the world as we know it - How are you living out your Christian servanthood? How are you earnestly contending for the faith? How are you being watchful?



So What &
Now What?