

Study	Gamma 16 – Study 1
Topic	Introduction to Revelations
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Welcome back to Gamma. Nice to see everybody here, I don't have to do this in front of my library again and have this videotape. So we're goanna, we thank the Lord for all of you coming. We're going to be doing Revelations. Revelations is not an easy book. It's quite a difficult book. So I'm going to be leading some of the discussions myself afterwards. So what's going to happen is we're going to have a lecture for about an hour. All our friends at home will be able to catch this lecture live stream. After that they will divide into groups to do their Zoom meetings for discussion.

So the questions are with you here for discussion, but since there are so many of you here, it's very difficult to do discussion and sharing. So what happens after is that we will probably spend on time fielding any questions from here. And all the questions you ask and the answers I give will also be videoed and put as a separate segment, because there'll be some difficult questions that people at home ask and you know, are not answered.

Let's start with a word of prayer....Lord, we thank you for gathering us together. Again, we believe that Revelations is a book that you have inspired, you have given and so often it has been misread and misused to cause fright and fear rather than comfort and strength. We ask O Lord that you grant us your spirit this evening to look at scripture again, with the kind of expectation that you will feed our souls and grant us strength. We commit all this in your hands for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Next week, we'll have a song to worship first. Brother Andrew has kindly volunteered, but this week we don't have any singing for the time being.

Why study the book of Revelations?

Well, we study the Book of Revelations because it is God's word to us. It really unmask all the rival powers at work today. If you look today at the Sabah election, our own confused political scene, we don't know who's in charge, right? Revelation tells you who is in charge and what the situation is. It teaches us to understand true victory in life. And lifts our eyes beyond this world and reassures us that God is in sovereign control.

Now it's not easy. They'll all popular misconceptions associated with Book of Revelations. It became very popular in the 1970s. There are two books that actually came out. One was the Great Planet Earth by Hall Lindsey and Tim La Haye wrote the scary book called, Left Behind. So they became best selling nonfiction books in the 1970s. 35 million printed by 1999, translated into more than 50 languages. And a whole bunch of other books and CDs have been written, even made a movie starring Nicholas cage called Left Behind based on this idea that one day there will be a rapture where when Christ comes all the Christians will suddenly disappear. So Nicholas cage is an airline pilot, and as he was flying his airplane, suddenly the co-pilot disappears, the air stewardess disappears, they all raptured to heaven. And then a plane comes barrelling past his plane because that plane's pilot was raptured. So all the passengers are alone.

So that was the kind of idea behind. A lot of ideas, is the COVID-19 crisis an example of something coming true in the Book of Revelations. Is this one of them four horsemen, because one of them involves pestilence. What about the coronavirus? Is it 6C corona? Is that foretold by Revelations? In fact, Revelations talk about the Mark of the beast.

Rev 13:16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

So this Mark, is it, some people won't take the coronavirus vaccine because it says the barcode there, so therefore it is the mark of the beast. If you put a barcode on your head, that might be the mark of the or you could actually put it in a little capsule implanted as a chip into your body and the latest Amazon in today's newspaper. You can use your Palm and you actually pay money using your palm.

If you look at Revelation, talks in chapter 13

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

How is this beast? They thought it was Ronald Reagan. Why? Six, six, six, Ronald Wilson Reagan. right. It could be him or could it be Mussolini or Trump believes in this. So therefore he moves the United States embassy all the way from Tel Aviv into Israel, because he believes the physical Israel will be reconstituted during time of tribulation. So there was an article written in the humanities magazine describing all this idea by this guy called Hal Lindsay who predicts the things that are going to come. And every time he predicts it goes wrong. And this is what he writes,

Every 3 years Hal Lindsay [sic] writes a new book denoting how the world will end in 5 years. Each subsequent book explains how he WASN'T wrong in the previous book and the world will really end in 5 years. . . . He has followed this pattern for 3 decades and is now acknowledged as "the fore-most authority on Biblical prophecy in the world today." . . . I'm an electrician. If I had been doing my job POORLY and WRONG for 30 years I doubt I would be "the foremost authority".

So if you put too many predictions based on what your understanding of Bible is that don't come true, non-Christians will look at you and wonder. So if you will look at the Book of Revelation, how do you make sense of it? Well, there was a story told of a commentator called FF Bruce who actually had a student who offered all the students at Oxford in his class, a free New Testament. The only one condition, you must read it and in three months; time you come back, have a discussion with you. You must tell me what you have read. So they all took the book and one of the students came back and he asked him, you know, what did you think? Was it good? Did you understand it? The students said, well, it was interesting, but the first four books are a bit repetitive talking about the same thing. I love the last book, great science fiction.

He described Revelations as science fiction. And that gives us an idea because what this non-Christian did was a very unbiased, you know, he looked at the literature and he thought Revelations was a particular kind of literature. It was science-fiction. So in order to understand, interpret books of the Bible, like any literary, what you've got to understand how it was written. Whether it is biography, a thriller, a poem, romance novel, or whether it is a doctor's report or SNP. Every one of them is a different literary genre. So it is important to understand what kind of literary genre. If you understand the genre, what kind of literature it is then you can read. For example, a lot of people bring their medical report to me. Why do they bring a medical report to me? You cannot read English, but why did they bring it to me? Because I understand medical terms and they recast it. So if I have a lawyers report, I will bring to a lawyer to read. So we have to read with that kind of background and the same thing with Revelations. Now, revelation is three kinds of literature. I want you to look at the first four verses.

Rev 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3Blessed is the one who reads aloud the

words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

The first word is Revelation. The Greek word is apocalypse. It is that something is hidden, is a mystery and is revealed to you. So it is an apocalypse. The second thing is that it must soon take place. That means things that must soon take place, which means hasn't taken place yet. And so therefore it's going to be the future and you look down here, it is a prophecy. So not only is something that God is going to reveal which is never revealed before, which is apocalyptic literature. Second of all, it is a prophecy. It means talking not about a past but talking about the future. And the third thing is that if you look, it is a pastoral letter.

Chapter 1:4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:...11 "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches,...

Exactly like Paul. Paul writes in this way. Paul to the Ephesians and he always start with grace and peace to you. So there are three things what this is:

1. It is an apocalypse,
2. It is a prophecy,
3. It is also a letter to encourage us.

And when you read this book, it has Old Testament roots, 278 out of the 404 verses in Revelations have referenced the Old Testament and 500 allusions that means similar kinds of words being used to the Old Testament verses 200 in Pauline letters. So it is the book that is most steeped in the Old Testament.

So if you call it science fiction, I wouldn't say science fiction because all the terms would you get actually come from the Old Testament. They don't come from modern ideas. Give you an example. Allusions are basically linkages. So basically Revelations 1:12, this is description of Jesus Christ and in the midst of the lampstand one like a son of man. The term use son of man, same word son of man is used in Daniel chapter 13.

13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

So the Book of Daniel tells us in the last days there will be one like the son of man, he's going to come to God. And God going to give him the kingdom of the entire universe. The same word is used. So therefore, you've got to look. If you want to read Revelations, you've got to go back and see what Daniel meant by the son of man. Same thing looking at today, you see something strange. This is what the coronavirus. Why do they call it a corona? Crown. So they take a normal because human beings, what you think about crown, right? We don't know virus terms. So the closest thing is a crown, so we call it crown a, you got a protein inside here. Why do they call this the spike protein because we are not viruses. The closest thing is a spike in the porcupine spike. So we call it something in terms that we understand from our history and human experience. The same thing happens in the Old Testament. You've got, if you read the whole book of revelation, there are different symbols, one seal, two trumpet and seven balls.

Now seals, how many of you seen a seal nowadays? Maybe last time when you actually graduate from university, your university certificate has a seal there and you put a ring there. But in the old days, a seal seals a particular parchment and you put your ring imprint there. And when you break the seal open means you can read. And if people read it without you knowing they can't, because they have to break the seal, of course you can put some steam and take it out. Alright, but this is what it means if you go back.

Why trumpet and why bowls?

Because these are examples of Exodus plagues. All of Revelations, trumpets and bowls come from the Exodus plagues. So when John talks about this, when he talks about trumpets that people understand, Old Testament. They talk about bowls, they understand Old Testament bowls. So you have to look back in the Old Testament for these.

Lion of Judah.

5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

So who is the Lion of Judah? Have you heard of lion of Judah before? If you go back in Genesis

Genesis 49:9 Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,

Which means in Genesis he is actually giving the blessing that from Judah will come the Messiah, the ruler, the King Sceptre. It will not pass from his feet. So when Jesus is called lion of Judah, why do they call Jesus lion of Judah, because this Jesus is actually the fulfilment of the Genesis prophecy. So it has all kind of background. What about a four horseman? If you look at Revelation chapter 6, the four horseman of the apocalypse, the pale horse, the red horse, the white horse, all of them, where did they come from? You look at Zechariah. Zechariah in actually in chapter 6 talks about the different kinds of horseman. So all the imagery is taken from the Old Testament.

What about sealing? You look at chapter 7,

3..."Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

That means they seal your forehead. Where does this idea of sealing your forehead come from? You don't see it in the New Testament, you see in the Old Testament. In Old Testament, the book of Ezekiel is a vision given to Ezekiel.

9:4 And the Lord said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

Which means in Jerusalem, time of great evil. A lot of people do evil things, political, you know, buying people to jump from one party to another and all sorts of evil things that they do. But the rest of the people are quite happy. This is how business is done. Isn't it? But the people who sigh and say, oh my God, this society is going off and they feel so hurt because of all the sin that is going on. They are the real people of God. And then God is saying to Ezekiel that angel will come and seal their forehead. Later on other angel will come and kill all the population. The ones without the seal will die and ones with the seal will be saved.

Now, if you understand Ezekiel then you go back to Revelations. Revelation says don't harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have seal the servants of our God on their foreheads. Then you understand judgment is coming and God's people are being sealed, Old Testament. You have to know your Old Testament. So there are apocalyptic prophets and the kind of literary works, which are not scripture, happen in Enoch, Ezra, apocalypse of Baruch, book of Jubilees. In the Bible Haggai, Zechariah, Daniel, Ezekiel, second half of Isaiah and Joel. All these books are where you are going to get all the imagery that you read in Revelations. So you can't read Revelations without reading all of this because it will give you the key to unlock what John is actually speaking about.

The two books that are most important for you to look back if you've got time to read is the book of Daniel, especially and also the book of Ezekiel. These are the two most of which it is anchored.

What are the characteristics of this apocalyptic prophets?

There are certain characteristics that you read. That's why the young undergraduate who told FF Bruce, you know, just look like science fiction actually is not science fiction it is apocalyptic prophecies. What does the characteristic? The first characteristic is an intensification of normal prophecy. Normal prophecy is kind of like, you know, standard. Tomorrow there will be a storm coming and the storm will cause the flood. That's a normal one. Intensification, tomorrow there will be a big watery monster coming and he blow and your whole building will fall down. It's the same prophecy by it is an intensification. And there's a use of visions, which are fantastical and unreal. You look at the beast here, one beast with all the different kind of heads coming from one beast. It is like coming out of a dream. So apocalyptic prophecies are like that. You look at the beast in Daniel, they're almost exactly the beast in revelation. You want to understand revelation you must look at Daniel.

They're mixed metaphors. Very important. We know metaphor for example, parable of the sower. Jesus said, seed came by, one seed fell onto the road and who picks it up, bird. Isn't it right? The bird is Satan. So that you can't get the gospel that's normal metaphor, right? Mixed metaphor means Jesus lion and lamb. Hello, you either lion or your lamb, how come you be lion and lamb at the same time, a hybrid between lion and lamb. So in your mind, very confused. You're trying to work out what a lion that is a lamb and lamb as lion look like, totally confused. So in order to understand these mixed metaphors means you must understand he is lion because he is King and lamb because he was sacrificed.

But you don't bring the two and form a hybrid that would be very stupid. But if you read apocalyptic literature, you have mixed metaphors. The other one is that it gives you an idea of God's eye view. When you go down into the busiest town street in KL, you go and walk down, there is huge amount of noise. People are rushing back and forth and nobody is looking at you? You're confused. You see so many problems. You see somebody being bullied, some people being run down by a car. You feel really unhappy. Then you enter a building, the tallest building you can find, you take a lift zoom all the way to the top. Then you look down at the same street. Do you feel the same? No. Because you have a bird's eye view, you understand what is happening. You understand the traffic jam is there because something happened over there and that gives you a sense of comfort and peace because you see things from a different perspective.

Revelations takes you above the cries and pain and suffering and confusion of today and brings you into the cradle where God is and sees things from his point of view, so that you get a measure of comfort that things are not as bad as they look because you see it from God's point of view. Apocalyptic literature will show you to see the future is something new to be happening and caused by God directly. Apocalyptic literature is basically pessimistic about current conditions and focuses you to put your hopes on divine intervention in the future. Apocalyptic literature will talk about judgment. There's a judgment issue. Some people complain, you know, New Testament Jesus is lovey-dovey, you know, he loves everybody. He forgave the woman caught in adultery. You look in Revelation. Every other page is full of judgment. So it's a bit frightening from that point of view. And then the images that come out of Revelations are basically very black and white. You see you either got a mark of the beast or the mark of God. Have you got in between? No.

If you look at Revelations? You look at Genesis, you see men of faith. Who is the man of faith? Abraham. Our friends supposed to wait for his son, right. Go ahead and have sex with Hagar. Got Ishmael. The heroes are not black and white. They're all very nuance. Look at Jacob? Jacob is supposed to be a patriarch and he is a nasty fellow, go and cheat his brother. Look at King David supposed to be hero, he sleep with Bathsheba, killed the husband. In the rest of literature, black and white in Revelations. You either good or bad, you either of the devil or you of God. The rest of scripture has a bit more nuance. It tells you the real story. So it's done on purpose.

The authorship is by John in the Island of Patmos and basically the two theories about when it was written, is some people think is written AD between 54 and 60 under the rule of Nero who started a local persecution of church. This is not very likely, it is more likely that it was written in the AD 90 under the widespread persecution by emperor Domitian.

Now let's answer a few questions. When you read this book, are you going to take this book literally or are you going to take it symbolically? It's very obvious it is going to be symbolic. Why? Because if you look at the word here, the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants, the things that must soon take place, he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.

The word know is 'Semaino', which is in Greek, which means either you make it or communicated or you signify it by symbols, which means this book is communicated to us by symbols rather than by words. So you've got to understand the symbols and this is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to show his servant, the things that must soon take place. He made it known or symbolize it by sending his angels to his servant John. Which means this is something which God gave, God showed concerning the things that will come in the future and he signified it, which means he uses symbols to tell you what's going to happen in the future. So that's what it means.

So things are always symbolic. If you look at Daniel, Daniel is just like Revelations. You have got symbols, you've got this statue and the statue has a golden head, which represents Babylon. Breasts and arms silver, which represent Persia. The thigh is made of brass, which represents Greece, iron legs, which represent Rome and then the feet which is iron and clay mixed together and then the stone come and break it. Why? Because it's a divided Roman kingdom. And the last one is made of stone, which has grows very, very big and that is the kingdom of God. So each one in this dream symbolizes. So what does this statue symbolize? It symbolize that one day there'll be a Babylonian empire followed by Greek empire, followed by Greece Empire, followed by Rome, and then Jesus will come in finish the whole thing.

Now I could tell you a prophecy like that, right? But you probably fall asleep. If I told you big dream, but this you will listen a little bit more. That's what apocalyptic prophecy is about. It gives you fantastical pictures to give you the points, which God wants to tell you what's going to happen in the future. Now literal or symbolic?

5:6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Wow! What does it mean? Do you read this literally or symbolic. So the next time you're watching Jesus, you are looking for Jesus as a lamb and that lamb must have seven eyes and that lamb must be slain. Hey how to walk, how this fellow can stand when is already dead. So you see a mixed metaphor isn't it. So, you must not take this literally. You keep on reading it literally, you will have a headache. That is why everybody read things in science fiction, because it doesn't make sense. What about the seven eyes? How come these lamb got seven eyes? It is weird. Isn't it? Why do you think if I give you a symbol of a lamb with seven eyes, what am I trying to tell you? Eyes mean can see, I know everything. Secrets I know. Imagine I got eyes at the back of my head. Imagine I got seven eyes, you are finished. There is nothing I don't know. Seven is the number of perfection. That means this lamb knows everything.

What about the seven spirits? It means the fullness of the spirit. So now if you understand symbols you can interpret on your own. So in this book of revelation, I will try to bring the Old Testament to help you make the logical linkage and read it for yourself.

Now the beast. You look at Revelation 13.

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.

What does that mean? Now, if you look back in Daniel chapter 7,

2 Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. 4 The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings...another beast the second one like the bear...and behold another one like a leopard with four wings of a bird in the back and the beast had the four heads and dominion was given to it.

Where do these beasts come from that we are talking in Revelation? It comes from Daniel. There is slight modification and these beasts are all kingdoms. So therefore Revelation, the beast must be kingdom too, right? So it's not difficult in that sense because all the clues are given to you because you recognize this is apocalyptic literature. Then you've got the woman who was pregnant, and we won't go into that. We'll do that later on. And then they've got this Babylon who sits on this, we won't do that.

So numbers, I won't deal with numbers because time is catching on. Numbers are very important. The number seven is very important. It means fullness or completion in the Old Testament. How many days of creation? Seven. How many golden lampstand? Seven. How many seals, trumpet and bowls? Seven. See, everything is God's number, is perfection. Isn't it. Alright. So what God is trying to tell you when he has given seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, it means it's all perfectly done. The history of the world is perfectly dictated by God and God alone. So if the perfect number is seven what about six, six, six. Is it seven? No, isn't it. It is always one shot. Try to be like God, by you are one shot. It's very simple. In Genesis chapter 3, she saw the fruit and I want to take your wife because it will make me wise like God. I'm number six. I want to be number seven. So everything of man is six, six, six.

So it's symbolic. So if it's symbolic, then never mind your house number six, six, six is not weird, you don't have to change it to 667. Because it's symbolic is not literal. Okay. Very important. Three and a half years is three and a half years of persecution usually, which is equals 1,260 days or 42 months, all add up to the same. It's basically a time of testing. It's not a long time, but it's a time of testing. So this is the same period, three and half years, 42 months, a hundred thousand, 260 days. It cannot be exact. All right, because otherwise exact got a problem. I think somebody shared with me, somebody who said 70 weeks of punishment for Israel talking about until Jesus comes. Exile of God's people is 69 weeks from the time of return from exile to the time of Israel. 69 weeks. The last week is 2000 years, Jesus hasn't been come yet the second time. So, how can you have 69 weeks? Is this literal 69? And the last week is metaphorical. They are twisting the rules. You don't do that.

So this is the same period of time. 1000 is complete or very long period of time, or it talks about eternal blessings for that redeem. We will discuss that in chapter 20. 12 is always the 12 tribes of Israel, apostles or the people of God. 144,000 is the number of the elect because 12 times 12 is 144. It's a number of the elect, cannot be that only 144,000 people are saved in this world. It is not literal. So the rule in Revelations interprets symbolically unless you are forced to interpret literally, everything is symbolic. Alright.

Why God must use symbol? Why can't he tell properly? The same question you should go and ask Jesus. Hey Jesus why don't you tell us, you come into die on the cross, Pilate is going to wash his hands, then we believe in you, we go to heaven. Why must tell parable of four seeds and all these things? Why Jesus tells parables is the same way John tells symbols. There is a reason and the reason is very simple. Let's look back. Every time he talks to the seven churches, he ends off with these words,

He who has an ear, let him hear.

Very odd. That means you really want to hear then you better hear properly. Why? If you look here in Isaiah, Isaiah says it's taken from Isaiah,

keep on hearing, but don't under. Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the hearts of this people dull and the ears heavy and blind their eyes

Isaiah will bring his message or prophecy to ask Israel to repent. He will tell it to them in such a way that they will here but they cannot hear, see but they cannot see. And in fact, when you tell them the heart of the people become dull, the eyes heavy and be blinded. The more you show them, the more angry they are at you, the more they cannot see.

Ezekiel 3, 'Thus says the Lord God.' He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

The word of God in symbol or parable, when it comes out to people has an effect. If I tell you as a narrative, it doesn't have the same effect.

Other seeds fell on good soil, produce a grain, hundred fold, sixty fold, some thirty fold. He says he has ear let him hear.

Jesus uses the same thing. Now blesses are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear. So there are certain people who see by cannot see, hear but cannot hear, but you have got eyes to see and ears to hear, which means when they use symbols for Christians, it will gain your attention. When you hear about a beast or everybody come from revelation. Because it's fantastical, you gain attention and spur obedience. If you are backsliding Christian, it will shock you. You either repent or you don't. If try sharing revelation with non-Christian, it will shock them so much so it will harden their hearts. Only those who are spiritually sensitive can actually see and hear and all that. So that's why there is a challenge to hear.

So when this word goes out to have you in your Zoom meetings at home, and here it is a very, very serious word. If you are God's child, when the word is preached, Revelation you will hear. It won't be fantastical. You will hear you will obey. If you're a backsliding Christian and having a struggle, it will shock you because it talks about judgment. It will shock you that you can't mess around. You're either with God, you see you either had the mark of the beast or the mark of God. Which one you got? You cannot say, at the present moment no mark. It is called pending. Maybe tomorrow, I am going to get my act together and then I got the mark of God. Now it is pending. No, the Bible tell, yours is six, six, six until you change to seven, seven, seven. Default mode is what? Six, six, six. Oh, shocking. Better do something about it. That's why Jesus tells you in symbols.

Now Jesus is perfectly capable of explaining symbol. When Jesus want to tell you properly, he know how to tell.

Rev 1:20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

You think Jesus cannot tell you. He can tell you what it means. Same thing as Matthew 13

18"Hear then the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

It means the devil came and pick the seed away. If Jesus want to explain to you, he will explain to you, he don't want. That's right and why doesn't he want. Well if you look here,

6:1 Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

Horrible. You release this, the guy comes out and cause war all over the world, thousands and millions die. Who called the horseman to come? The lamb. Who opened the seal? The lamb. So when Hitler invaded Poland and millions died in Stalin killed his own people and Mouzey Tung killed 50 million people during the great leap forward, who opened the seal, the lamb. The reason,

Mark 13:32 "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father...37And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

If your father going to come back to your house and tell the children you don't play play. If I want to come back exactly 9 o'clock, I play at 9 o'clock. The reason why Jesus doesn't tell you all this is, you know why, because he wants you to be awake. Every aspect of your life, every moment, so that is why he will never tell you. The first pastor that stand up here and tell you exactly when Jesus come and all that, basically you can kick him out because he's a false prophet. The moment someone tells you this is where Jesus is coming back again. It's a false prophet. I can easily tell you because this verse tells you. Nobody knows that even the son doesn't know, even the son doesn't know. Some pastors know, I don't know, very clever. So, if you know, you don't have to jagga, right. You play, play, play until last minute and then you go and do. See, that's not how it's supposed to be. Now I'm going to go for the last 15 to 20 minutes, the literary restructure.

Now you have to understand the structure of the book of revelation. So if I give you the structure, when you read then you understand a bit. So I suppose only one or two of you have read the rest of you. Haven't read it. Okay. I want you to read it like a story book. You read all the symbols. Don't work it out. I'll help you work it out later on, but just read it like a storybook. And here is how you go.

Now, the first three chapters about us, the imperfect church. How and why are we imperfect. So Jesus will have a vision and a vision he will come and tell us why we are imperfect. Don't go and read the seven churches, that one Ephesus are very bad, they all lost their first love, very bad. Look at Laodicea, you know very rich church, you know our church not so rich, it is okay. We're not so rich. It doesn't apply to us. But you don't understand this describes all of us perfectly. It is the message to the entire church of the world. Otherwise you're saying in those days only go seven church, only seven church. What about the rest? Perfect is it. No, it is a circular letter to seven churches. After that there will be seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls. Each of them are symbolic way of depicting punishment, judgment, pain. Each of these when you read, you'll find that the judgment and the pain and the misery is intensified, you know? Worse and worse and worse until the, almost the worst ones in the bowls. In between there is a bit of Star Wars here where we talk about the woman who is pregnant and the two witnesses, which actually talks about spiritual warfare.

So spiritual warfare will be here. Then finally, after all the judgment done, there is final judgment battle Armageddon, and then you got to perfected and then the millennium, and then we got a church. In chapter 21 onwards, that is perfected in the new heavens and new earth. There is a conclusion here. So this is a rough scheme is in your PowerPoint. It will be on the website. You don't have to write anything down.

So all these things, are they in chronological order? A big question. Do we move from here, here, here, here. Is it chronological? This is chronological final judgment and the church perfected, this is chronological. Nobody will argue with you, but this one, this one, this one, are they all chronological. Very important question to answer. So seals, trumpets, bowls and then the witness, is it chronological or is it sequential in

terms of the visions? It is a sequence in which the visions are received, but not necessarily indicating the timeline over which these events will unfold. Okay, big difference.

Now their classical approach would be, these things are going to be in the past, these things are going to be present or these things in the future, all these things are going to be happening all the time. So we're talking about the bowls, the seals, the trumpet are they happened in the past, are they happening now, or they will happen in the future? Or they happening all the time? It was very simple. I don't want to use difficult fancy terms because they confuse people. I usually break down to more easy ways of understanding.

This is the futurist world. What's happening? We are looking at this futurist. Now you can read Revelations letter to the seven churches. Revelations 20 talk about the millionaire, which is the basically the thousand-year rule, then after that, the rest is the dragon is destroyed. Judgment and new heaven. I think there is no argument here.

Chapter 14 to 19 trumpets, seals, witnesses, the woman, the dragon, the beast, the bowls, the harlot, Armageddon, all this is big trouble. It's called tribulation. When does this thing happen? All right. Now if you take all these things which you read in Revelations 14 to 19 this is in the future. There is a futurist view, which means you take all these as chronological. That means we are here now. We are here now. You thoughts Sabah election was bad. This is even worse. This is going to happen that means tomorrow or the next day, the seal, the trumpet, the witness is going to come. Suffering and tribulation.

Now another part of the view of the future is that we are here now, but then there are some people who say, but it's okay the church will be raptured. Before the big trouble come, what is happening we are going to be raptured. That means that Jesus is going to come in the clouds and just when we are having our live telecast, church service, you know half the people in church just disappeared and all their clothes are left in piles. That's called a rapture. So they rapture. So but problem is that? I'll talk about the problems later. So rapture here and then another group will say, no rapture here, you don't escape. You suffer and then you rapture, which is a bit sad. I don't like this view.

Then what happens is that the church will have to go through tribulation. Now there are several problems to this view. When they say the tribulation will come in the future and we will be raptured here, Israel will be restored during this time. But if you read in Revelations, no mention of Israel being reconstituted. I'm talking about ethnic political Israel. None. Donald Trump can move his embassy to Israel, it doesn't matter. Revelations doesn't say it. Revelations very funny, if rapture so important, how come Revelation never write about rapture. 22 chapters not one about rapture. The only time you read about rapture is where 1-Thess chapter four. That's the only piece. Very hard to make doctrine based on one passage in the whole of scripture, which could be interpreted another way. So that's a problem for us.

And then they keep changing who is the antichrist? We don't know, they kept changing who it is and the trouble is if this is going to happen in the future and we get the rapture, the letter written to seven churches, you think it is relevant for the seven churches. He says, these are things that are soon going to happen. He wrote to churches, so it doesn't quite make sense. No relevance. Okay. And then we try to interpret all these events through more modern eyes, very kind of difficult.

Now, the other view is all these things happened in the past. We are now here, we are in the millennium. All these bad things happened in the past, the fall of Jerusalem AD 70, the fall of Rome is all the things that happened in Revelation 4 to 19, and we are just waiting for Jesus to come and finish the whole thing. But the problem is there's very little evidence because if you see Revelation is written in AD 90, correct. When did the fall of Jerusalem come AD 70, right. Wow! I mean the fall comes before the letter. There's a bit late for you to read letters. So there's a problem with it.

So this is suffering in the past, we are here now. The next one is historicist chronological sequence, which means this one sayings, all these things happen and they're basically can be interpreted in terms of history. That means all these things happened in history and who was the beast? The Pope during Martin Luther's time. So then they tried to put all the history, medieval wall reformation, everything, you block it onto all these symbols. The problem is you can't be sure, are you sure the beast is the pope, which Pope, so many pope you know? So that there is a problem with this particular view as well.

Not only that the history is only relevant to Western church. Only the Western pope is antichrist, the Chinese side nothing, Indians side don't have. So it's very, very peculiar to only the history of the Western church. So may not necessarily make sense. Then you start to read the newspaper or what happened. Europe formed together how many years ago? About 40 years ago, Europe form together. So Europe must be the beast. Even in my time in Europe came together, everybody who was Bible lad this is beast, it is coming true. Now, Europe going to dismantle, England left. So obviously that's wrong. It's very hard for you to pinpoint historical events with any degree of certainty.

Now, so I would take more of the idealist view. The idealist views means that we are now living through Revelations 4 to 19, because there's enough bad stuff happening, but we can't exactly pinpoint historical events to particular seals, I will demonstrate to you later on, and why I say that is because these seals, these trumpets and these bowls are not necessarily sequential and chronological. They're actually recapitulative, which means they occur with themes, which actually overlap. It's not sequential.

John saw these things as a sequence of visions. They are all recapping the same thing. It's like, you know, have you all watch Korean serials, I am sure all ladies watch Korean serial. Every time you start the new episode, what will happen? They'll recap the old one. So because you're all women all can all remember. Then you see how come Revelation I read, all died already then die again and then again, how many times. Then you understand is recapitulated, which is it is repeating itself. Now, if you look here, you've got the beast chapter 13.

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

So when did the beast come and where it is from. It is from the sea. When did it come? Chapter 13 but then you look beast already attacking in chapter 11

7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,

This is in chapter 11 but he only came out in chapter 13. Is it the same beast or different beast? Right, it is a bit puzzling. It is not told in chronological sequence. Here you have Babylon introduced in chapter 17

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

Chapter 17 introduced. Then you look here Babylon already destroyed in chapter 16.

19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Destroyed in chapter 16 but introduced in chapter 17. Is this a new Babylon or the old? Confused. Then you go and read chapter 14. Another interesting

8 Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

Babylon died already two times before chapter 17. No wonder, the poor fellow reading the Bible revelation thought it is science fiction. Die, resurrected, die resurrect again. So if you think it is sequential, you are out of your mind. How could he be sequential? It is a sequence of vision. Telling you the same thing, but different point of view.

Let's look at the final judgment on believers, chapter 14 verse 19

19 So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

The angel put everybody in a wine press and they all bleed and the blood goes up to the horse's nose, which is higher than my head for thousands and thousands of miles, a lot of people died. Yet chapter 19, some more another final battle. And then chapter 20, another one. Hey which one, I thought people in chapter 14 died already. There is somewhere to people to die here. How many times are you going to die or it different sort of people.

So basically it's repetitive. What about the final battle fighting with God. Revelation 19, battle of Armageddon. Revelation 16, got final battle too and Revelation 20 also got another final battle. Is it three battles or one? So is obviously recapitulative.

Look at this idea of Daniel. Daniel has statue four metals, chapter seven four beast and then chapter eight, the ram and the goat. Chapter 2, the four metals means four kingdoms, chapter seven the four beasts are the same four kingdoms and chapter three there is an overlap of the ram and the goats and the beast. So the vision is coming back again, it is repetitive. So what we are seeing here is their repetitive cycles of judgment and salvation. Whether is Revelations 6 and 7, 14, it is the same story being told again and again except the last bit is really chronological, but this bit is repetitive and recapitulate. That's why it's structured in this part of the seven letters, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls.

A same goal shot from different angels, shows its beauty from different angels. God also want to show you the shock part three times. Seven seals, seven bowls and seven trumpets, so you know how bad life is. Three different angles for you to know. Okay. So don't try to take the seals, the horsemen all and then plot, this what happened in this or that era. These are all symbols and if God wanted to tell you, this symbols means DAP and this means UMNO, he would have told you.

Because Jesus is perfectly capable of telling you, but he purposely don't want to tell you, so you jaga. So that is exactly why he does it. So what is happening in Revelations 4 to 19 is progressive and it recapitulates over and over again. It's all very nonspecific.

The thousand year rule, another way of dividing is a thousand year rule which is revelation 20. We will deal with that. You can have people who say a thousand year rule, Christ will come before the thousand year rule. Some people say Christ will come after a thousand year rule. Some people will say no thousand year old rule, it is happening now. This is something we will deal in chapter 20, is our millennial view.

Now let me end. John wrote these words,

1-John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour,

Which means revelation is now, it is the last hour. After the last hour, there is no some more last hour, right? It is the last hour.

and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

So revelations talk, there are many beasts, many antichrist, they come repetitively because at every age if you were in the church of Smyrna AD90, your beast would be Rome, Domitian. So this word is relevant to you. When they released the horsemen and conquering, you can see all the fighting and the Roman empire, the Greek empire split into four different parts and Romans got Antony and Cleopatra and, you can see all that there. Right? And Rome being taken over by other people, you can see all the horsemen, you see the pestilence, you see the red horse, it's relevant to you, but you can see the same horsemen during World War II isn't it and World War I. Same horsemen coming out, conquering, civil strike. Today, you can see black lives matter, you got all these people who are basically on the streets, you know all over the world, you know, civil unrest and that is about the horsemen. If you talk about pestilence today. Actually today's pestilence is nothing. The death rate is 2%. In Europe in those days the plague death rate was 20%.

So this word is as relevant for a guy who lives in AD 90, 1960, 2020, because the pattern is repetitive. And so we as Christians, when we read our idea is to see, this pattern is happening in my life. Why is this happening? Why is God allowing this to happen in our lives?

Our job is not to read exactly when Jesus comes, I play, play until Jesus come then I repent. That's not what it is for. Jesus can make it plain if he wants to, he doesn't want to make it plain.

Next week we will do first part of chapter one, talking about the vision of Jesus. Then we will go into tree sessions where we'll talk about the different churches. This part is the most practical because it actually talks about all our sin and what we need to deal with. Then we will do the majesty of God, which is basically worship. It tells you in the center of the universe what's happening. The center of the universe is not you. The center universe is God and the lamb. That's the majesty there. Then it talks about seven seals, trumpets and all these other things before the church is perfected.

So that's all. So I hope for all of you at home this one hour lecture a bit long, try to go through some of the questions there in your discussion group. So let's end with a word of prayer.

Lord, we thank you. We ask that as we open the pages of this most exciting book in the entire Bible that you fill us with what you want us to be filled with, the seven spirits, that the servant spirit will give us fear of God, Holy fear or love and a desire to please you, because this is the last hour and many antichrist are coming. We asked for Jesus' sake. Amen