

Bible Survey, part 18 – The New Testament Revelation – “Recovering Our First Love”

“I, John . . . was on the island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
Revelation 1:9

The Apostle John:

- Fisherman on the Sea of Galilee
- Youngest of the twelve disciples
- Member of the “inner circle” with Peter and James (his brother)

John’s mother, Salome, was Mary’s sister [cf. John 19:25 with Mark 15:40] – so Jesus and John were cousins – perhaps explaining why (from the cross) Jesus committed His mother’s care to John [John 19:27].

Church father Irenaeus tells us that, after Jesus’ ascension, John lived in Jerusalem for a while – and then took Jesus’ mother Mary and moved to Ephesus.



Irenaeus also tells us that John became the “**Bishop**” (if you will) of Ephesus and the surrounding churches.

In A.D. 94 – as part of a widespread persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire – Emperor Domitian exiled John for two years to the island of Patmos.



Patmos harbor



Greek Orthodox Monastery



Entrance, with mosaic over the door, to the cave where the Apostle John lived.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day [Sunday] and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet, which said, ‘Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches . . .’” Revelation 1:10-11



After Domitian died in A.D. 96, John was allowed to return to Ephesus where he died c. A.D. 100 at the approximate age of 95 years old.

- **WHO** wrote it? **Apostle John**
- **WHERE** did he write it? **Patmos**
- **WHEN** did he write it? **c. A.D. 95**
- **WHY** did he write it?
Revelation 1:19 – to tell us about “. . . the things that will take place later.”

When it comes to **interpreting** the book of Revelation, there are basically **four [4] different approaches**.

Approach #1 – Preterist [“bygone”]

- Entire book talking about 1st century A.D.
- Conflict between the Jews and the Roman Empire

Approach #2 – Allegorical

- Entire book is symbolic only
- Good people = Christianity
- Bad people = paganism

Approach #3 – Continuously Historical

- Entire book is predicting the events of church history over the last 2000 years
- The 1000-year “**Millenium**” [Revelation 20:4] is symbolic and has been going continuously ever since Jesus’ resurrection

The “Continuous Historical” approach is the common view of Reformed theology, Covenant theology, and 5-point Calvinist theology.

All three of these approaches deny that the Lord Jesus Christ is returning to this earth at the end of the age: literally, visibly, bodily, and actually – to rule over a real 1000 year Kingdom here on earth [Revelation 20:4, 6].

[Angels to the disciples at the Ascension] “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back **in the same way** you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11

How did “this same Jesus go into heaven”?

Bodily – visibly – literally – actually!

Approach #4 – Literal

- Entire book literally says what it means and means what it says
- **Chapters 1-3** apply to the **Seven Churches of the Apostle John’s day**
- **Chapters 4-22** apply to **literal, future events** at the end of this age

“After this, I [John] looked, and before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice I had heard . . . said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place **hereafter.**’” Revelation 4:1

Here at McLean Bible Church, we take **Approach #4**.

We don’t understand every event in the book of Revelation – but we believe that every event is going to literally happen just as the Bible says it will.

“In the end – Jesus wins!”

So What?

“I know your deeds, your labor, and your perseverance . . . and that you have labored for My name’s sake and have not grown weary.” Revelation 2:2-3

“Nevertheless, I have this against you: you have left your first love.” Revelation 2:4

“First love” = the Lord Jesus Christ

“Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, and repent! And do the things you did at first!” Revelation 2:5a

- When you **first came to Christ**
- When the **wonder of the cross** dominated your heart and the **service of the cross** was your highest aspiration

None of this will happen until it happens **inside you and me first!**

“ . . . **Repent . . .**” Revelation 2:5

We need “**radical surgery**” by the Holy Spirit – **not** just “**band-aid**” treatment

Summer Series: Recapturing Our First Love