

# Have No Fear, The End is Near

9.9.09

A Practical Discussion on the  
Book of Revelation

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## Before we begin

- We're taking it slow.
- If you want to discuss "what it means", please do so with a pastor outside of small groups.
- We can understand this book.
- As with any book of the Bible, we must start with the big picture and zoom in from there.
- In the spirit of 1 Corinthians 13:2

## Our Text

**Revelation 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,<sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.<sup>3</sup> Blessed 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.<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood<sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.<sup>7</sup> Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.<sup>8</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

## Who – “to his servant John”

- John, the apostle
- Wrote a lot of the New Testament
- Most likely outlived all the other apostles
- Died of natural causes at an old age
- Buried in Ephesus
  
- *If you're the last apostle alive during a time of great tension for the church, what would these visions have meant to you?*

## What – “the revelation of Jesus Christ”

- Shares some similarities with Apocalyptic Literature
  - A dualism between good and evil is present
  - Filled with symbols and visions
  - Reveals an end of history
  
- Note: Very little in the book is new!

## When — “the time is near”

- A lot of discussion surround the dating of Revelation.
- Definitely written during a time of persecution for the church.
- Possible dates: Nero (54-68 AD) or Domitian (81-96 AD)
- I favor the later date based on the situation of the churches at that time and the type of persecution Domitian created.

## The Four Views

- The Preterist View
  - Everything already happened
- The Historicist View
  - An outline of church history from then until the return of Christ
- The Futurist View
  - Most of the book will be fulfilled during some final crisis just before the return of Christ
- The Symbolist View
  - No single fulfillment, but repeated fulfillments, themes, and principles

### For the purposes of this study...

- Our main premise: The book mattered to them and it matters to us.
- Preterist – What then does it mean for us?
- Historicist – What does it mean for them and us?
- Futurist – What did it mean for them?
- Symbolist – It mattered for them and it matters to us.
- Note: Symbolists try to find insight in the other three views, because we read it as though the patterns are repeated.

### Where – “to the seven churches that are in Asia”

- John writes from exile on the island of Patmos. (1:9)
- He writes to seven churches in modern day Turkey, but we believe it was meant to be distributed to the whole church.

## Why

- To ease fear and concern
  - Where is Jesus?
- To combat worldliness
  - Whose side are you on?
- To point to Jesus
  - He's still on His throne and in control!
  - Fear and worship Him alone!
  - He wins and the Devil loses!

## Final thoughts

- “blessed” (1:3 and 22:7)
- “prophecy” (1:3)
- “the seven spirits” (1:4)
- “the Alpha and the Omega” (1:8)