

Revelation 1:10, 19

Sunday 11/5/2006

We have been in a systematic study of the Bible. I say this to give a lead back every week so you understand if somebody is new coming in or maybe missed last week, so you can jump up to speed here. From the day we started our church, which is about three and a half years ago now, we have been endeavoring to get people grounded in the Word of God. We started out with a process, worked through some things, getting to some places, and then we took the Bible on full force. We have come through every book of the Bible on a Sunday and laid out all the things that you need to be able to figure out when you read those books, what you are looking for.

Then we started going through internally, and I was showing you how God lays His Bible out through a systematic study of the number seven. When you come through the Bible, you are going to find that over 800 times God uses the number seven to show you something in the Old Testament alone. Over 800 times. I am not a rocket scientist, but I would think that if you are reading your Bible and you are paying attention and you saw God say something to you over 800 times, you would think that God was trying to show you something. I do not know why we have all these other things out here to try to teach people the Bible. There are two ways to learn the Bible: God's way and man's way. God's way is best.

I. The Seven Series and Spiritual Growth

We have gone through this series of sevens. The first thing we talked about, I wanted you to see, is I showed you in the Bible the seven stages of spiritual growth, how you grow spiritually as you get into the Word of God. These are natural things that just take place in your life as you grow spiritually. If you learn the Bible, when I look at you to preach this morning, we have all kinds of people in all kinds of different walks of life who know all kinds of different things about the Bible. I basically look at you where you are at in one of those seven stages. Some of you have just gotten saved and are learning the first baby steps of Christianity. Some of you have been around for a while and are starting to put things together. Some of you have been around quite a while and are really getting it together. Some of you have been around for a long time and, very frankly, you are a pain, and I wish you would get out of here. No, I am just kidding. You are really getting it together, and I see that. That is what is exciting for me. It is exciting to me to see the Bible work in your life, and that is what it is supposed to do.

Then we talked about the seven laws in the Bible when I went through that. We talked about how the Bible has seven mysteries in it. Those seven mysteries really show you the things that God has for you and me as the body of Christ. We talked about the seven different baptisms in the Bible and what they represent. I think one of the greatest studies that we talked from a practical standpoint was when we looked at the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. You see, that answers a lot of questions. It helps you put a lot of things together. I have an experience with people all the time, and they come through different troubles in life, and they are diagnosed with all different kinds of quacko things. When I say, "This is what your psychiatrist has told you is wrong with you," I say, "Now, let me show you something. When I lay this out to you, or what changed about you the day you got saved, you show me how you can have what

they say you have if the Bible is true in what it says." You have to learn those things. The average Christian, if you went up to them, say five, ten, fifteen years, if you said to them, "Name me two things that changed about you the day you got saved about your physical, spiritual nature," they would not be able to tell you. But you need to know these things.

Then we were talking about a historical aspect, and I showed you that God's Spirit gave this country a seven-grade awakening. Then I showed you that as the devil brought about, God brought about those seven great awakenings, the devil brought seven counterfeits to counter those great awakenings. One of the counterfeits that he brought was the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses started in about 1882 or maybe before that. When they started, they were started by the devil to counter-effect what God was doing in one of the great awakenings. Bring them on over. We will help educate them. We are looking forward to that.

Then we talked about the key words and phrases in the Bible. I showed you how the Bible is built around very simple one-syllable words. We have the idea today that the Bible is some hard book that you cannot understand. That idea is put forth by a lot of pastors because they want to always have the edge over you, that they always know more about the Bible than you do. That is a form of control. As long as you always know something and you do not teach, it is like the Rocky movie, the one where the Eye of the Tiger, where they are going to spar at the last one and they are dancing around there before they hit each other. Rocky says, "I do not know, Apollo, you taught me pretty good." And Apollo says, "Yeah, but I did not teach you everything." See, always hold a little bit back when you want to control people because you always want to look down on, but you never want to look at you and me as equals. I look at you as equals.

He told me last week about you two teaming up together and dealing with those people at that. He is okay if I tell that. I am going to tell it anyhow. I will see if I get used to it. That is what I am talking about. I want you guys, everybody in here, after five years, you better know the Bible as good as me or better than me. I really do not know it. I fake a lot of it. I know at this point in my life, I can tell you stuff that is not true, and you do not know the difference, so I can get along all right. I am just kidding. I expect you to know it better than me. I do not want to hold anything back. I want to give you everything. I find stuff out that I did not see. I found like 20 things this week that I did not see last week. As you grow, everybody is on the same turf when it comes to learning God's Word. It is not about your IQ. It is not about where you went to school. It is not about whether you know Greek or Hebrew. It is about how well and how close you are to God and God's Spirit and you and your relationship. Then God reveals it to you. Many of you now at this point in your life are beginning to see how all these things work and how these studies on the sevens.

I told you this when we started: it is kind of like it builds a safety net. The reason why there are so many heresies in the church today and why so many people get confused about everything is if you want to scare God's people, just take some off-the-wall thing and throw it out to them. They do not have a clue because they do not know where they stand in the Bible themselves. They are good people. They really are. I get angry at this, not at the people, because I love God's people, but what I really have a problem with is the preachers. Preachers today have betrayed their calling as far as I am concerned. The calling of a preacher, a pastor, is to spend whatever

time it takes with his people helping them understand the Scriptures. If you are doing anything other than that more time than you have got, then you have betrayed your calling. That is how I feel about it.

II. The Importance of Doctrine and Bible Study

My job is to, and I have told you this before, the number one issue in our church is doctrine. The Bible says over there in 1 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable. It is profitable for four things, but the first thing it says is the word doctrine. The job one of this church is to protect the integrity of the doctrine of the Bible. The second job of this church is to get everybody in this building who wants to know why they believe what they believe. Not just, "I believe this," but being able to understand why you believe it. That is the job of a pastor.

I do not send you off to Bible college. I think, frankly, Bible college is a waste. I do not send you off to Bible college. I just follow the simple pattern in the Bible. It is found over there, and this is not new to most of you, it is found over there in Isaiah chapter 28. Coming down through that great chapter there around verse 9, he asks a question. It is a great question. In fact, he asks two questions.

Isaiah 28:9

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?

That is a good question. He starts out by saying, "Who can we teach knowledge to? And who can we get to understand doctrine?" Then he answers it and he says, "Them that are weaned from the milk." You see, when you get saved, you are a baby Christian. Just like all babies, you have to have milk. But as you grow, you need to be weaned off of that milk, and you need to come to the point in your life, like Hebrews chapter 5 says, that you really grow. The writer of Hebrews told those people, he says, "You know what? You guys ought to be teachers. You guys ought to be really impacting people's lives." But he said, "You know what? We have to teach the same principles or the first principles, the basic foundation of the oracles of God, again to you. Because you have not moved past the point of the day you got saved." That is the state of most Christians today. I do not want that for you. I want you to grow. I want you to mature. I want you to know not only what you believe, but why you believe what you believe. I want you to be able to fend off all of the heresies that are out there today. Brother, there are a lot of them out there infecting the body of Christ.

He says, "Them that are weaned from the milk." Then he gives a great statement in verse 10.

Isaiah 28:10

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Now that is a great verse. Because what it says is this, when you tie in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, it says there that the day you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation is Jesus Christ. The rest of your foundation you build upon that foundation. Did you notice here, you

builders? Did you notice what he is talking about here? He is talking about line upon line, precept upon precept. He is likening the precepts to a line. Did you ever build a wall? When you build a wall, what you do is you lay down a plumb line. That plumb line keeps the wall straight. What he is saying here is when I wean you off the milk of the Word of God, I have a process by which I am to teach you. I teach you principle by principle. We have a line that keeps our wall straight, the wall of our bodies being the temple of God. Your body and my body is likened to the temple of God. When you got saved, you laid the foundation of that temple. Now you are in the process of building up those walls. They have got to be straight walls. The only way they are straight walls is by keeping your doctrine straight.

When you get the walls up and you get the roof on, there is another part of this, and it is talked about in the Bible, and that is you have to put the furnishings in. That is why the Bible talks about when a man gets the Word of God in his life, he is thoroughly furnished. All the new Bibles say thoroughly finished. No, thoroughly furnished because there are furnishings in that tabernacle in the Old Testament, which is a picture of your body in the New Testament, that you have to put those things in your life. When you do not put those things in your life, you grieve the Holy Spirit of God. That is how you do it. Line upon line, precept upon precept. Every time you come to Sunday morning, I give you another precept, sometimes four or five of them. You come on Thursday night, you get more precepts. You come over to my house through the week, you get more precepts. Then as you go through life, you add a little. Here a little, there a little. Once you get the foundation, you start taking truth from every direction and laying on that foundation. As you lay that on that foundation, you build your body strong. The walls are straight. Now they are straight because of the doctrine that you have held yourself accountable to. That is why the job number one of this church is to preserve the integrity of Bible doctrine. Of course, you have to know the Bible to be able to do that.

III. Introducing the Book of Revelation and the Seven System

With all this under our belt now, I thought about this and I thought to myself, we are ready for this. So what are we going to do next time in this next study series is I am going to show you how the seven series come into play to break down a whole book of the Bible. We have never seen it like this before. We have had the seven judgments, the seven laws, the individual thing. Now I am going to take one book in the Bible and I am going to show you how what is presumed to be the hardest, most hardest book in the Bible is easily broken down once you understand the seven system. It is the book of Revelation. In this study, I want to begin to break down for you and show you how the whole book of Revelation. Now, this is not going to be a verse by verse of Revelation. We will do that when we come through it in our Bible studies and our little groups. But you are going to get enough information out of this that you ought to be able to figure it out.

The book of Revelation is the most unique book in the Bible. It is the most incredible book in the Bible because it is the only book in the Bible that completely breaks itself down through this seven systems. You have just come through in the Old Testament over 800 times. I never counted them in the New Testament, but certainly well over a thousand times now. By the time you get to

the book of Revelation, you have been told at least a thousand times that seven is the key. Then the last book in the Bible, the last book in your Bible. If you are paying attention and you are reading through the Old Testament, you keep seeing God doing it by sevens. Sevens, sevens, sevens, sevens, sevens, sevens, sevens, sevens, everything is multiples of sevens, everything is by sevens, 600 times, 700 times, 800 times, 900 times. You get into the New Testament coming up through Paul. You see it there, not as much as in the Old Testament, but it is very there. Then you come to the book of Revelation. You have just seen over a thousand times how the number seven is the key to what God is doing. Then you open up this book called Revelation and you see:

- Seven churches
- Seven years tribulation
- Seven spirits of God
- Seven stars
- Seven candlesticks
- Seven angels
- Seven eyes
- Seven horns
- Seven heads
- Seven kings
- Seven seals
- Seven trumpets
- Seven thunders
- Seven plagues
- Seven vials
- Seven characters

Now you think that after seeing that seven system for over 800 times, you would figure out that, "Wow, the key to Revelation must be the number seven." But oh no, no, no, no, not us. No. We cannot go there.

IV. Why the Book of Revelation is Hated

The book of Revelation is sometimes called the Apocalypse. It is supposed to be the hardest book in your Bible. It is supposed to be the book of great mysteries. In truth, it is really the easiest book in the Bible. I will tell you why men make it so complicated: because the book of Revelation is the most hated book in the Bible. There is no question about it. The book of Revelation is hated for two reasons.

1. The unsaved world hates it because it spells the doom of the Democrats and the Republicans. It spells the end of the United Nations. It spells the end of all political systems and monarchies on planet Earth. It spells the end and doom of everything that man has orchestrated to get around the Word of God and God's coming kingdom. So the unsaved world cannot stand the book of Revelation. They will reject it. They will laugh at it. They will make fun of it. You have got guys all down through history that have done that. You have

got men, when Milton wrote his famous thing, Paradise Lost, it was nothing more than a parody on what the Bible said in the book of Revelation. When Dante's Inferno is nothing more than a parody on what... I do not know what parody means, but I heard it used and it kind of fits in here. It means it is a farce. It is a made-up concept of a truth to get around it. That is exactly what unsaved men do with the book of Revelation. You will never find a politician quoting the book of Revelation. They will talk about love in Jesus. They will talk about their faith. They will talk about how strong their faith is. But they will never quote you Revelation chapter 19. You will never see a politician get up and he will... I have heard him. I have heard him get up and post something out of Matthew about the Good Samaritan and throw it into their political speech. I have heard him get up there and pull something sweet out. I heard somebody say last week, and oh, this was great. I was on the Oprah Show, and I love Oprah because it smells like opium. She is on there and she is making a statement about something, and then somebody does something, and she says, "And a good book says, 'And a little child shall lead them.'" And everybody applauded. Now, Oprah obviously does not understand the context where the Bible says, "And a little child shall lead them." Because that is a context out of the Old Testament of the second coming of Christ when Christ comes back and sets up His kingdom in the millennium. It had nothing to do with what she was talking about. But you see, it is a nice phrase. We like nice phrases. Politicians like nice phrases. They want you to think they are spiritual, so they will get up and they will talk about some little verse out of the Bible. It is usually, I laugh because it is usually quoted wrong. But you will never hear one get up and say, "In Revelation chapter 19," or get up there where it said, "or Revelation chapter 20, I saw a great white throne and him sat on from whose face the heaven earth fled away." You will not hear him say that. Because that is going to be the end of politics. So they hate the book because of that.

2. The religious world hates it. The religious world hates it because the book of Revelation, once you get it in the right form and the system of sevens, it leaves no doubt in your mind what Bible doctrines are right and what Bible doctrines are wrong. That is why the Jehovah's Witnesses cannot deal with the book of Revelation. The Jehovah's Witnesses cannot deal with the book of Revelation because they get over there in Revelation chapter 7, chapter 11, because the Jehovah's Witnesses think that only 144,000 people are going to go to heaven. That is right, right? And they get that out of Revelation chapter 7, Revelation chapter 14. Now here is the problem. There have been nine million Jehovah's Witnesses down through history, and every one of them think they are one of 144,000, right? Now that does not bother them when you go over to Revelation that says, first of all, the 144,000 are only male. So there goes all your JW women. And then the second thing is they have to be virgins. So there goes nine-tenths. I mean, but they do not care about that. They cannot take that book the way it is because if you take the book of Revelation the way it stands, you cannot be a Jehovah's Witness anymore. You have got to be a Baptist. There is no way around it.

Church of Christ is the same way. Church of Christ will tell you the book of Revelation means nothing. If you are a Presbyterian, if you are a Biscopalian, if you are a Lutheran, or whatever the case, you will be told that the book of Revelation means absolutely nothing as far as truth. It is a poetic book. It is a book of symbolism. The reason why they cannot accept that is because the book of Revelation, as it stands, breaking itself down through the series of sevens, that is the way

God intended it to be. He wanted to take a book, and I love it. God says it is called the Revelation of John. Man calls it the Apocalypse. Now, you know what the word Apocalypse means? It means Revelation. But you see, if you left it the way God said it, you would understand that God wanted to reveal something to you through the book of Revelation. When you call it the Apocalypse, then you walk around as a Christian not knowing that God wants to reveal something, because when is the last time you met a Christian and knew what Apocalypse meant? Man is always trying to take that thing and put it in a fashion that he just distorts the pure, simple teaching of the Word of God so he can have something over on you. If I told you the book of Revelation is the book of Revelation, you would say, "Well, I am going to go home and see what God revealed to me." And you come back next week and you know it as good as I do. But if I say, "Now, son, that is the Apocalypse, my child," and you go, "Whoa, that is a big \$25 word." Yes, it is. And you do not have enough money right now to figure out what that word means. So I will tell you, the word Apocalypse means the book of Revelation is a mystery. So you go out of here saying, "Wow, I wish I was as smart as that guy up there. He knows the mystery and I do not." It is the Apocalypse. It is the book of Revelation. You know what God said? He said, "I want to reveal something to John. And here is how I am going to do it. I am going to put it in a book. I am going to put it in a book. And I am going to reveal this thing to a man. And this will, all he has got to do is read it, follow the guidelines, follow the pattern in the Bible, and he will understand that book. I am going to give it to him. I am going to reveal it to him."

This is why religions do not like the book of Revelation. Because it shows you that man is only going to be on this planet for 6,000 years and the 7,000 years is going to be the millennium. No question about it. It shows you, through the System of Sevens, that the rapture of the church is just the way that we all teach us going to be. When you start to study the book of Revelation, you have got guys who believe in all millennialism, in post-millennialism, pre-trib rapture, mid-trib rapture, end of the trib rapture, no rapture. You know what? The reason why they do not like to follow the guidelines of Revelation to lay it out? Because the book of Revelation tells you exactly. Do you really think when the Bible said God is not the author of confusion, that in the midst of all this confusion, God would not give you a clear line of truth? I mean, what kind of God would just allow you to be confused all your life and then have the audacity to judge you by the truth when He never gave you the truth to begin with? You see, it becomes real simple.

The book of Revelation shows you that the tribulation is literal and there is going to be a literal restoration of the nation of Israel. It shows you in the book of Revelation that the second coming of Christ is literal and not spiritual. It shows you that the millennial reign of Christ is literal and not spiritual. It shows you that the new heavens and the new earth are right on course and they are very true in the Bible. It shows you, I guess most important of all, that hell is literal.

Over the years, the devil has just flooded the market with material that goes against the Bible because he knew that God's people who do not read the Bible and pastors who do not teach the Bible would raise up generation after generation of good men and women who just simply did not know why they believe what they believe and be able to explain it in the Bible. So he adds all this stuff in. I always like, I remember when they found that a couple of months ago, six or seven

months ago, oh, you should have heard it. You should have heard the reverb around some of the churches when they found the Gospel according to Judas. Like, now this means something. You should have saw the hubbub in 1946 with all the scholars when they found the Dead Sea Scrolls. Now they are going to come into Union Station. They are going to have them on display down at the Union Station. I am sure that will bring in millions of people. I just be lined up. I want to see the Dead Sea Scrolls. Yeah, right. But you see, they thought, "Wow, this old rebel." Hey, let me tell you something. If God waited until 1946 to finish out His Bible, we are in trouble. We are in trouble.

Somebody says, "Well, how do you know that? How could you say that? Why do not you know? How do not you know? Or how do you know that those Dead Sea Scrolls just are not really important?" You know how you know? You know the Bible yourself. You know the greatest type of the lake of fire in the Bible is the Dead Sea? That is where Sodom and Gomorrah was. When God rained fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah in Revelation chapter 17 and 18 and 19, that is what became the Dead Sea. You know the Dead Sea is the lowest point on this planet. There is only one other place below sea level that is like Sodom and Gomorrah that someday probably will be the lake of fire. It is New Orleans. I am telling you something. When you see that and you realize that back there in the Old Testament was a place that was so wicked and so vile that when God rained down fire and brimstone on it and put that thing in there, today it is known as the Dead Sea because that is where the dead were in Sodom and Gomorrah. I just do not see the parallel of God bringing the truth out of something dead. But again, that is just me. But that is how the Bible keeps this stuff all straight. All straight.

V. The Significance of "Last Things"

The great lesson is God calls it the Revelation of John. I found something out a long time ago in the Bible and it is true also in life. I found that usually in history, the last thing a man says before he dies is really what his perspective is on things. In the Kansas City Star now, when they redid the Star here a couple months ago and now it has got that new face look, the obituaries have took on a whole new... and I love the obituaries. When you get my age, you start looking, you see your pictures in there. Now they have got a... I love this. They have got a whole... because I read those, and I honestly, I read them and I try to... I read those things, especially the young ones. I just really wonder if they ever say... I look at those pictures and I read about their lives and I wonder myself, I wonder if anybody ever got to them. Sometimes you get a little glimmer of hope by the way they put it in there, "So and so went home to be with the Lord," you know, and trusted Christ, and that is good. Then you read the one that says, "So and so died on this day and he will celebrate the mass of the Christian burial," and you go that way. Sometimes it just... "He was a good old boy and he drank his way into oblivion," and that is bad too. But I like it the way they got that one thing in there to depict one person that died in the last couple of weeks, and they put a little picture in there with him and they tell you all about him. You ever notice that thing? The last thing they say... the last thing in that thing is the final thing they say about him. You see that? You know why? I am going to tell you something because the final thing a man says, a woman says, or a person does is always very important.

General Douglas MacArthur was a great general, but most people do not know anything about him at all today, and anybody that does probably remembers him for the last thing that he said at West Point when he retired. He said, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." If you remember Judge MacArthur, you think about it. When I think of John F. Kennedy, I think the last thing he said before he got his brain split down in Dallas. He said, "Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you," and the next weekend they did it for him. Assassinating. Last thing he said. I always... and it has got me so into this that every time I read a book, I always read the last chapter first. Because I found that if it is goody good, then it is worth... once you see the end, then it is worth going back and reading it, but if the ending is no good, probably the book is no good. That is the way I look at things. Saves me a lot of time.

Listen, it has got a lot of pictures. William Booth started the Salvation Army. You know what the last thing he said was before he died? The last thing out of his mouth was "others." You know what that summed up? That summed up what his life was all about. It was about other people. Other people. If you ever go into the Bible and read the last thing, you want a really good time sometime? Go through the Bible and find the last thing God says about a man. You have got to see the last thing God says about Moses. You have got to see the last thing God says about Abraham. You have got to go to Hebrews chapter 11, God's Great Hall of Fame, and find out the last thing God says about those people. You have got to go into the book of Acts and find the last thing God says about David. When you see that and understand it, you realize that that is a very important tool. Because when God says something the last time about somebody, God has given you the perspective. See, we as humans do not look at it that way. You see, we make mistakes in life right now and we crucify each other for the mistakes. I am not saying when we screw up God does not chastise us, He certainly does. But you know what? The bottom line is, Job already said this life is a veil of tears. You do not find anybody in that Bible that did not struggle with something going through their lifetime. You know what really the bottom line is? Really the bottom line is not how you started or how you ran, but did you finish? That is the key. When you worry about the last thing God is going to say about you, then you will not worry about what everybody else says about you. The last thing you want God to say about you is simply this, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of that kingdom." That is enough for me.

I am telling you, the last thing that God says in the Bible is very important. You know the last thing that Paul said before he died, 1 Timothy, it shows you where Paul's heart was. You know the last thing Paul did before he died? He was writing two books to a young man that he trained for the ministry. In other words, the last thing on his mind was the thing that preoccupied his whole life, training young men for the ministry. So he writes the last thing he says, 1 Timothy, then he gets his head cut off. You know what the last book in your Bible is? The book of Revelation. I will tell you why. The one reason I know the book of Revelation is so important is because it is the last thing God gives you. Last thing God gives you. If the Bible was a pyramid, then the book of Revelation is a capstone. It is just that simple. There is a great lesson you learn out of this. We get the idea that the book of Revelation is a great mystery book, a great book of symbols, and a great big word called allegorical, which does not really mean anything. We get the idea that it is locked away, that it is only a select few.

In the first and second century, there was a group that began to come out of Christianity, and they called them Gnostics. The Gnostic movement was simply this. It was a group of men who were in the church who got the idea that they were educated more than everybody else, and they had an ability to see spiritual things better than the average person. So they brought themselves up over all the body of Christians, and they held themselves up as Gnostics. The word Gnostic means to be a knower. We call them Bible scholars today. Their whole concept was to build a priest class over the common man by which they could control them. If you think all the Gnostics died out in the third century, you do not know very much about the Bible and history. You have got men out there today that will tell you that the book of Revelation is a book that you cannot understand. The book of Revelation is a hard book that you will get messed up getting into it.

I always judge a man's ministry. I always judge a man's ministry and say you should not judge. No, the Bible says he is the spiritual judge of all things. I am not judging the man, I am judging his ministry. I always judge a man's ministry by what he knows about the book of Revelation. Because I will tell you what, you do not have the book of Revelation now, you forget the rest of the Bible. It is the finished piece. That is like making a modern masterpiece of Mona Lisa and forgetting to put her head on. I mean, it is the book of Revelation that brings everything else together. It is the book, the book of Revelation is the key to the Old Testament, the Old Testament is the key to the New Testament. You are going to find that there is more trash written about the book of Revelation than any other book in the Bible.

If I put a sign out there, next week, all next week said, "Come next week, Bible Alexander is going to lay out the book of Revelation. He is going to show you who the Anti-Christ is. He is alive and living now. He is going to tell you what nationality and what kind of car he drives, where his address is, and his telephone number." We would pack this place out. You go out and tell your friend and say, "My pastor has got the secret. He is going to lay out the whole book of Revelation." Everybody is drawn to that. You know what? You put another sign out there and said, "Next week, Bible Alexander is going to preach on the life of Christ." That will be a better Christian. Nobody shows up. That is where we are at.

The book of Revelation is a great money maker. Because guys know that some of God's people do not have any clue about the Bible, so they can write all of these things out there and talk about all these things that are going to happen and put it in novel form. We get it. We read them. Then, you know, we just get it. With a problem, and I am not fighting that. But here is what the problem becomes when you do not know your Bible. You start taking what they write in those books as doctrine.

When I first got saved, there was one book, one book, Pat, you may know about this. You have been around long enough. There is one book that really fired my imagination. It was called The Late Great Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey. I never, when I first got right with God, I knew nothing about the Bible. But somebody gave me a copy of The Late Great Planet Earth, and I will tell you what, I was so scared after reading that I did not go to bed for two weeks. I read that book 16 times. I mean, it just, it told about the tribulation period. It talked about the Anti-Christ. It talked about all the things in the tribulation and people getting their heads cut off. It really just

galvanized me that I wanted to know more. I must have read that book 9 or 10 times. I mean, I read that book over and over, and if there would not have been somebody in my life that said to me, "Hey, that is a good book, but you know what, you need to put the book that is really got the truth about that time period." I would have took The Late Great Planet Earth and made that my Bible. That is what we have a tendency to do. Because our old human nature, first off, is always going to go to something that man does versus something that God does.

I am not fighting this, so allow me to say this, and I am not being nasty or mean about it. But Rick Warren wrote a book a couple years ago called The Purpose Driven Life. I will tell you, you know you are in trouble. I am not criticizing him or the book. Do not look at me and laugh like that. Barb, you are giving yourself away. Wipe that smirk off your face. Okay, I will continue now. Now, you are smirking again. Hey, I am not fighting it. I am not fighting it at all. I really am not. But I am telling you something. I know, because of what I do know, that when a year comes around that a book written by man, The Purpose Driven Life, outshoes the book written by God, we are in trouble. I must have had a thousand people ask me, "Have you read The Purpose Driven Life?" I said, "Many times. Good book, wonderful book." "When did you read it?" I said, "The first time I read it was in 1971." They said, "Well, that cannot be. It just came out two years ago." It was obvious we were not talking about the same book on The Purpose Driven Life. I was talking about this one. Now, this is the book on The Purpose Driven Life. Now, what would make a man or a woman want to read a book written by man on it when you have got the book written by God on it? Somebody said, "You ever see the movie The Ten Commandments?" "No, I read the book." See how we are drawn to what man does? It is the same way with all this stuff in Revelation.

When I was a young Christian, I read that. I am not saying do not read them. Hey, it was the catalyst for me to get me back into church, get me back in the Bible. It scared the fire out of me. I am not saying it is bad, but what happens today is most people do not have a pastor. They do not have a church that is teaching doctrine, so they start to believe that everything that man writes in there is gospel doctrine, and this is the way it is going to go. Hey, I read The Late Great Planet Earth about two years ago, three years ago. I found it when I was going through some stuff, and I looked at that thing, and I did not get two pages in it and threw it away. It was so full of unbelievable stuff that had nothing to do with the Bible. But you see, that is the distance I came from then to now. I am not saying it is wrong. I am just saying you have got to understand when it comes to the book of Revelation, there is no book better than the one that God wrote. But pastors today, churches today, they do not teach you that. They do not teach you that. They do not teach you that at all. They try to get you to the place where they get you to believe that it is some hard book that you cannot understand.

Now, this is going to be a great study because it is going to help you with what you already have. What you picked up on Sunday morning through the seven series, and we are going to give you a little edge on it even a little bit better. You are going to find out that the book of Revelation is not a hard book to understand. It is just a hard book to believe because many of the things that are in here that everybody tells you, they are symbolism, they are literal. Let me take back the word many. Everything in here, it is literal. It is a literal book. You have seen me, you mean you tell

me when it talks about those beasts flying around with stingers in their tails. I had a preacher one time, I was just a young guy, and I did not know any better. I was just a young guy, and he was a big time preacher named Jack Van Impe. Jack Van Impe made a lot of money on the book of Revelation. I have got to tell you, Jack Van Impe was a great preacher. Jack Van Impe had an ability to scare the fire out of you. I mean, he took messages, and I remember some of his messages, and there was never more an animated preacher all my life. I am telling you what, I saw him preach on the crucifixion one night, and I will tell you what, I mean, he could paint a picture with words like nobody's business. He was not dumb. He had memorized the complete New Testament verbatim. He would stand up there, he would quote scripture, he would quote 200 scriptures in a sermon, and he would never crack a Bible. He was an incredible preacher, but he did not know much about the Bible. He wanted to make a lot of money, and now he is.

I will never forget one time, he preached out of the book of Revelation, and over there out of Revelation 9 in one of those places, where these scorpions come out, got hair like women, and wings like eagles, and stingers in their tails. He is up there telling these people that this is a future picture, this is John not understanding what the book of Revelation is all about, and what John is really seeing is a squadron of B-52s. The people are down there writing that down, "I see you, B-52s, you know, this is great." I went up to him afterwards, and I said, "Brother Jack," I said, "I really enjoyed your sermon." I said, "I just got a question, because I am just a young guy." I said, "You said," and I got the old Baptist two-step shuffle. See, Baptists say they do not dance, they lie to you. They dance all the time. Nobody can get a Baptist to dance better than I can. They will say, "I do not dance." Boy, let me ask them a few questions, and they will go right in there. They will get in there. They dance, man. Now, this was my mistake, and early on, and I never got over this. This is the first time that I ever shot my mouth off with somebody a lot bigger than me and made a fool out of him, and then I got in trouble for it. That was the first of many incidences, because he is down there, and there is the pastor, nice old gray-haired gentleman, you know, who never rocks the boat, and I am coming up here, and I got the best intentions. I am too dumb to be smart, Dan. I asked him, I said, "Brother Jack," I said, "I got a question here." I said, "I love your sermon." I said, "Now, you said over here, these were a squadron of B-52s." I said, "Is this literal?" He said, "No, no, no, no, it is figurative." And I said, "Okay." I said, "Well, help me here." I said, "If all these things are not literal," I said, "it says here they come out of hell. Now, how did B-52s come out of hell?" And with that, it was... He says to me, he says, "Well, son, you do not understand." I said, "That is obvious. That is why I am asking you the question." He said, "Well, the book of Revelation is really a hard book." And I said, "Well, I understand that. You said it, I just want to know, is hell real there?" By that time, the pastor now, he sees that he is in a jam, so he steps in and says, "Well, we have got to go, Brother Bob." So the two of them, like a chorus line, like the Rockets, New York, down the thing. "We got away from that old Bible-believing kid. We are on our way to eat. We got our choreography." That is what it was. You could not have choreographed it any better. That is what it was. That is what it was. I learned a great lesson right then. I learned a lesson that a lot of guys will get up there when they really do not know what this book means, and they will just fake their way through it. When you have got a question, hey, the first time you come to a Thursday night Bible study and you ask me a question, and I look to the band and say, "Strike up the band and start dancing," go find yourself another church. If I do not know, I will tell you, I do not

know. I will not try to snow you. I will not try to pretend that I do not know the answer so you lose faith in me. I will tell you right now, what I know about the Bible, you could put it in the left eye of a blind mosquito. I do not have a clue about a lot of it. But I just believe what I have, and I believe what I do not understand. That is the way you have got to come. I am telling you.

VI. Understanding the Book of Revelation's Structure

We are told that the book of Revelation, you see, is a hard book. What I want to do today is I want to begin to lay the background, the groundwork. I want you to see that it is not a hard book. We do not go through four verses in Revelation chapter 1 until we find out that God is addressing seven churches. I have got to tell you this, something real special about that. Because I find in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, the book of Revelation, He says to those seven churches, He says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." He says that to them seven times. I am telling you something. I learned a long time ago that when God draws your attention to something and says something similar or like this, like in Matthew 11:15, like Matthew 13:9, like Matthew 13:43, Mark 4:9, a number of places, He will bring attention to something. He will say, "If you have got ears, hear what I am saying." Now, if I am reading my Bible and I come across a place where God says, "Bob, if you have got a pair of ears, hear this." I kind of think that that is probably something He wanted me to know. Then if He told it to me seven times, I really get the idea that you better pay attention to this. But that is just me. As I said earlier, this is not going to be a verse by verse study of the book of Revelation, but you will get enough information out of this that you will be able to put it together and you will certainly see how the thing lays itself out. He says it seven times and anytime you find that in the Bible, you have got something you have got to pay attention to.

Now, here is the standard teaching on the book of Revelation, and there are three, basically. The first teaching is, and I told you why that they want to get rid of it. The first teaching is that from our Bible, we know that in Chapter 1 that John is on the Isle of Patmos. You will find that in Chapter 1:9. The Isle of Patmos is a little island off the coast of Turkey, and he is exiled there, and he dies as far as we know on Patmos. He has been exiled because of his preaching, because he was with the Lord, and probably John is the last apostle. We do not know that for sure, but we know that Paul is dead by this time and Peter probably is too. We know that James was killed in Acts chapter 12. I would be safe to say, I think, that he is probably the last guy.

Now, the first thing we do is that there is a teaching that the Bible teaches, and we and I teach that he is on the Isle of Patmos in 90 AD. The first standard teaching is that it was not 90 AD, that it was 70 AD. Here is where we have got to get around the book of Revelation. If you went into a Roman Catholic Church, into a Bible study, or many of the other churches that are around that, they would tell you that John, the book of Revelation was not written in 90 AD, it was written in about 66 to 68 AD. You know why they do that? Because in the book of Revelation, when you get on into the book, there is a destruction of a place called Babylon Mystery Religion. If the Roman Catholic Church does not move the book of Revelation back to 70 AD, when they do that, they say, "Well, that is a destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD under Titus." If they do not move it back, they are faced with one other thing. It is a destruction of the Roman Catholic

Church at the end of the time, which everybody was teaching. So they had to get around that. You know how they got around that? They said, "Well, it was not written in 90, so it could not be referring to us. It was written in 70 AD, has to be referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 AD under Titus." That is how they do it.

So the first approach is what they call a historical approach. Change up the date. The second one is called the futuristic. That is what you and I believe. We believe that it all deals with future events, and that it is literal, and it all has to do with something. It is the end of the Bible as far as God now summarizing every event that the Bible is talking about. You will find every event in the Bible. I told you when we started studying our Bible that your Old Testament is nothing more than built around three concepts: the Tribulation period, the Millennial reign of Christ, and the Second Coming of Christ. That is all it is. Historically, yes, it is the nation of Israel going to the Promised Land and then getting in the mess, and getting in exile, and then getting back to the First Coming of Christ. No question about that. But from a doctrinal prophetic standpoint, there are three issues addressed in the Old Testament. One is the Second Coming of Christ, two, the Tribulation period, and three, the Millennial reign of Christ. You will find all three of those detailed out just the way they happened in the breakdown of the book of Revelation. Now, every other religion on the world today outside of Bible Christianity has to get away from that, because they do not believe Christ is coming back literally. They do not believe that there is a real Second Coming of Christ, and they do not believe there is a thousand year reign. So they try to get out of it. So the futuristic is what we believe, and that is that the Bible, the book of Revelation is the capstone of the Bible. It puts the end to everything and shows you all the major events he has talked about now in a concise concept that you can walk it through history from one point to another and get every event in the right order. That is what it does.

Then there is one that is called, the last one is called the Praeterist approach. That is P-R-A-T-E-R-I-S-T, Praeterist approach. That is the fact that it is just allegorical, it is symbolism. It does not mean anything. Because you really cannot figure anything out. It is just in a poetic form someplace. Of course, this was started back in the 1600s by the Jesuits in Spain. It comes up through a guy by the name of Dean Farrar in the 1800s, and it makes its way into evangelicalism today, and the whole mess goes from there. That is why somebody gave me a Bible study of a Baptist church in town here a couple of years ago that they were teaching the book of Revelation. Somebody said, "Here, this is what they are teaching." First thing out of that old bird's mouth was the fact that you could not know anything about the book of Revelation for sure. The second thing out of his mouth that anybody that thinks they know the book of Revelation, quote unquote, like us, really have deceived themselves. People read that today and look at that thing, and they sit down there, and this church probably ran four or five thousand people. Everybody sits down there and says, "Oh, what a great smart man he is." You know where that man got that stuff? He got it right in 1882 with O4R, and that is what he taught. He got it from the Jesuits in 1600, and that is what they taught. But nobody knows that today. If you were to pull that old pastor out of the pulpit and sit him down there and said, "Tell me, tell me where you got that. Tell me where you got that. Show me what is going on in that period of time, and name me five people who believe what that guy believed." He could not do it. But that is what he has been taught. He does not know why he believes what he believes. He got a little quarterly, a little

pamphlet that somebody else did. He had not studied it. He got it from the co-op group, and then he sits down and he passes it off to you. If you would have got him down front at the end of that thing and asked him what this or asked him about that, you would have got the same thing I got. And off they would have danced. Because that is the way they take it.

God says, "You know what? I am going to call it the Book of Revelation. I am going to call it that so you know that I am going to reveal something to you, and then I am going to use John. And I am going to tell you seven times you better get what I say to John."

VII. Why John Was Chosen to Write Revelation

Now, why John? Why did God pick John? Why not Peter? Why not Paul? Why John? You know why John, if you have been around here any time at all. You know when you got those twelve apostles who were the first ones called out to preach the gospel, you have within those twelve a picture of all Christians. You have twelve apostles, one of them is a phony. You get any group of Christians together and we all say we are saved. I promise you, the odds say at least one is a phony. Out of the ones that are left, you have three people of the ones that are left who really experience the power of God greater than a wrath. You know who they are? Peter, James, and John. Every time you read through there, when God does some great miracle, when Christ does something here, or when He is teaching something in depth, when He is on the mountain of transfiguration, when He is teaching about the end times, it is always Peter, James, and John. Why are not the rest of them there? I will tell you why. Say why, why not all of God's people are in the Bible the way they should. Any twelve Christians, any group of Christians, the modelers of twelve apostles, you have one was the phony, the rest of them followed Christ, but they just never got in on the intimate level that the three did. That is why Peter, James, and John experience the power of God in a greater way. They see things of God in a greater way. That is why, very frankly, some of you will get the power of God in your life better than maybe the person sitting next to you, or behind you, or across the room. You know why? It is not because you are smarter. It is not because you are better. It is because you are going to get into it, and you want more out of God in God's Word than just coming to church.

But out of that three, there is only one that goes all the way. That is John. That is John. Hey, when push comes to shove, and we are at the crucifixion of Christ, Peter denies him, James is taken off, and there is only one guy who goes the distance. It is John. It is John. You realize that John is the only apostle that Jesus said he loved? Now, I know Jesus loved them all, but why is it that Jesus singled out one apostle about the rest and says, "the apostle whom Jesus loved," when he never said he loved the twelve, even I know that he did. You know why Jesus had a special love for John? It is real simple. John had a special love for Jesus. So special that he would go the distance when everybody else went. How about you? Are you willing to the day and age that we live in because you love Him? They will go the distance no matter what the bearing of the cross is. That is the question. It was John. If you remember the story, it was John in John chapter 13. It was John when they are all sitting around the Last Supper. Jesus says, "One of you is going to betray me this night." All of them are sitting there. And Jesus said, "One of you is going to betray me tonight." Every one of them looks at Jesus and says, "Lord, is it me? Lord, is it me? Lord, is

it me? Lord, is it me?" You know what John says? He says, "Lord, who is it?" He did not know who it was, but he knew it was not going to be him. You know what that Paul calls that over there in 1 Corinthians? He calls that a good conscience toward God. Some of you right now today are saved on your way to heaven, and I love you. But if you were faced with the challenge of having to stand for God in the face of the world out there, you would falter. If you had to stand there and know that your life was on the line or your family was on the line or some terrible thing could befall you, you would falter. John did not falter. You realize in John chapter 13, he is the only man in the Bible, the only man in the Bible that laid his head on the breast of Jesus and heard the heartbeat of God. I am talking about God incarnate in the flesh. He listened with his own ear to the heartbeat of God. There is only one other person, people, group in the Bible that can hear the heartbeat of God. It is you, and that book is His heart. That is why the Bible says, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." He is not talking about hears what he is saying. He is talking about hearing the heartbeat.

Let me ask you a question, simple. Do you know where, do you hear the heartbeat of God today? Do you know what God's heartbeat is? We use it in a simple little silly phrase, "Why, I really got his heart. Why, I really know his heart. Why, I really know she has got a good heart. I really see her heart. I really know her heart." Well, good. I am glad. You know what that means? That means that you know someone so intimately that you know really where they are at. I have a problem with that. I know most of your hearts. Most of you know mine. But do you know His? Do you know His? John knew His.

With that little, well, you are getting about 19 sermons out of this message this morning. But with that in mind, that is why John was chosen to write the Gospel of John. You have got four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, when he writes, he presents Christ as the King of the Jews. When Mark writes, he presents Christ as a servant. When Luke writes, he portrays Christ as the Son of Man. But no, no, when John writes, John, because of his special relationship with Christ, he does not portray him as a human man. He portrays him as the Son of God. Because he saw him. John is only one of the four men of the Bible that has seen experienced the glory of God. I talked to you about it three or four weeks ago. When we were coming through something else. So then he is chosen to write first, second, and third John. You know what the key of first John is? Everybody, you go out by any commentary on first John. Pick every one of them up. Keep your receipt, or you will want to take them back the next day. You will find that every author of the epistle of first John will tell you that the theme of first John is love. And yet, you know what? You read through those five little chapters. I think you find the word "to know him" or "knowing him" or "to know" 17 times or something like that in five chapters. Now, it would not take no rocket falling on my head to find out that the theme of first John is not love. The first theme of first John is knowing. But you see, that is us. That is Americans. That is the way we are. We always try to love something before we know it. That is why the divorce rate is so big. We love people before we know them. Then once we get married, we do not like what we know. How many times a lady said to me or a guy said to me, "Well, if I knew then what I knew now." Well, why did not you? I mean, if you would get married, like some of you buy a car or a dress, there would never be any divorces. If some of you guys would pick a wife like you do a hunting dog, bad analogy, excuse me. Shotgun. Fishing rod. Boat. Man,

you are out there and you are saying, "Well, you know, they will go fast through the water and it will do this and that. Yeah, it will keep the wave down up here." You are looking at this. "Oh, yeah, that ejects the way I want. I want one with a down injection, not a side ejection. Because when you bring that up, I want that thing going down, you know, and I want that dog. What kind of pedigree does he, what kind of, can I see his family tree, dog, tree dog, dog, dog like trees. The dog tree thing back here. His mother was a grand champion hunter and his grandpappy was." If you pick a wife or a husband like we pick everything else in life, there are no divorces. I mean, today, if he looks at her, she looks at him, you say you want to get married. She says, "Why not?" I got better today. Hey, that is typical of us. We do two things as Christians or as American Christians, as Americans and Christians do it, too. We love things before we know them and we love things that cannot love us back. If you want to put the downfall of Christianity and the end of simple little form, there it is. We try to love God without knowing God. You know why some people come to church, they get saved and then you never see him back again. I will tell you why, because you can get saved. That does not mean you love him. You have got to learn to love him. You have got to spend the time to learn to love him. You have got to invest the time to love him. You have got to learn about him and you have got to know him. Then you have got to see his qualities and then you build that relationship and then that is how it goes from there. The reason why we cannot love God today is because we love things that cannot. I kid my family about it all the time and I have talked to you about it before. We love things that have no ability to love us back. "Boy, I just love that car. Boy, I just love it. Do not you just love this dress? I love those shoes." Now, I understand what you are saying, but you only got so much love to give. I just do not see loving a pair of shoes. Do shoes ever love you back? Do you still love your car when it lets you down on the freeway at three o'clock in the morning? See? We are so fickle in our mind and it all comes back to the fact that we have lost the concept of what it means to love. To love means to know. The theme of 1 John is not love, it is to know. Because to know him is to love him. That is why John was picked to write the book of the Revelation because he is a type of you and me. As a type of you and me, this is how simple it becomes. Once you see all of that and you understand how simple it is, God chose to reveal all the truth of the future events to John. If he reveals that John and John is a type of church, he is a type of me, then that tells me that if you get in this book and know God and love God, God will reveal him to you.

Remember that little verse I gave you a couple of weeks ago? I really found it that day and I just never been getting it off my mind ever since. I have been using it every time I turn around, Job 24:1.

Job 24:1

Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

That is a great passage. If the times are not hidden from God and you and I claim to know God, then why can not we find God down through history? That is the key. Oh, it is a key.

VIII. The Two Keys to Understanding Revelation

There are two things you have got to get out of Book of Revelation when we start this. Next week we are going to blast into the seven churches and off we go. But two verses you have got to get. Look over Revelation chapter 1 verse 10. Here is what you have got.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Now you see that, now you get the average revelation commentary. You know what it is going to tell you? The Lord's day is going to tell you the Lord's day is Sunday. That is not true. There is not anywhere in the Bible, anywhere in the Bible, anywhere, that Sunday is ever called the Lord's day. It is called the first day of the week. It is never called the Lord's day. Never. I do not know how guys miss that over 1200 times in the Old Testament. You are told that the Lord's day, the day of the Lord, is the second coming of Christ. I do not know how in the world you can miss that. I really do not unless you are just not paying attention when John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Here is what you have got and you have got to understand this or we are not going anywhere. Next week when we come back we are going to move into this thing and I am going to start breaking down these sevens and I am going to lay out these churches to you. Then we are going to move on to every aspect of the sevens and show you how the book of Revelation falls down on all of them.

Now here is what you have got. John is on the Isle of Patmos right here. We are going to put the Isle of Patmos right here. 90 A.D. in history, fixed point right here at the end of this thing. Here, second coming of Christ right here. So we got from 90 A.D. to the second coming of Christ and then second coming of Christ we have got the millennium. Then we have got the new heavens and the new earth. Then we have got eternity. Happy Revelation 20, 21, and 22 following your Bible. Do not worry about it. We will break it all down here. Okay. He is in 90 A.D. John says, "I was in the Spirit of the Lord today." You know what God did? He picked John up in 90 A.D., transported him into the future and set him down at the second coming of Christ. That is what that verse is saying. You have got to get this because if you do not get this you will not get anything out of the Revelation. This is where every one of them missed the boat. When they missed the boat you could not find out the book of Revelation if your life depended on it because these two verses are the keys by which the whole book unfolds itself. I am going to give it to you one more time. 90 A.D. is right here, fixed point in history. 90 A.D. He is on the Isle of Patmos. He comes out one morning after having breakfast, nice bright sunny day and suddenly something meets the Lord and the Lord says, "John, I got something I want to show you." John said, "Wow, this is a great board today." Anyhow, all I have got to do is walk around this dumb island. God picks him up, whisks him up to the second coming of Christ, puts him right down in Revelation chapter 19. That is the first thing. Everybody got that? That is real simple. All right.

Next verse. Miss these two? Miss the whole book.

Revelation 1:19

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Now there is your second key. John is on the Isle of Patmos in 90 A.D. Suddenly he is picked up. He is brought up here to the second coming of Christ and he says, "John, I am going to tell you some things and you are going to write. But here is how you are going to write, John. You are going to write in three tenses. You are going to write what thou hast seen. That is past. You are going to write about the things that are. That is where you are at now with the second coming of Christ. And then you are going to write about the things that shall be hereafter. That is the millennium eternity. And write on out into Revelation chapter 22." See how that thing breaks down? So when you look at this, you have got to get this. Now understand the book of Revelation. See how these sevens fit? You have got to see that John is no longer on 90 A.D. He is taken up to the second coming of Christ. When he is told to write the things that have been, he is writing about the church age, the rapture of the church, and the tribulation period, and then write up to Revelation chapter 19, which is the second coming of Christ. Then he is told to write about the things that are. That would be all the events concerning the second coming of Christ. Then he is told to write the things that have not happened yet from his perspective of the second coming. That would be the millennium, the new heavens and the new earth, and then out into eternity.

Keep that in your mind. In fact, if I were you, I would make you a little chart. I would draw a line on a piece of paper eight inches long. At the two inch mark, I would put a line straight up and I would mark that rapture of the church. At the six inch mark, I would write the second coming of Christ. That is all I do. Here is what I would add to that. Between the beginning of that chart, you want to put 90 A.D. That is when it starts. At the beginning of that eight inch mark, up to the six inch mark, you want to write underneath "the things that has been." Right under the six inch mark, at the second coming of Christ, you want to write "the things that are." The rest of that chart, you want to write "the things that shall be." We will show you in weeks to come how we build on that chart. We will take that little chart and I will show you as we start to go through this seven series. This thing is broken down by a series of sevens. John is looking back at what has been. Then he is looking where he is at, second coming, and he is looking into the future. If you want to make that approach found in chapter one to break it down, you are nuts. You are lost. You are never going to make it. This is what Job 24:1 was talking about when it talked about if God knows where he is going, why you that know him not see his days.

You know what the number one problem with God's people is? They have lost their perspective. I think one of the neatest little things that come out, man's technological experience is the GPS system. The GPS is an incredible little deal. You can find your exact position wherever you are at on Earth with a little GPS. You know what that GPS does? Up around the Earth we have satellites. That GPS is plugged into those satellites. Those satellites know exactly where they are at. When you triangulate off of one satellite to another satellite and it configures where they are at and where the signal came from in a heartbeat, in an instant, it triangulates down to where you are at. You have now your exact position on planet Earth if you do not know where you are going.

You know how I do astronomy and astrophotography? You saw that telescope we had out there that night when it was so windy when we were looking at stuff. That telescope is a very basic system. I take that telescope. It has got a computer readout in it. I take that telescope and I set

that telescope up and I say, "I am going to give you two stars." I have got a whole database of stars. I pick this star and I swing that telescope over to that star and I put that star right in the middle of that field. And I hit enter. What that telescope does now is in its database it knows that star's name is matched up with its database and on that database is that star's coordinates from where Earth is. So it locks into that coordinate. Then I take it to another star on a list, find a star, line it right up in the middle and then I hit it again. It now has coordinated two places up in outer space that are even more exact than the satellites because God made the stars you see. Now I can pick up that hand pallet telescope and I can tell it to go wherever I want it to go. There is a big galaxy over here in Andromeda. I just dial in that number, get out of the way, that telescope. Zzzz. Looking at eyepiece? Bang right in the middle. I have got 68,000 objects that I can dial in and if they are up in the sky they go to. You know why? Because I have got a system that always points me exactly where I am at. You know what I have got to have to know where I am at? I have got to have a fixed point here and a fixed point here. You know what is wrong with God's people? They have no fixed point in their life. If you do not know where you come from, history, point one, then do not tell me you know where you are going, point two. If you are not fixed on where you have been and you are not fixed on where you are going, please do not kid me you know where you are at. If I did not get those two fixed points in that telescope, I would hit something in and it would just go whoo, whoo, whoo, all over the place and it would turn around and just go. One time I made a mistake and it just went around in a circle for 15 minutes. I did not know, I thought the zombies took it over. I thought it was turning into a robot. It just went around for 15 minutes. It went around in a circle until the battery went dead. That is what most Christians do. You know why? No fixed point.

You know what the book of Revelation is for you? Besides all the other stuff in the Bible, it is your GPS system. It shows you the fixed point. John has told to write from what has been and what he is writing in the future and then you can fix your spot where you are at. That is called getting a Christian perspective on where you are at. If you ask why God's people, they have no idea of church history. They have no idea, they have somewhat of an idea of future events, but they have no idea where they are at in relationship to it all. You see, that is the job of the church. The job of the church is to teach you, give you the tools, show you how to work it. Now, do you think the first time I had created that telescope, I figured that thing out? You know what I had to have? I had to have a guy who already had one of those telescopes come over and show you how to do it. I was lost. I mean, that thing up there and it has got like 1700 scrolling things coming down through. I had no idea. And the manual? Oh yeah, the manual really helps. The manual I am convinced is written by chimpanzees that used to work for NASA. Clueless. But an old boy came over that had one. He said, "Oh Bob, it is really easy if you just learn a few things. Forget all the other stuff. Let me show you the shortcuts to how this thing works." Then once you get the foundation of the shortcuts down, then you can build all the other options of the telescope on that base. That is what I did. You know what? Forget all the stuff in there. You let me build the shortcut foundation in your life about the Bible and get those fixed points. Then as you grow, you add all the other points onto it. That is the job of the church. That is my job. That is what we do. Sunday morning, Thursday night and our one-on-one stuff and everything we do. That is why we are only about one thing here. It is about my one goal is for you to know not only what you believe, but why you believe it. You will see by this book as we start to come through and break

these things down next week. You are going to set your point of reference to where you are at in a great way. Even though this will not be a verse by verse study, you will come out here saying, "Oh, I got the book of Revelation, all the other stuff I can add to it later."

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you.