

# Revelation - Introduction, Part 1

© 2003-2004 Tony Garland - [contact@SpiritAndTruth.org](mailto:contact@SpiritAndTruth.org)

COURSE  COMMENTARY 

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## Goals of the Course

1. **Gain Understanding**  
To take some of the mystery out of our understanding of this book. After all, **God gave it for our understanding** (Rev. 1:1-3).
2. **Grasp the Biblical Context**  
To become familiar with the *Book of Revelation* and to **grasp its intimate connection with the rest of the Bible**. We will focus on what is revealed concerning Christ, the end of history as we know it, and the implications for **living today**.
3. **Understand Divergent Views**  
To equip the student to understand the reasons behind the divergent interpretations of the *Book of Revelation* and to be able to assess the relative weaknesses and strengths of each.
4. **Inoculate Against Incorrect Views**  
To inoculate the student against common pitfalls encountered when studying the Bible in general, and this book in particular.

## A Book Under Attack!

- **A Bookend of the Bible**  
Foundational to a complete understanding of the Bible. A **bookend** along with the *Book of Genesis*. Much of what falls apart in Genesis is restored in Revelation.
- **Reveals Important Future Events**  
These events "collide" with the agenda of humanism. (Also with the agenda of Christian Reconstructionism!)
- **Most Serious Attacks from Within**  
We expect those who do not believe the Bible to attack the *Book of Revelation*. But the most serious attacks come from distortions of its message from within the Christian community.
- **Doctrinal Controversies**  
Many are uncomfortable with various teachings found in the book and desire to avoid these realities:
  - 1) a restoration and future for the Jewish nation;
  - 2) a literal kingdom on earth with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem;
  - 3) a time of unparalleled upheaval.

## Hiding what God has Revealed

- **Hiding or Revealing?**  
Is the *Book of Revelation* meant to be obscure?
- **Hiding AND Revealing**  
The Bible is written to reveal to those with an ear to hear, but also to hide or obscure truth from those with hard hearts. [Mat. 11:25-26](#); [Mat. 13:11-15](#) (Click on an address to view the Bible passage.)
- **One Text, Many Interpretations**  
The difficulty is not so much with the text itself, but with the variety of interpretations which are placed upon the text.

## Importance of Perspective

- **Historical Perspective**  
Two extremes to avoid: 1) everything written applies exclusively to *our day*; 2) everything written applies exclusively to *John's day*.
- **Limiting the Book's Scope**  
Some attempt to limit the scope of the book historically. Others limit it geographically or both.

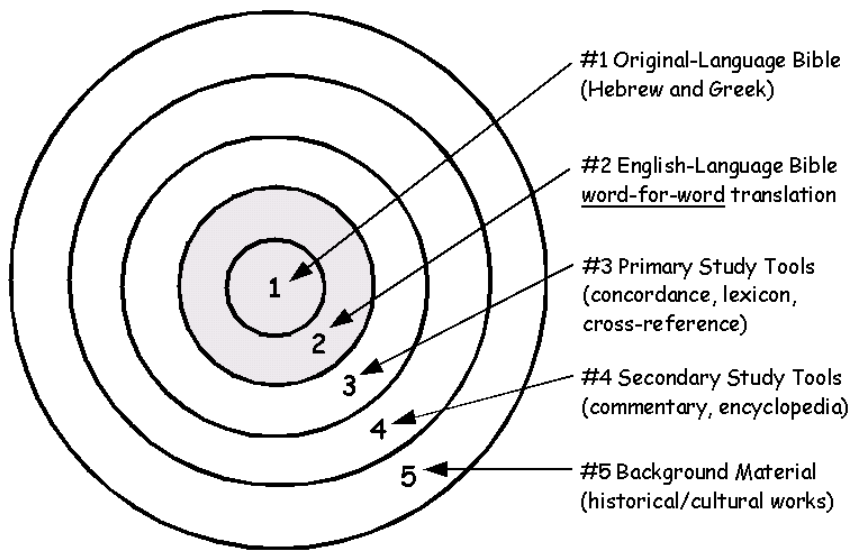
## Attitude of Learning

- **Learning God's Way**  
God does not respond to our "fast food" mentality. He purposefully frustrates the proud, the independent, and the "movers and shakers." Attributes considered desirable in our society may contribute toward frustration and failure when applied to the study of God's Word.
- **Focus is Christ**  
The book is "The revelation of Jesus Christ" ([Rev. 1:1](#)). The emphasis and motivation of all revelation is ultimately to reveal Jesus. ([John 5:39](#); [Rev. 19:10](#)). If we are looking for something else, our study will be unfruitful and not what God intends!
- **Beware of Distractions**  
The *Book of Revelation* is packed with interesting symbols and events. These aspects can draw our focus away from Jesus and toward a fascination with the horrific events. We are never told to watch for the Antichrist, but always told to watch for "our Lord!"

## Bible Study Bullseye

- **Primacy of Center Rings**  
The middle two rings represent the inspired Word of God. All other rings are the fallible views of men.
- **Need for Outer Rings**  
Ignoring all secondary study tools and historical / cultural background material will lead to poverty of understanding (e.g., [Dan. 9:26](#)).

- **Dangers of Outer Rings**  
Rings 3 through 5 contain **error** and can "spin" our understanding.



For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).