

The enthronement of Christ

Deltacourse

A discipleship training to equip Christians for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11-16)

19

QUIET TIME

Theme: The sovereign rule of Christ

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

- Day 1 Psalm 110:1-2
Christ's enemies become his footstool
- Day 2 Hebrews 9:23-26.
Christ intercedes for us
- Day 3 Romans 8:31-39
Nothing can separate us from God's love for us in Christ
- Day 4 Revelation 1:9-20.
Christ is present and active in the midst of all congregations
- Day 5 Revelation 2:1-7
Christ leads his congregation in Ephesus
- Day 6 Revelation 3:14-22
Christ leads his congregation in Laodicea
- Day 7 Revelation 8:3-5
The incense offered causes fire to be thrown from heaven onto the earth
- Day 8 Revelation 9:13-21
Trumpets warn unbelievers that they should repent
- Day 9^{BS} Revelation 12:1-18
Satan's war against Christ
- Day 10 Revelation 14:14-20
The double harvest
- Think about Revelation 8:3-5.
Christ on the throne answers your prayers by influencing the events on the earth.
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Explanation of Revelation

Read study 19 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: The struggle of Satan against Christ

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Revelation 12:1-18**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

THE SOVEREIGN RULE OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 15:25

For he must reign
until he has put all his enemies
under his feet.

1 Corinthians 15:25 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

4. Memorisation of the Bible books

The 8 general letters and 1 apocalypse:
Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1&2&3 John, Jude, Revelation.

19. Explanation of Revelation

Maybe you think that the book of Revelation is incomprehensible and possibly the most difficult book in the Bible to understand. Satan would like you to think that, because the book of Revelation proclaims Christ's victory over Satan! The book of Revelation does not intend to scare you. On the contrary, it encourages you with the fact that Jesus Christ reigns supreme and that you are 'more than conquerors' through Christ both now as well as in the future at Christ's second coming. The purpose of this study is to help you understand the book of Revelation.

A. The purpose of the book of Revelation

1. The book reveals God's plan

Revelation 1:1 says that the book of Revelation is 'an unveiling or disclosure' (Greek: apocalypse). An 'apocalypse' is a book that reveals God's perspective on the events of God's history of salvation within human (secular) history. As in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, God reveals the significance of events by means of visions, signs and numbers, which are all symbols of realities that God wants to make known to us.

Revelation 1:3 says that the book of Revelation is 'a prophecy', but then not exclusively in the sense of 'predicting the future'. It is a prophecy in the sense of a backward-looking and a forward-looking (retrospective and prospective) unveiling of the deepest significance of events in the past, in the present and in the future.

The fulfilment of this prophecy began immediately when it was revealed to John in the first century A.D. The word: 'soon' in Revelation 1:1 and 22:7 means 'without delay', 'immediately'. According to Revelation 1:3 the time that this unveiling would become a reality was 'near'! The book of Revelation therefore proclaims the unveiling of God's plan within the history of the world from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ. Jesus Christ does not desire that this unveiling remains a closed book (22:10). Therefore he blesses everyone who reads the book!

2. The book is relevant

Revelation 2:7 says that the seven letters in the book of Revelation is intended for all the congregations in the world throughout history. The book must be read in every congregation (cf. Colossians 4:16), because it is relevant for every Christian and every Christian congregation throughout history!

3. The book is a blessing and an encouragement

Revelation 1:3 (cf. 22:10-11) says that whoever reads the book or hears it being read and takes to heart what is written in it, is blessed!

The theme of the book is: 'Christ is the Conqueror. He goes ahead to conquer (6:2). Christians are more than conquerors through him (17:14; cf. Romans 8:37). The purpose of the book is to encourage Christian churches in their struggle in the world. What can encourage you more than to know the outcome of a struggle ahead of time?

4. The book relates recurring events

What Jesus had revealed to John and what John had seen by means of visions are historical events that are taking place 'now' in the present and that would take place 'later' in the future (1:19). The book of Revelation describes the significance of events: in the past (especially since the first coming of Christ), in the present (the time we are living) and in the future (until the second coming of Christ). That is why this book is important for every Christian and every Christian church in this time (2:7)!

The visions depict events that keep repeating themselves within history. For example: the rider on the white horse symbolises Christ and the proclamation of his plan of salvation (6:1-2). The rider on the red horse symbolises the slaughter of Christians at different times (6:3-4). The rider on the black horse symbolises economic oppression of Christians in different places (6:5-6). And the rider on the pale horse symbolises death at different times and in different places in history (6:7-8). Throughout history the proclamation of the gospel is followed by persecution and oppression. Throughout history death reminds everyone that we need a Saviour.

A number of visions are repeated several times in the book. These are visions about the fall of Babylon (14:8; 16:19; 18:2 – 19:3; cf. 11:13); visions about the final battle (11:7; 13:7; 16:14,16; 19:17-21; 20:7-9) and visions about the final judgement (6:12-17; 11:13,18; 14:14-20; 16:16-21; 19:11-16; 20:11-15). This proves that the visions in the book of Revelation are not arranged chronologically, but in parallel sections.

The book does not predict certain demonstrable and recognizable events in the future, but reveals God's view on history, God's plan and the fact that God will conquer through Jesus Christ!

B. Signs (symbols) in the book of Revelation

1. The book with signs (symbols)

Revelation 1:1 says that Christ 'made this revelation known' by means of an angel and the apostle John. The verb 'to make known' (Greek: semainò) literally means 'to make known by means of signs or symbols'. A 'sign or symbol' (Greek: semeion) has significance: It is a picture that helps us to grasp the reality which God wants to reveal. Only 'the reality' is much bigger than 'the symbol' (of that reality), 'the significance' is much bigger than 'the sign'! For example: 'a congregation (church)' (the significance) is greater than 'a lampstand' (the sign) (1:20). 'The

seven congregations' mentioned in the book represent all the congregations in the world throughout history (2:7) and are much greater than the seven historical congregations mentioned in chapter 2 and 3. 'The sevenfold Spirit of God' is much greater than 'the seven lamps' (4:5). 'Jesus Christ' is much greater than 'the lamb' that looked as if it had been slain (5:6). And 'the uncountable multitude' (7:9) is much greater than the symbolical number '144 000 that had been redeemed from the earth' (14:1,4).

The 'signs' do not have arbitrary significance. They only have the significance which Jesus gives to it in the context! The sign of 'a woman' (12:1) represents 'humanity crowned with glory and honour' (Psalm 8:4-7) that would bring forth 'the male child' (Genesis 3:15). More specifically, she represents 'God's Old Testament people' (Isaiah 54:1) that would bring forth the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14; John 4:22). 'The sign of 'an enormous red dragon' (12:3) represents only Satan (12:9). The sign of 'the male child' (12:5) represents Jesus Christ at his first coming (Luke 2:7). The sign of 'the One who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre' (12:5) represents Jesus Christ as Judge of everyone at his second coming (19:15; Psalm 2:9; John 5:22; Acts 10:42; Romans 2:16). The sign of 'the seven angels with the seven last plagues' represent the final judgement, because "with them God's final wrath is completed" (15:1).

2. The explanation of the signs (symbols)

The significance of a number of signs is explained by the book of Revelation itself. This explanation is the key to explain the other signs in the book. The signs that are explained in the book of Revelation are the following:

1:20	14:3-5
4:5	15:1
5:6,8	16:13-14,19
6:8	17:7-11,12,15,18
7:9,14	19:7-8,11-16
11:8	20:2,14
12:5,9,17	21:8-10,22-23
13:18	22:15

3. The explanation of the numbers

The numbers in the book of Revelation are also symbols and some of them are explained.

- 2** witnesses (11:3; cf. Luke 10:1)
- 3** the Triune God (1:4-5; cf. Matthew 28:19)
- 3½** a divinely limited period of oppression (11:2-3,9,11;12:6,14;13:5).
In Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 = draught; and in Daniel 7:23-27 = the oppression under Antiochus IV, one of the many antichrists.
- 4** the present earth or world (7:1; cf. Jeremiah 49:36) and also impenitent humanity (9:21)
- 6** man with his limitations (13:16-18)
- 7** God's perfection and completeness (1:4) in his acts towards man:
seven lampstands (God's Church);
seven seals (God's guidelines for history);
seven trumpets (God's warning judgements);
seven bowls (God's final judgements).
Also the enemy makes a false claim on omnipotence (12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,9)
- 10** completeness with respect to people:
ten commandments for people (*Read* Exodus 20:1-17),
ten silver coins as the possessions of people (Luke 15:8),
ten horns to attack people (12:3),
ten kings as bearers of authority among people (17:12)
- 12** (3x4) God's work in the world results in God's people during the Old Testament period: the 12 tribes of Israel (12:1; 21:12,21)
or in God's people during the New Testament period: the 12 apostles as foundation of the Church (21:14; Ephesians 2:20)
- 24** (12+12) the representatives of God's OT people and NT people in heaven (4:4) who worship and praise God in the heavenly temple (cf. 1 Chronicles 24:1-19)
- 1 000** (10 x 10 x 10) the absolute completeness (10) determined by God (3);
a divinely determined period of time (*Read* 20:1-7) that stretches across all generations (Psalm 90:1-4; 105:8)
- 12 000** 12 000 length, 12 000 width, 12 000 height = the result of the absolute complete (1000) work of salvation of the Triune God (3) among the people of the world (4) = the New Jerusalem (21:9,10,16; cf. Hebrews 12:22-24)
- 144 000** (1000x12x12) the absolute complete number (1000) of God's redeemed people in the OT (12) and the NT (12) (7:3-4; 14:1-3; cf. Romans 11:12,25-26).

C. Structure (build up) of the book of Revelation¹

The seven sections of the book with the events belonging to each section:

The book of Revelation is divided into seven parallel sections, each with a theme of events that take place from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ.

Each section almost has the same structure (See D):

- (1) a definite beginning
- (2) a long period of events, followed by
- (3) a short period of events shortly before the second coming of Christ
- (4) a definite end
- (5) and a description of eternity

Section 1: The establishment of the militant Church in the world (Revelation 1–3)

Theme: Jesus and the seven lampstands (his Church) shine in the dark world.

“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). And “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).

Recurring events: New congregations are planted between the first and second coming of Christ. They come into being through the preaching of the Word and the application of God’s Word in the hearts of people by the Holy Spirit. The congregations are ‘lampstands’, the bearers of light amidst the world lying in darkness. Jesus walks and works amidst all his congregations. He wrote his seven letters to all congregations in the world.

The letters to the 7 churches nearly all have the same structure: 7 divisions

- (1) The addressee: “To the angel of the church in write.” These ‘angels’ are the leaders of the congregations. The letters are directed to all the congregations, its leaders and its members in the whole world (2:7).
- (2) Description of the Author, Jesus: “These are the words of him who...” Each description is related to the condition of that church.
- (3) A recommendation: “I know...”
- (4) A condemnation: “Yet I hold this against you...”
- (5) A command: “Remember...”, “Do not be afraid...”, “Repent...”, or “Hold on to what you have until I come.” The congregations must act, so that they may change and be able to overcome.
- (6) An exhortation: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
- (7) A promise: “To him who overcomes I will give...” These promises are for those who resist temptations, bear oppression and obey God’s commandments. Each promise is related to the condition of that

church. In the last four letters the exhortation and promise are switched.

The conditions described in the seven historical letters re-occur again and again in all the churches in the world throughout history. Therefore these letters remain relevant for each church!

Section 2: The persecution of the militant Church by the world (Revelation 4–7)

Theme: The 7 seals of oppression and persecution are broken.

“In this world you (will) have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).

Recurring events: The seals reveal God’s guidelines with respect to Christ’s conquering and the persecutions, oppressions, disasters and suffering that follow. The Church is exposed to these events from Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming. The first seal will always be followed by the second, third, fourth and fifth seals. This reveals the fact that Christ’s triumphant progress in the world and the proclamation of the gospel will always be followed by persecution and oppression of Christians, by disasters that hit everyone in the world and even by martyrdom. These events take place again and again in different places in the world and at different times in history, also in our time. The sixth seal represents the final judgement. The seventh seal introduces the fact that the breaking of the seals are followed by the sounding of the trumpets, that is, that the world’s persecutions are followed by God’s judgements.

Section 3: God’s chastising and warning judgements over the world (Revelation 8–11)

Theme: The 7 trumpets symbolise God’s present chastising and warning judgements. They are not yet God’s final judgements,

“Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? (Luke 18:7).

Recurring events: From Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming God brings his chastising and warning judgements over the godless and wicked world, which persecutes and oppresses the Church. The fifth trumpet symbolises the destructive results of evil spirits in the lives of the unbelievers. The sixth trumpet symbolises the destructive results of wars in the history of the world. The seventh trumpet symbolises the final judgement (just as the sixth seal). Many people persist in hardening their hearts and they refuse to repent. Therefore the trumpets of God’s warning judgements are followed by the bowls of God’s final wrath. Also the events under section 3 take place again and again in different places and at various times.

¹ W. Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 1960.

Section 4: The victories of Jesus Christ and his Church over Satan and his helpers (Revelation 12–14)

Theme: The woman and the male child are persecuted by the dragon and his helpers. The enemies of Christ and his Church are introduced: the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the prostitute Babylon and the people who bear the mark of the beast.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Recurring events: From Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming the visible conflict between the militant Church and the world is in reality the deeper invisible conflict between Christ and Satan.

Section 5: God’s final and decisive wrath over hardened people in the world (Revelation 15–16)

Theme: The 7 bowls of final judgements are poured out on the people who bear the mark of the beast.

“Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath when his righteous judgement will be revealed” (Romans 2:5).

Recurring events: From Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming God’s final and decisive wrath is poured out again and again on the godless and wicked people. They persist in hardening their hearts (16:9,11,21; cf. 9:20-21) against God and his warning judgements (the trumpets). They are the people who bear the mark of the beast (16:2). Already before their death these people have passed the limit between God’s merciful patience and his holy and righteous wrath (cf. Matthew 12:32; 1 John 5:16) (*Read* Romans 1:18-32). Every time these godless and wicked people refuse to repent, God’s chastising and warning judgements (the trumpets) turn into his final and decisive judgements (the bowls). Then there will be no more opportunity to repent. ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever’ (Genesis 6:3). On the final judgement day God’s final and decisive wrath is at the same time his complete wrath (15:1).

The sixth bowl represents the final battle in the history of the world. The seventh bowl represents the final judgement (just as the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet).

Section 6: God’s inescapable judgement of the prostitute Babylon, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 17–19)

Theme: The great prostitute Babylon, the beast and the false prophet are finally completely defeated. The Victor is Jesus Christ. There will be a feast in heaven when the prostitute Babylon has fallen and the Bride celebrates her wedding to the Lamb.

“The world and its desires pass away” (1 John 2:17a).

Recurring events: From Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming Satan’s immoral powers (the prostitute) are again and again frustrated by Satan’s political powers (the beast and the kings). The final defeat and destruction of Satan’s allies (the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet) is inescapable and complete!

Section 7: God’s Kingdom in its present and its final phase (Revelation 20–22)

Theme: The dragon is finally defeated and destroyed. The earth is renewed and the heavenly Jerusalem descends onto the new earth.

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Recurring events: God’s kingdom in its present phase is a reality on earth in which Satan is presently bound (Matthew 12:28-30; John 12:31-32; 1 John 3:8b; Revelation 12:7-10). Although Satan remains bound (i.e. his power and influence remains curbed/curtailed/limited) from Christ’s first coming to almost Christ’s second coming, he still is very powerful and causes very much damage throughout the New Testament period. But he cannot deceive the nations, that is, he cannot prevent the gospel being proclaimed to all the nations in the world and he cannot prevent Christ robbing people out of his dominion (*Read* 20:1-3; Colossians 1:13)!

‘The souls’ of Christians who die are immediately translated into the presence of Jesus Christ (*Read* 20:4-6; Philippians 1:23; John 11:25). This spiritual resurrection is called ‘the first resurrection’. They now participate in all the activities of Jesus Christ in heaven: they ‘sit’ with him on his throne (3:21), they ‘stand’ with him on Mount Zion (14:1) and ‘sing’ before his throne (14:3). And they praise the righteousness of God’s rule, deeds and ways (his rule, salvation and judgements) (15:2-3).

Christ’s second coming makes an abrupt end to ‘the final battle’, his enemies and Satan (*Read* 20:7-10).

Jesus Christ resurrects all the dead at the same time (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). This physical resurrection is called ‘the second resurrection’. Jesus Christ conducts the final judgement of people (*Read* 20:11-15) and of the universe (20:11; cf. Matthew 24:29; Romans 8:19-21; 2 Peter 3:10) and renews all things (*Read* 21:1–22:5; cf.

Acts 3:21). It is then that God's kingdom reaches its final phase as the New Jerusalem on the new earth.

Note:

- that 'the final battle' is described in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th sections;
- that 'the fall of Babylon' is described in the in 4th, 5th and 6th sections;
- and that 'the final judgement' is described in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th sections.

The seven sections in the book of Revelation are therefore parallel and not consecutive.

The sections 1 to 4 (Revelation 1–14) are more concerned with events that take place during the whole New Testament period.

And the sections 5 to 7 (Revelation 15–22) are more concerned with events that take place in the end-time.

Throughout the book of Revelation there is an increasing measure of spiritual struggle and a growing emphasis on the end-time events.

D. Overview of the seven sections of the book of Revelation

Themes:

1. The establishment of the militant Church in the world.
2. The persecution of the militant Church by the world.
3. God's chastising and warning judgements of the world.
4. The victory of Jesus Christ and his Church over Satan and his helpers.
5. God's final and decisive wrath over hardened people in the world.
6. God's inescapable judgement of the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet.
7. God's kingdom in its present phase and final phase.

Introduction: Revelation 1:1-8

Overview:

Period	Chapter	Beginning	Long period	Short period	The end-time	Eternity
1.	1	1:9-20				
	2		2:1-29		2:7,11,17,26-29	2:7,11,17,26-29
	3		3:1-22	3:10	3:5-6,12,21-22	3:5-6,12,21-22
2.	4	4:1-11				
	5	5:1-14				
	6		6:1-11		6:12-17	
	7	7:1-8			8:1	7:9-17
3.	8					
	9	7:1-8	8:6-13			
	10	8:2-5	9:1-21		10:7	
	11	10:1-11	11:2b-6	11:7-10	11:11-14,17-19	11:15-16
4.	12	11:1-2a				
	13	12:1-10	12:6,11-17	13:7-10,15-18		
	14		13:1-6,11-14		14:6-13,14-20	14:1-5
5.	15	15:1,5	15:6-8			15:2-4
	16		16:1-11	16:12-16	16:17-21	
6.	17	17:3	17:1-18			
	18				18:1-24	
	19			19:17-19	19:11-16,20-21	19:1-10
7.	20	20:1-3	20:4-6	20:7-10	20:11-15	
	21					21:1-27
	22					22:1-5

Conclusion: Revelation 22:6-21