

REVELATION REVISITED

Why Try?

The history of the Christian Church is littered with the broken reputations of those who “got personal” with the book of Revelation. Even our own church has its roots in the soil of failed prophetic expectations. After all, William Miller was wrong.

But he is not unique. The historian Eugen Webber notes that the scriptures regarding a second coming have been misapplied *hundreds* of times, as different leaders and “prophets” have set numerous dates for the return of Jesus.

In the face of this, why try? Why even open a book that has been the source of more argument and acrimony than light? Why should we believe that *now* is the time, and that *we* – of all people – will finally be given the opportunity to understand this remarkable book?

Fair questions. And the short answer is that we won’t be able to understand all that this book has to say – at least not yet.

But we can understand some of it – and we might even be able to understand more of it than those who studied it in the past. But regardless of how much or how little we come to understand, there are very good reasons to undertake this study.

Here are some of them:

1.

God encourages us to do so. This is the only book in the Bible that contains a special blessing specifically for those who study it. You can read it in Rev 1:3. “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”¹

2.

Clearly portions of this book speak to end time events. As we are most certainly closer to the “end time” than ever before, those portions of the writing are just that much more relevant. We should be investigating them.

3.

History shows that God often gives prophecy in a manner that *keeps it from being clearly understood* until the time comes for the prophecy to be fulfilled. We shouldn’t be bothered by the fact that it couldn’t be understood by those who didn’t need to understand it.

4.

Ellen White wrote: “When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 113

If the above statement is to be considered as prophetic, three conclusions can be drawn: **A.** The way that Revelation was understood in her time fell short of revealing all the truth that God had placed in this book. **B.** Since our approach to Revelation has not changed

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture is taken from *The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1996.

since she wrote this statement, our traditional view still falls short in this regard. **C.** The promised revival that will happen as a result of coming to understand this book is yet ahead of us. This should spur us to an earnest study of the book of Revelation.

5.

It has always been the will of Jesus that His followers live with a sense of the immediacy of His return to keep them from lapsing into complacency. Studying Revelation renews that belief in our hearts.

6.

Errors (and false teachings) about this book abound. To be grounded in the storm ahead, we need to understand the messages that God has given. If we do not understand them properly we are at an increased risk of being misled by their misapplication.

7.

Jesus cares about what His people are soon to go through. He cared so much that he came down to the Isle of Patmos over 1900 years ago and gave His good friend John this “Top Secret”, “Classified” message for us. Shouldn’t we who are awaiting His imminent return care enough to give these messages our most serious attention?

8.

Ellen White wrote of this book: “The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God’s people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention.” 8 T. 302

9.

While it may bring us comfort to believe the same as everyone else, there is no safety in Orthodoxy. We are *individually* responsible before God for the opportunities we have to learn. Just because it was “good enough for Mama” doesn’t make it “good enough for me.” We must each individually understand these truths.

10.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Mat 7:7-8
Note that it is those who **seek** who will **find**. Not those who don’t.