

Ends Teaching Outline #1 – Introduction Draft

Think of eating a meal.

Some eat the meal by eating too much. Others eat enough of the meal. The rest do not care about the meal, so they eat a little. This example shows how many approach the study of end times. Some become obsessed with end times, then the Bible is only about the end times. This type of reader of end times is attempting to decode the future at the cost of the local church. Others attempt to approach the end times in the same way they approach the rest of the Bible. For the rest, they give up too soon, preferring not to see what the future will bring.

At least in many places and times, there has been too much of a focus on timelines in the end times. The study of Revelation becomes creating a timeline in how the future will reveal itself. Charts, timelines, news events, and signs in the sky are often how Christians understand the end times. It is no wonder why Christians become obsessed or have little interest in the End Times.

Let's turn to Revelation 1:1-3 to see what God thinks of the End Times.

Point 1: Revelation 1:1-3:

Verse 1: Revelation reveals Christ's testimony. An angel brings Christ's testimony to the Apostle John. Notice, Revelation is for the church to know the Lord's will. Dear Christian, do not reject the testimony of your God and saviour Jesus Christ. God is speaking much hope through this book while answering what will God do with darkness. This book should bring joy to Christians, as one of the major themes is God dealing with the effects of darkness. As of writing, God is patient in waiting for non-believers to repent of evil. Servants of darkness like Satan, demons, and non-believers live during a time of God being patient. At some point, God's patience will end, leaving God to display his justice. God's justice can be many things. Not suppressing war to declaring an everlasting judgment on a human are examples of God's justice.

It is easy to speak about timelines after reading the news or seeing an event in the sky. Somehow, many relate these things to Revelation. This approach cheapens the attributes of God. Why? Instead of seeing God displaying many attributes like justice and love, the timeline is the focus. Listen to Christians when they discuss end times. It is about their

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view of end times. Christians will often get into heated debates or try to force leaders into accepting their view. As Christians do this, each claim this is what the Holy Spirit says. Is God able to lie or misdirect? No! See James 1:13 with Numbers 23:19. God cannot change his mind from person to person, leading them into unique positions. Christians claim the Holy Spirit says this about the end times, contradicting another Christian. Christians make God into a human, changing his mind from person to person. It would be better to avoid putting words into God's mouth.

Verse 2: The Apostle John has the testimony of God's words provided by an angel. The Apostle John wrote the testimony of Christ for the church. The church is any person who has trusted in Christ alone for salvation. God goes into the world through Christians speaking the Bible, saving his people from every tribe, nation, and people. See Revelation 5:8-10, Romans 10, John 6:35-50, John 3:15-21, and Ephesians 2:7-10.

Remember, there is hope in you, Christian. Starting at birth, everyone has evil inside ready to come out. Everyone's immaterial part, as in the soul or the spirit, is aiming to rebel against God. See Psalms 58:3 with Psalm 51:3 and Romans 3. Christ, with his freedom, forgives as he takes the sin and consequence on himself on the cross, where he saves. Christian, Christ holds you close. Remember, there is mercy and love for you, Christian, in the end times.

Verse 3: Receive Christ's blessing, Christian, as you receive Christ's testimony. Remember, the idea of a blessing is to have a deep thanks towards God as God's favour shines on you. God's favour is in salvation only, as Christ alone saves. There is no end to God's favour, as salvation never ends. See John 10:28-29 with John 6:37 and 2 Corinthians 13:5-6. Listen to Christ's testimony and keep any directions that apply to you, Christian.

Point 2: The Book of Revelation is called Apocalyptic Literature.

Revelation is full of dramatic symbols, like Daniel in the Old Testament. The symbols represent people and events. Symbols are difficult to understand. Why? Without knowing the exact event or person who the symbol is referring to, it is difficult to understand the symbol. What does a dragon with many crowns mean? Are there horses bringing war or famine? Revelation is full of language like this. Chapter 12 of Revelation is Christ's birth, as seen in Matthew chapters 1 and 2. There are times the symbols are clear. Often, is it a horse bringing war, or does it represent something else?

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Christians get themselves into trouble in two ways.

Option 1) Many obsess over the symbols, trying to decode them beyond what the passage allows for. The end goal is to create a timeline or a position. Instead of seeing Christ and plain ideas, the act of decoding symbols morphs the clear ideas of Revelation. Jews of Christ's day tried to predict Christ's first coming and what he will do. Despite having God's word, the Jews miss the gentiles having salvation too. Most Christians who go beyond the symbols miss plain and clear ideas. Look at books written in the last hundred years. Authors make great, convincing arguments that turn out to be wrong. Why? Trying to decode events through vague dramatic symbols. Remember, the Bible is not the problem. It is the person going beyond the symbol.

Option 2) Many Christians give up on Revelation. Why? It is too difficult to understand. Many Christians in many places live in an environment where it is about the timeline. A heated environment starts. The heat rages on, causing fights within the local church. Fights are over who has the best arguments for why their timeline or position is correct. Do not allow the abuses of others to miss God's blessings.

There are other reasons Christians take this approach to Revelation.

Suggestion: Please list the reasons your audience gives up on understanding Revelation.

Remember, Revelation is a part of God's word useful for teaching.

Point 3: How does a Christian understand the Book of Revelation? This is a valid question worth considering. First, ignore the news, blood moons, falling stars, and political events. Whatever distracts from reading the Bible well, it needs to be put away. When a Christian reads the Bible, outside events like those listed above should not influence what the Bible means. Revelation, like many Old Testament books, uses symbols to express an idea. Other passages or another part of the Bible explain the symbols. This is how Revelation, like any book in the Bible, needs to be understood. If a symbol shows famine or death, then it means at some point God will display justice as in famine or as in death on the earth. God uses a symbol of a new city made with precious materials. Each Christian will inherit a place of rest to be with their God forever. Christian, you can know famine will come in history, whether in the past, now or in the future. Christian, you should know there is a wonderful place where we will co-exist

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with God. The symbols point to something without trying to decode the historical event, which may have already come to pass or may be a future event.

Some may say this takes the literalness out of a passage. Yes, there is truth in this. Finding a timeline or the exact event is not the goal. What is being suggested is to follow the symbols as far as other parts of the Bible allow for. Yes, this means a less dramatic reading of Revelation. In its place is to seek knowing the symbols within the limits of the whole of the Bible. Revelation completes the teachings from the rest of the Bible. Christian, do you rather have fights and divisions in your church over events not revealed? It is better to be at peace with a simple understanding of Revelation, balanced by the rest of the Bible.

Let's look at Revelation 12 to put what has been said into practice.

Point 4: Revelation 12 has many symbols with limits from the rest of the Bible. Israel gives birth to Christ. A Jewish woman, blessed by God, gives birth to Christ, who has authority over all the earth. Dark forces are at war with our precious Christ. The church is God's saved ones. The offspring of Christ, being Jew and Gentile together in the church, are under attack or will be at some point. This is a quick summary of the themes presented in Revelation 12. God in this chapter reveals a template to understand the End Times. Christian, please consider the symbols found in Revelation. Consider the whole of the Bible. Put the symbols and the whole of the Bible together.

In Revelation 1:19, God explains the events written in Revelation will take place after communicating to the seven churches. The churches that are written about start in Revelation chapter 2 ending at the end of chapter 3. The church of Ephesus is the same church the Apostle Paul wrote to in the Book of Ephesians. 1st Thessalonians and 2nd Thessalonians is the church of Thyatira. Apostle John's testimony reveals what happened to the churches that Apostle Paul started and watched over. These seven churches are like churches today. In these seven churches are people saved by God's grace, where light replaces darkness. This light of God is unconquerable, while there are remaining influences of darkness still affecting Christians. Watch for the blinding effects of darkness, so pray to God that he will reveal weaknesses in you. Christian, your weaknesses are a part of the church you attend. Despite weaknesses, God commissions you to share Christ with words and be students of the Bible. You need strength to fight the battle against darkness in this life.

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Point 5: Please turn to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Verse 9 is the focus.

God will grant Christians a benefit like the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul received insight in many mysteries and direct words of God to provide to churches. In all this, the Apostle Paul, still being influenced by darkness, could have brought praise to himself. God's mercy brought a trial to keep Paul trusting in God's grace. Grace is favour from God to overlook offences of evil with its consequences. This type of grace applies to salvation when God saves with his freedom. As the Christians walk with God on the narrow road, grace becomes God's strength. Grace never stops displaying the power of Christ. In the Apostle Paul's struggle, grace is the strength to keep him humble yet fruitful in the ministry. Dear Christian, you are no different. You need grace to continue on the narrow path of God. God has granted you many benefits from being known by God. But, also, God often keeps in place or introduces trials that force you to use God's grace as strength. What does this have to do with the End Times?

End Times are future events in history taking place after the seven churches. Grace is there as strength. Whatever you will go through, grace is enough. Remember, God has you secure in his hand, never letting go. Christian, you are secure in God. See John 10:28-29 with Colossians 3:3, Psalms 63:6-10, and Psalms 73:20-24.

Let's put the pieces together.

- 1) Understanding Christ's Testimony in Revelation is a blessing.
- 2) Seeking a timeline while going beyond the symbols is an abuse of vague symbols.
- 3) Ignoring the symbols is to put aside Revelation, missing a blessing.
- 4) The whole of the Bible should define Revelation.
- 5) Grace is enough for all trials.

Depending on the goal of learning Revelation, Christian, either you can find the book a waste of time or a rich blessing. Seek Christ in Revelation, as Revelation should motivate you to go tell the dark world that salvation through grace is here. Remember Romans 10 with Revelation. The sweet words that there is forgiveness through grace in Christ alone, is here to share. Non-believers dismiss trusting in Christ for grace and

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salvation. God responds with his justice. Christian, you should know what will happen to the non-believer in the next life. Share Christ with his freedom from evil and grace. Grace is your strength.

To keep balance, Revelation has a simple outline, which sermon 2 and on will explore.

Where do we go from here? Genesis 3 is where we should understand paradise and what it means to lose paradise. Why? Revelation is restoring paradise. As God's people go to paradise, God deals with evil. Therefore, Revelation is a book of God's justice for those who cling to evil, starting at birth. Revelation offers hope there is a solution for darkness. Amen!

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