

A study of Revelations

Introduction

Text
Revelations 1:3
Kjv

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Introduction

1. In this lesson tonight,
 - a. We are going to touch briefly on God's plan for man
 - b. We are to define some terms that will be used in our study.
2. Look at our text found in Revelations 1:3
 - a. The writer tells us that we are blessed
 - i. If we read this book of prophecy
 - ii. If we hear this book of prophecy read,
 - iii. If we keep the things which are written in this book.
 - b. Just a note from other versions
 - i. Niv...

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

- ii. Nlt...

God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.

- iii. AmpC

Blessed (happy, to be envied) is the man who reads aloud [in the assemblies] the word of this prophecy; and blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who hear [it read] and who keep themselves true to the things which are written in it [heeding them and laying them to heart], for the time [for them to be fulfilled] is near.

3. Personal statements

- a. I enter this study prayerfully and carefully for I do not claim to have all the answers.
- b. I approach these lessons knowing that I am not an authority on the matters of prophecy
- c. I present these lessons with my understanding of God's Word with my mind open to learn as I teach.
- d. We may disagree, but we do not have to be disagreeable, so let us learn together.

4. With these thoughts in mind, let us begin with our introduction to our study.

I. God's plan for man

Note: I am taking some of these thoughts from God's plan for Man by Finis Jennings Dake

A. Importance of the Study of "God's Plan for Man."

1. Much of the confusion and misunderstanding of the bible occurs because mankind does not understand the plan of God for man.
2. When we begin to have a working knowledge of the blueprint of God's plan, then the Bible becomes easier to understand.

B. God's plan is eternal

1. The fall of man did not do away with God's plan
2. God's plan for man is an everlasting plan and it involves this earth.
3. God's plan for man will continue with the New Jerusalem upon the new earth which will be a renovation of the old earth, and God's plan will continue.

C. Let us look at God's dealings with man in view of an eternal perspective

1. God created us as free moral agents with a free choice, the freedom to choose
2. As free creatures, our wills are tested to see if we are willing to cooperate with God for the greatest good of all.
3. As free moral agents, our will must be purged from the possibility of falling, so we demonstrate by our choices here and now that we are going to follow Christ, and then in the Rapture, we are translated, changed into a new body with no possibility of ever falling.

Note: Now we can fall, but when we are totally redeemed body, soul, and spirit, there will not no more falling or failing.

4. Being a person of free will, we must learn the following lessons.
 - a. God must be respected and obeyed.
 - b. God's laws are final and just.
 - c. Sin does not pay and will never be excused.
 - d. God's form of government is the only correct one.
 - e. Loving and freely submitting to God is the highest principle of attainment.
 - f. Justice and righteousness must prevail or no society can be eternally preserved.
 - g. God is merciful and forgiving to those who will repent and who learn obedience.
 - h. God is the only absolutely just and perfect Being and the only One capable and worthy of unquestionable authority and worship
 - i. God does things that are for the common good of all creation
 - j. God by virtue of His own position as Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Lord should and must be recognized by all as the Supreme Moral Governor of the universe.
5. God deals with us to bring us back to the place where we were before the fall.
6. In God's dealing with us, we learn that He is All in All, so we do not have to worry, fret, be filled with anxiety, or doubt, because we know that God is God, and we are His.

II. Biblical terms we need to learn and understand

A. Age which refers to a "period of time" whether long or short, so we have

1. Past ages which are referenced in Paul's writings

a. Ephesians 3:5-6

5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6) That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Note: The prophets and patriarchs did not understand that Gentiles could be an heir with Christ like the Jews, but in this age, it is delivered to Paul.

b. Colossians 1:26...

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

2. Present Age which is the Age of Grace between the 1st and 2nd comings of Jesus
3. Future ages is referring to the Millennium and beyond
4. Let me quickly touch on the following ages where God deals man
 - a. Antediluvian age...From the six day creation to the flood
 - b. Present age...From the flood to the Millennium
 - c. Age to come...From the Armageddon to the Great White Throne Judgment
 - d. Age of the Ages...Eternity without end.

B. World...Ten different Hebrew and Greek words translated world in Scripture, and each one has a particular reference that ought to be understood.

1. Hebrew Olam is referring to “Unknown time, eternity, everlasting”
 - a. Psalms 73:12...“in the world” would read better “continually”
- 12) Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
- b. Isaiah 45:17...“World without end” could be “eternal.”
 - c. Isaiah 64:4...“Beginning of the world” is “eternal.”
 - d. O lam is to be understood as “time without limits as to a beginning or an end.”
2. Greek aion (I on) means “a period of time” whether long or short.
 3. Greek oikoumene (oi-kü-me'-na) means the “inhabited earth” or “the world of men” or could refer to just a part of the earth like the Roman empire.
 4. Greek kosmos means order, regularity, arrangement, ornament, and social system.
 - a. Always translated world except in 1st Peter 3:3 where it is “adorning.”

- b. Kosmos refers to the social system or order in the earth.
 - c. When the “world” was destroyed by water, only the social order was destroyed, not the earth itself. (2nd Peter 3:5-7)
5. Greek aionios means “unknown time, time out of mind, eternity, always, perpetual, and forever.”
- a. Romans 16:26...

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Note: Since the world began in the Greek “chromos aionios” which is time without end,” or “time without defined limits as to a beginning or an end.”

- b. 2nd Timothy 1:9...
 ”before the world began” is “before time without end” before time began.
- c. Titus 1:2...
 - i. Kjv... In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;
 - ii. Strongs... Ionios chromos meaning before beginning of time.

Note: You may ask, why is this important?

- i. Look at 1st John 2:15-17

15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

- ii. A man said to me, I will not be able to go to heaven because I love the world.
- iii. What does the word “world” mean here?
- iv. Can a person love the “world” and go to heaven?
- v. It depends on your definition of “world,” and here, it is “kosmos” which is the social order of man.

C. Times and Seasons

Note: There are 28 different Greek words translated “time” and “times,” and eight Greek words translated “season” and “seasons.” Each of these Greek words have a different shade of meaning, but let us only look at two of them.

1. Times

a. Chronos...Time unlimited unless specifically defined.

b. Kairos...A certain limited or defined portion of time. A specific time

2. Hebrews 1:1

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

3. Ecclesiastes 3:1

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

4. 1st Chronicles 12:32...

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

5. In Matthew 2:1-10, we read about the wise men who studied the stars and knew the signs of the time.

6. In Matthew 16:1-3, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for not discerning the signs of the time as well as they could discern the natural seasons.

7. In Acts 1:6-7, we find that it is only the Father who knows the times and the seasons, but we can discern the time in which we live.

8. Even satan and demons know the time of their doom, for legion asked Jesus if He came to torment him before his time.

9. According to Paul in 1st Thessalonians 5:1-9, we should discern and know that we are living in the last days before the coming of our Lord.

10. The secret things belong to God, but He does reveal to us by His Spirit understanding of the times in which we live.

Note Deuteronomy 29:29...

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

D. The Eternal Past...Dateless past before the beginning of time with Genesis 1:2

E. The Eternal Future...Eternal continuation of time after the Millennium

F. The Times of the Gentiles...

1. This refers to the dispensation or administration of the Gentiles upon Israel.

2. Luke 21:24...

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

G. Dispensation...

1. From the Greek word “oikonomia” which administration or stewardship or a household or estate

2. It could be used as a “guardianship.”

3. Paul speaks of the “dispensation of the gospel” and “dispensation of the grace of God.”

4. The Millennium is called “the dispensation of the fullness of times” when God gathers together all things in Christ and puts all His enemies under His feet.

5. Dispensation when applied to various “ages” means “a moral or probationary period in human history” where “free moral agents” are tested according to a fixed standard of conduct or responsibility under which they are to remain true to God and rule, exercise His authority which He has given to us, for Him on the earth.

III. The Seven Dispensations of Man between the two Eternities

A. The Dispensation of Innocence (Genesis 2:15-3:21)

Note: This age is from the creation of man and His commission to rule the earth to his fall

B. The Dispensation of Conscience (Genesis 3:22-8:14)

Note: This age is from the fall of man to the flood which is about 1,656 years.

C. The Dispensation of Human Government (Genesis 8:15-11:32)

Note: This age is from the flood to the call of Abraham which is about 427 years.

D. The Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 12:1-Exodus 12:37)

Note: This age is from the call of Abraham to the exodus of Israel from Egypt under Moses
Which is about 430 years.

E. The Dispensation of Law (Exodus 12:38; Matthew 2:23; 11:10-13; Luke 16:16)

Note: This age is from the exodus of Israel from Egypt under Moses to the preaching of
the kingdom of Heaven by John the Baptist, or from Moses to the 1st coming of Jesus,
which is a period of over 1,718 years.

F. The Dispensation of Grace (Matthew 3:1-Revelations 19:10)

Note: This age has lasted some 2,000 years from the 1st coming of Jesus and will continue
until the 2nd coming of Christ.

G. The Dispensation of Divine Government (Revelations 19:11-20:15)

Note: This age will cover the period from the 2nd coming of Christ to the last rebellion of
satan and man on the earth, which will be a period of a thousand or so years.

IV. Other terms to be used in our study.

A. Millennial

1. This is a Latin word meaning thousand

2. Millennial is used in reference to Revelations 20:4

4) ...They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5)...the rest of the dead lived not
again until the thousand years were finished....7) ...when the thousand years are expired,
Satan shall be loosed out of his prison

3. There are three terms that will be used with the term Millennial

a. Pre-millennial...Jesus will return before the thousand year reign.

b. Post-millennial...Jesus will return after the thousand year reign.

c. A-millennial...A belief that the Millennial is non-existent as a literal state.

i. The a-millennialists feel this could represent the immediate state of the dead

ii. The a-millennialists feel that Christ could return at any time to usher in the
eternal state of bliss and the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Note: We are Pre-millennialists.

i. Declaration of Faith #13 states:

We Believe In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.

ii. Doctrinal Teaching #19 declares that we believe in the

Premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the dead saints and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, To reign on the earth a thousand years.

B. Tribulation

1. The word tribulation means trouble of a general kind or sort.
2. When referring the period of time known as Daniel's 70th week, it is referring to a period of suffering sent from God upon the earth for 7 years.
 - a. This week or 7 years is called the "Tribulation Period."
 - b. The last half of this period or 3 and 1/2 years is called "Great Tribulation."

i. Matthew 24:15-22

15) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

ii. Daniel 9:27

27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

iii. Daniel 11:31

31) And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and

shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Note the Amplified

31) And armed forces of his shall appear [in the holy land] and they shall pollute the sanctuary, the [spiritual] stronghold, and shall take away the continual [daily burnt offering]; and they shall set up [in the sanctuary] the abomination that astonishes *and* makes desolate [probably an altar to a pagan god].

iv. Daniel 12:11

11) And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

v. Revelations 13:4-6

4) And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5) And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6) And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

3. There are three terms associated with the “Tribulation”

a. Mid-tribulationist

- i. The Mid-tribulationist believe that the Rapture will occur in the middle of the Tribulation Period.
- ii. The Mid-tribulationist believe the Christians will go through the first half of the Tribulation Period which is for 3 and 1/2 years.

b. Post-tribulationist

- i. The Post-tribulationist believe that the church will remain on the earth during the Tribulation Period.
- ii. The Post-tribulationist believe that the rapture will occur, but it will be at the end of the Tribulation period.
- iii. The Post-tribulationist believe that the church will be raptured to meet the Lord in the air as He is on His way to establish His kingdom on the earth.

c. Pre-tribulationist

- i. The Pre-tribulationist believe that the rapture will occur before the seven year Tribulation period.
- ii. The Pre-tribulationist believe that the church will be in Heaven while tribulation is being poured out upon those left on earth, because of their disobedience.

Note: I am a Pre-tribulationist.

- i. I believe that the church will not go through the seven year tribulation period.
- ii. Pre, Post, and Mid-tribulationist are all Pre-millennialist.

C. Rapture

Note: Rapture is not a Biblical word.

1. The word rapture comes from the Latin “rapio,” and it means “to snatch away suddenly.”
2. In relation to Christ, the word Rapture means “to carry away to happiness.”
3. Scriptures

- a. 1st Corinthians 15:51-53

51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

- b. 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17

16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

4. Notice the phrase “caught up” in 1st Thessalonians 4:17

- a. This phrase “caught up” comes from the Greek word “harpazo” which means “to seize, to catch away, to catch up, to take by force.

- b. There are two other places this phrase “caught up” is used, and they are

- i. 2nd Corinthians 12:1-4

1) It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3) And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Note: Paul went to heaven. He was “caught up” or “snatched up,” and then he returned.

ii. Revelations 12:5

5) And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Note: In my opinion, this refers to the Ascension of Christ.

D. Resurrection

1. A raising

2. A return to life after death

3. Man exists between death and the resurrection according to Luke 16:19-23

19) There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23) And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

a. For the resurrection to be complete, there has to be a redemption of the body according to Romans 8:23

23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

b. The redemption of the body is accomplished through the resurrection

i. 2nd. Corinthians 5:1-3

1) For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

ii. Revelations 6:9-11

9) And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11) And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

4. Let us notice two terms with the word Resurrection

a. The term “First Resurrection” is found in Revelations 20:5, and it consists of

5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

i. First is Christ in 1st Corinthians 15:21-23

21) For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

ii. Second is the Church age saints in 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17

16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

iii. Third is the Tribulation saints in Revelations 20:4

4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

iv. Fourth is the Old Testament saints in Hebrews 22:40

40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

b. The term Second Resurrection is found in Revelations 20:5, 11-14

i. v5...

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

ii. v11-14...

11) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

iii. Those in the second resurrection are the unsaved dead, the millennial dead, and those who die after the millennial.

E. Eternal Life

1. Eternal life begins at the new birth
2. Eternal life continues throughout our life time here on earth
3. Eternal life continues after our life time here on earth
4. Eternal life in relation to God

a. John 3:14-16

14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

b. John 3:36

36) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

c. John 5:28-29

28) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

d. Romans 8:6

6) For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

F. Eternal Punishment

1. There is no Liberation
2. There is no annihilation
3. Scriptures

a. John 5:28-29

28) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

b. Isaiah 66:24

24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

c. Matthew 25:30, 31-34, 41, 46

30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 31) When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:...41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:...46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

d. Mark 9:43, 44, 46, 48

43) And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched....46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

e. Revelations 20:11-15

11) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the

heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

f. Revelations 21:8

8) But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

g. Revelations 22:11

11) He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.