

# Mission Team

Jesus is coming back



As most of you know we have been studying the book of Revelation in our bible study on Sunday mornings. I have read this book before, more than once and I find it very difficult to understand. Teaching Revelation for me was a big challenge because it is largely symbolic and you must know the Old Testament very well to understand the scriptures.

As I was reflecting in the past I realized that pastors and teachers alike tend to shy away from this book. The only recollection I had was more than fifty years ago my uncle, Reverend C. R. Price, an old Southern Baptist preacher scared the dickens out of me, shaking his finger in my face and spouting something about “hell fire and brimstone”.

The point is people don't like to hear about the end of times. It's scary. Some people see it as negative and hard to believe because of the symbolism. Some people called Preterist believe that the prophetic events were fulfilled in the first century because of all the suffering of the Jews and Christians. Then we have those that do not believe our loving God could actually fulfill the events in revelation.

While reading the scriptures again and keeping in mind that anything is possible with God, I was doing fine with the aid of my study bible and many resources from the internet.

Then I came to chapter 9, verses 1-11. **The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. <sup>2</sup>When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. <sup>3</sup>And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. <sup>4</sup>They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. <sup>6</sup>During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. <sup>7</sup>The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. <sup>8</sup>Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. <sup>9</sup>They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. <sup>10</sup>They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. <sup>11</sup>They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).**

I could not find a good explanation in all my research including the Old Testament of how to identify this locust. How could I teach something I cannot explain?

Another example that I could better understand in chapter 12, a red dragon appears with seven heads and ten horns. Verses 3-4, **<sup>3</sup>Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. <sup>4</sup>Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.**

In my research I found enough information to validate what the dragon symbolized.

Satan had many names, one of them being a Dragon, the seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns represent his power and the kingdoms of the world which he rules. According to Daniel 10, there are also seven chief prince spirits that rule these empires. The stars that fell from heaven are considered the angels that fell with him and became his demons. According to Hebrew tradition, one third of all the angels in heaven fell with Satan.

I began to understand why this book is not often taught or preached about. Revelations has 22 chapters and over 400 verses of which much is symbolic and it takes a lot of research to understand what the scripture symbolizes. I did the math on the time it would take to teach this and it converted into about 40 hours. One hour per week- 40 weeks is a long time to keep the attention of your classmates.

So I prayed to God and He pointed me in a different direction. I began to research the teaching of revelation and found that many video's had been made about this book. This led me to a pastor by the name of Perry Stone. He has studied the book of Revelation for more than 3 years and he put together seven DVD sets, 2 hours of study for each DVD. He is a fourth generation pastor and very knowledgeable. The DVD's cut the time down by 1/3 and introduced a new personality to the class.

We are at the half way point in the study, I personally have learned a lot about the "second coming of Jesus Christ" and from what the class has told me they are learning as well. Shortly after we started the class I began to think this chapter should have been much earlier in the bible. I remembered times when I was going to read the whole bible and never got close to revelation. Christians need to know about the second coming of Jesus.

Revelation is not a book about doom, it's about hope and warning. Jesus gave this revelation of Himself to John nearly 2000 years ago. It still stands as a comfort and importantly a challenge to God's people-Christ will return to rescue his people and settle accounts with all who defy Him.

To my classmates and others that might be interested in this teaching.

Rob