

End Times Prophecy

This Week:

Lesson: Revelation 1-3

Next Week: Revelation 4

Introduction to Revelation

It is the close of the Apostolic period, the emperor Nero has initiated a great persecution against Christians. All of the apostles have died except John, who is an old man, and who has been exiled to the island of Patmos.

Revelation 1:1-3, 4-8 Introduction and statement of authority

Revelation 1:9-20 Jesus Christ

Revelation 2-3 Epistles to the Churches

2:1 Ephesus

2:8 Smyrna

2:12 Pergamum

2:18 Thyatira

3:1 Sardis

3:7 Philadelphia

3:14 Laodicea

Discussion:

- **Discuss** the degree of authority expressed by the first 3 verses, and by all of the first chapter. Also consider Revelation 22:18-19
- **Note** the “seven Spirits” in v. 4 must be identified with the Holy Spirit. Compare with Isaiah 11:2 and Zechariah 4. Also, this is contextually identified beside God the Father and God the Son as being the three divine authors as the Book of Revelation. It follows to consider the divine symbolic emphasis on the number 7 and what it represents, but Scripture does not provide a ready explanation.
- **Note** that this is first-hand dictation, Jesus is speaking and John is verbally directed throughout the book pertaining to what's going on, and about what to write.
- **Note** that the words messenger and angel are the same Greek word, **discuss** the variations in meaning for the “angel of the church in...”
- **Locate** the seven churches (Oxford Bible Atlas, pg 91) and note that a route from John could reasonably be the same as the order in which they were addressed.
- **Note** that the Nicolaitans were probably associated with Gnostics (spiritual holiness separate from and allowing fleshly world, spiritual elitism) and/or Baal worship – the former justifying the later.

Questions to the Class:

Considering the Nicolaitans, what is the great dangers in adopting a “casual Christianity” or interpreting Scripture symbolically with impersonal application?