

***Another Perspective***

**September 9-10, 2024**

**Initial Comments –** The workbook contains the entire text of the book of Revelation on pages 173-208 that you can use to do all the marking that Jen Wilkin recommends. (You may prefer to purchase a stand alone copy of Revelation to have side by side with the questions as you work through the workbook. If you buy the one available from LifeWay, you will want to take time this week to correct the HEADINGS at the top of pages 20 to 76—this will make it much easier to do the comparisons between passages that you will be instructed to do as you move through the course.)

**Appendices –** The workbook contains several appendices at the back, immediately following the text of Revelation. Let’s familiarize ourselves with those right now, starting with the two on pages 210 and 211.

**Guiding Principle –** You may have noticed that we skipped over the first appendix when we began the discussion above. If you turn back to page 209, you will find the heading “Four Views of Revelation”, which gives “a brief explanation of the *most common* methods for interpreting the book”—which means that there are even more than four methods of interpretation out there! Does that make you nervous? We shouldn’t be surprised that a book filled with symbols from the first chapter to the last would be open to a variety of interpretations. I purposely skipped over this appendix for the time being because I think we need to spend time examining the text carefully for ourselves before deciding which “interpretation camp” we fit into.

We also need to acknowledge that we may not all reach the same conclusion. Does *that* make you feel uneasy? The Bible addresses the fact that believers will not always agree on what is the “right” viewpoint on certain issues. Paul mentioned one such issue in Romans 14:5 when he wrote, *“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. EACH ONE SHOULD BE FULLY CONVINCED IN HIS OWN MIND.”* (NIV) The Discovery Bible renders that last sentence like this: “Let each man be ***fully convinced*** in his ***own*** mind,” using red italics to indicate what receives the most emphasis in the original Greek. The tense of the Greek verb for “be fully convinced” indicates that this is to be an on-going habit of our lives, i.e. that we are to study issues out for ourselves and be able to give good reasons for why we do what we do and why we believe what we believe. And as Jen Wilkin has said in the past, we need to love God with all of our *own* mind, not someone else’s!

So my hope is that you won’t set a goal of determining which of these four views is the “right” one, but rather that your goal will be to study the text of Revelation diligently and develop your understanding so that you will be able to reach your own conclusions, be able to articulate them, and be able to give good reasons why you agree or disagree with various viewpoints as you encounter them.

**Opening Verses –** So with that goal in mind, let’s look at the first two verses in the book and see what we can glean from them: *“The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave Him to show His servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw.”* Notice the *progression* of the revelation:

Now let’s look at the first sentence as rendered by the Discovery Bible so we can learn something from the *emphasis* given in the Greek: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which ***God*** gave Him to show to His bond-servants…” This is a pattern that we see over and over again in Scripture: God the Father has a plan; the Son faithfully carries out that plan; Christ involves both men and angels in working out some of the details of His Father’s plan; and God clearly communicates to His people what He is about to do.

**The Desired Response –** And lastly, let’s look at the third verse of Revelation chapter one to see how God desires us to respond to this revelation of His plan. Once again we will look at the Discovery Bible’s rendering to see the strong emphasis: *“****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.” So we see that the strong desire of God’s heart is to bless His people, and He leaves us in no doubt about how we can receive that blessing. God also continues to involve people in the fulfilling of His plan to bless us: 2000 years ago the apostle John faithfully recorded what he saw and heard. Today Jen Wilkin faithfully asks us at the beginning of every lesson to *read aloud* the portion of Revelation to be studied that week and then asks at the end of every lesson, “What have you *heard* this week in Revelation?” and “How will you *keep* what you have heard?” forcing us to deal with the crucial issue at the heart of this book.

**Displays and Pictures –**  I, too, want to do everything I can to help you hear, heed, and keep what you have heard as you study this book. You see pictures and verses displayed on the walls, things that I hope will continually send a subliminal message to your heart even if we aren’t consciously aware of them every second. For example, one of the biggest things that I “heard” as I worked through the lessons this summer in preparation for leading this study is the fact that **God is on the throne**, utterly at peace and in control, bringing His plan for the universe to its exact completion at exactly the right time. I wanted to keep that thought in front of us, quite literally, for the duration of this study. You will see other pictures and verses on the walls, as well as displays on the table in front of the podium that I hope will be helpful to you as we continue week by week.

**Over to Jen** – So…are you ready for the adventure? Let’s hear what Jen Wilkin has to say in her opening lecture for this study.