

## **New Testament History, Literature and Theology**

### **Session 27: Revelation**

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This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his final lecture in New Testament History, Literature and Theology session number 27 this is the book of Revelation.

I'm going to tell a story just because it's how I think. Once upon a time, I was in a Master's psych program with a guy named Dr. Larry Crab. Crabb was one of the best teachers, students just loved this guy. He came in the last week and it was several days before finals and he said, Hey, I just read this great book. It's the best book I ever read in my life and you guys need to read this book. So what I'm doing for the final exam I'm assigning a book. This was about three days before the final. I'm assigning this book so that you guys can read it just before the and we'll go over it on the final exam. You'll be tested over it on the final exam. Now what happened? This guy was the best professor ever. What happened when he did that? All the students go just there was a disaster. What a way to end a course. You end up with all this, big work. I got three days left, they got to read this stupid book and it was a great book, but he was just out of sink and I started thinking about that. And then I also think about Proverbs, sorry for going on, but Proverbs has this thing where you don't swap a horse in the middle of the stream. Has anybody ever heard that you don't swap a horse in the middle of the stream. Or to quote

my friend Probo? You, when you go to a dance, you leave with the girl you came with. My wife doesn't dance so it's not relevant to us. But that's what he said. He says, you leave with the girl that you came with. That was a big thing with him. So all that to say, does anybody know what those Proverbs mean? Here's the meaning of the proverb. And I just say that it gets your ire up a little bit. I have this 500 page book that, I learned from that and what I think I started thinking about the class and you guys have gotten used to the Quizzlet format and all that kind of stuff. What I'm saying is I don't think I should switch gears in the middle of or for the final exam. So what I'm thinking is why don't we work on those three lectures where the Quizlets I have the

questions for the Quizlets and they're already built. The last five lectures I don't have quizlet built. I didn't even have video. Ben's been doing it for this class. And so now what's the problem? The problem is then you say, well, I don't need to know. I don't need to know nothing. So let me maybe make I'll tell you what, maybe on each lecture I'll make like one question that'll be kind of a generic question for each one that you can just go over and if you've been taking notes and it'll be good. Let me think about that more. But what I'm saying is the exam will focus on those three lectures where you have the Quizzlet questions. I may have a few other questions, but there'll be very minimal and then the revelation questions you'll have. I do

that because I don't think I when I get you to, I learned you, one way and then I think it's not good to switch over just because I haven't got the stuff built yet. This stuff doesn't exist yet. I mean Ben's making exist right now. So you can warn the students next year. It will be ready next year. But so you can warn them to take somebody else hopefully. So is that clear? Then let me clarify. I will send you guys an email explaining what I just said in detail. I'll send that out to you guys, but focus on those three lectures where give me tonight and tomorrow. My wife is picking up her father today and he's dead anyways. So there's a lot of stuff going on, but I'll, I'll try to get this done tomorrow. I'll have that ready for your Thursday morning. All right then the Revelation material will be ready Thursday or Friday. The questions, the readings. Then memory versus to just do those. So now Ben, there's a guy walking out in the hall. If you could catch him and tell him the sound's not networking and I think it's the back there. Just saw Chris, I mean out there. Chris. the sound isn't working here and I've got everything turned on. This is Chris. He is the man. And, alright. He has the magic touch, but yeah, but I got it all on. See right there on. I'm cool. This one, here's that. So I wonder if it's in the back. So he says, just keep teaching and things, so that's okay. I'll yell loud.

Today what I'd like to do is go over the book of Revelation and there's a couple of ways that I could have done the book of Revelation. Is it the way, here's a little bit there. So the book of Revelation, there's a couple of ways of handling it. One would be to do a left behind. What does a newspaper say? What are the nuclear arms happening? Then import those things from make Iran and the Ayatollah the antichrist or something like that. That'd be one way. The other way is that, which is usually done is that people just skip the book Revelation because Revelation is

hard and it's difficult to figure out. I've taught a whole course in the book of Revelation once and I thought I knew what I was doing. Since then, as you get older, you kind of mellow out. I thought I knew what I was doing when I was younger and I realize now that I don't. So unfortunately, I'll share that side of things with you too. Let me just say this. In the Bible there is a beginning, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Remember back to Genesis, there is a beginning and then things move through the patriarchs. They move through David. They move to this expectation of this King who would come. Jesus comes, but then Jesus dies and then all of a sudden Jesus is says he's coming back again. So there's this great hope, but what I'm interested in that you get is two notions. One is that history moves from a beginning to a middle to an end. And that's really important. By the way, does your life move beginning, middle and end? You guys are on the kind of the beginning of the middle of your life. And then there's an end of the story. What I'm saying is that means something then because it gives meaning to the decisions that are made along the way. Time is not circular. Things aren't just circular. So you say, I get up every morning. I do the thing. It doesn't matter what I do because I get up, I do the same thing day in, day out. What does my life matter? It's all circular. I go to the dust, I came from the dust, I go back to the dust. So what? Life becomes meaningless in this circular kind of way of thinking. What I'm suggesting is that life is not circular. There are patterns in life that are spiraled, but they're spiraling to an end. So yeah, Chris, I think we got it. Good man. Anyways, Chris Imming, he's the man.

Now let me just read a passage out of 1 John chapter three verse two he says, "but we know that when he appears," when Jesus appears, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure, even as Christ is pure." We purify ourselves. So now it's when we look for Christ coming, we prepare ourselves. How do we prepare ourselves to meet Christ? He says, we purify yourselves to be pure, even as he is pure. Now what I want to do is look at this Revelation and I want to discuss this and I don't want to do the newspaper exegesis kind of thing. I do ant to stress the notion of hope. That's one of the big themes of the book of Revelation, that Jesus is coming back and that should cause us to hope. In other words, there is a wonderful end to the story of this world. There is a wonderful end to the story of this world. Do you guys ever get depressed? Actually this is finals week. This is probably a good time to be talking about people get depressed. You start going in a cycle and

they say, I got so much stuff to do. Some students came up to me and said, "Hey, where's the Quizzlet on the last three lectures?" And I thought, oh stink. I didn't build that yet. It was like, Oh nuts and now it's out the window. And so what I'm saying is life is like that. You get disappointment, on top of disappointment. What I like is that the book of Revelation is with hope that sometime Jesus is coming back and we're going to see him face to face. We're going to be in the presence of God forever and ever. So that hope is called the blessed hope. something The question is, what do you really hope for in life? What do you really hope for? Do you hope to be rich? Do you hope to for a nice home, nice family? What types of things do you hope for in scripture? The hope for is the return of Christ meeting him in the air.

Now the problem with the book of Revelation is it's a literary genre. This literary genre is apocalyptic. When I say apocalyptic, that has certain meanings. When I say apocalypse now, what is the apocalypse? It is about the end of the world and apocalypse now, at the end of the world, the world's going to blow up or you as in 24 he's going to, nuclear weapons are going to go off all over the place. So at the end of the world, but the book of Revelation is also a letter. It's also a letter written from John to the seven churches. So as Galatians is a letter, Ephesians, Philippians, Galatians is a letter so the book of Revelation is a longer letter, but it's a letter. Then thirdly, it's a prophecy. It tells something, it preaches, but it also teaches about the future. So I want to look at what is the five features of apocalyptic literature. I want to just run through in order to understand this literature. It's strange stuff, book of Revelation, because it's apocalyptic. The first thing is and this: symbolism. There's going to be symbolism. The book, you say, well I take the Bible literally. Unfortunately when you get in the book of Revelation, you can't take it literally. There are symbols there. Apocalyptic literature uses high levels of symbolism. If you take things literally, you're going to be having all sorts of strange critters running around. Animals, with lions' heads on them. It just doesn't make sense. So there's going to be symbolism. Let me just give you an example of this. In chapter one, verse 20 it talks about the candlesticks and the candlesticks equal the churches. So that you see these candle sticks, candle holders, the candle sticks equal the church. So in chapter one verse 20 it says, "the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lamp stands is this. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." "The seven stars are angels of the seven churches." Does your church have an angel? So what does this mean by angel? By the way, do you realize that the

word "angel" can simply mean messenger? It can simply mean messenger. So he may be me not talking about a winged creature that flies around your church or something like that. But rather somebody who's bringing the message to the church--a messenger.

So he says, you've got seven stars or seven angels of the seven churches "and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." So we know that the lampstands represent something else, and this is called symbolism. One thing stands for something else. That gives us a hint in chapter one that this book is going to be filled with symbolism and therefore we got to keep our eyes open. Pictorial language will be used. Now, angels, apocalyptic literature, whether I'm talking about the Apocalypse of Peter, for example, or apocalyptic literature that was known at the time, usually you have an angel who accompanies the guy who was recording the apocalypse. So all of a sudden some angel will show up, Gabriel, or what's the name of some other angels, Raphael or something. Some an angel will show up and basically guide the person through and tell the person the story of this. This angelic guide or mediator will be there. So in chapter 1:1, it says, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant, John." So John's going to write it and an angel's going to mediate this thing. So you're going to see angels popping up in the narrative throughout apocalyptic literature as kind of a normal. Here's something that's really interesting. When John sees an angel, he's going to freak out. So he's going to fall down in front of this angel. In chapter 22:8, it says, "I, John am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and had seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me." So he falls down at the feet of this angel. Now what's, what's an angel going to do, John? I take it as the apostle John falls down at the feet of the angel. What's the angel going to do? He starts worshiping the angel because the angel is like awesome. He tells his angel and starts to worship. What's the angel do? Does the angel receive worship? No, there's only one being in the universe that receives worship. That's God. So this angel then says, "but he [the angel] said to me, do not do it. I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and the prophets, worship God." And what's the angel do? Does the angel receive worship? No, There's only one being in the universe that receives worship. That's God. So this angel then says, but he [the angel] said to me, do not do it. I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and the prophets, worship God.".

Dreams are at night when he's asleep. Visions when he's awake. The scope of apocalyptic literature will always be the end of time. So it's the end of the world. So prophetic literature, we'll always talk about the end of the world, how things are going to blow up or what's going to happen at the end of the world. So the end of all things, it's cosmic and scope usually. Actually is Star Wars apocalyptic a little bit? Yeah. It's about the end. Some of the worlds make it and some of them don't. So there's things like that where there's talking about the end of the world and a cosmic scope. Big things happening in the universe. Then lastly, there is dualism. In apocalyptic literature, there's a real sharp, a bifurcation between good and evil, good and evil. So you have the forces of darkness and the forces of light. Actually, am I talking about Star Wars now, Where there's this bifurcation between, the good and bad. Then you've got the bad shows up and then he's got a little good in him. You've got a good guy who's got a little bad in them. Then you work it out like that. I anyways, so there's dualism in apocalyptic literature. There'll be this sharp cleavage between what's good and what's evil. So you'll have the heroes, the white knights. You'll have this other with the features of S and evil. So there's a clear cut dualism. Now I'm going to be referring constantly to this fellow David Mathewson who used to teach here. He's one of the leading people in the world and the book of Revelation in my opinion. He taught here. I also went out, chased him down out to Denver and videotaped him doing 30 lectures and the book of Revelation. So if you want a real detailed study of the book of Revelation, Mathewson does 30 hours on it. By the way, he also does three lectures on revelation where he did the whole book of Revelation in three lectures. I put that at the end of his New Testament class. I'm putting that up on YouTube [biblicalelearning.org]. Does anybody know that thing? They called the YouTube. You can go and you watch these videos. It's kind of an interesting. I'm just mocking myself out. But anyway, so I'm putting it up on YouTube. Give me a week or so with that and Dave will be up there.

When Dave talks about apocalyptic literature, he talks about it as if it's a political satire. Do you ever watch those cartoons where they draw where a political satire draws a picture. So, for example, if you were in America and you had somebody draw an elephant and then they have a donkey kicking the elephant in the face, would that be a political statement in America? Donkey kicking the elephant in the face. . And what I'm saying is because we're in America, we know donkey stands for, I always get those mixed up. Donkey stands for anyways, one group and the

elephant. I'm just joking. But anyways, the elephant stands for the other group. And so, and then there's this tussle between the donkey and the elephant. We know those as two political parties, two political parties. Let's suppose you go out a hundred years from now, when people look back, is it possible people would forget what the donkey and the elephant stood for? You say, no, everybody will know that. No, it's possible they forget that. What I'm saying is when you look back on history, sometimes there's all these embedded historical references. Things like, what does six six, six stand for anyways?. And so there are these political things that if you were in that culture you might know it very well. Like if I started talking about I better not talk about that. Let's jump to something else. I was thinking about something in the late nineties that had to do with them anyways, a certain person. But I better not, I'll jump older now. Let me use a Richard Nixon and if I start talking about Richard Nixon, is that pretty much out of our culture now? If you guys were jumped back then you probably a lot of the nuances and things you just catch because you know the story of Richard Nixon's but it's been over for a long time now.

So what he's suggesting is that the book of Revelation is like a political cartoon. Let me say that again. I think this really helps understanding the book of Revelation is that it is similar to a political cartoon. Therefore it's got all sorts of references that are kind of hidden from us because it was written back then. By the way, was the book written to us? It was the book written churches 2000 years ago. Was the book written to us or was it written to seven churches? 2000 years ago? So what I'm saying is we are the ones that are on the outside looking in. It was originally written to the seven churches. They would know these images, they would know the symbolism, they would know the donkey and the elephant. They would just know that. So, think about it as a political cartoon, a political statement of political satire. Actually, something like that is what apocalyptic literature is. The author seems to be John. Some people say it's John the elder who's not John the apostle. I would say it's John. John the guy who sounds like it should be in Star Wars. John John. John is the apostle John. Now there's different approaches to the book and what I'd like to do a survey, all the approaches, do pros and cons to the basically four approaches to the book of Revelation. Then I'm going to give you, and actually I got to stand here. I'm going to tell you that I'm going to walk way over to the left and I'm going to give you my opinion and then we'll work on this together. First of all, it's the preterite view, the prererite view. When I say preterite, it has anybody had much grammar. When I say preterrite at what

does that mean is preterite? It mean like past tense. The past tense is the preterite tense. And so the preterite at view looks at the book is as recording something that's happened in history and that this was all in the first century. In other words, they say that the book of Revelation is a symbolic way of describing the wrestling's of the early church in the first century. The preterite view says the book of Revelation is just a satirical way of writing about the first century. And therefore it's about Nero who is a nasty dude as Caesar, an emperor. There was also Domitian who also killed Christians and did bad stuff. They are possibly related to the beasts, that would devour people.

Now what's the benefit of this preterite view saying that the book of Revelation is not about the 20th century and all this 21st century, but it's actually about the first century. It relates really well to the first century church. John is writing to the first century church. So they would have understood some of these symbols. For example, he mentions a city on seven hills and he mentions Babylon. Babylon, he keeps talking about Babylon and the beast and Babylon. But everybody knows if you're in the first century, when they referred to Babylon, it was really talking about Rome. Babylon, if you go over to Peter, Peter says, Peter is in Rome, he's going to, Peter is going to die in Rome. In 2 Peter, he mentions that he's in Babylon but where everybody knows he's not in Babylon, Babylon is in Mesopotamia. Peter's in Rome. So Babylon was a code word by which they referred to Rome. So that we begin to see some of this stuff when he says Babylon, they would have known immediately that was Rome, not Babylon over in Mesopotamia. So there's an advantage of this position because it allows the first century church recipients of the letter to understand the letter and that's a good thing. What are the disadvantages? The disadvantage of this is if it all took place in the first century, that means that it's not apocalyptic, which is about the end of the world. The world didn't end in the first century. The end of the world's still going on now. By the way, are we closer to the end of the world now? Is it possible the world could end now? And by the way, do we have weapons that could or blow up this whole place? Yeah. Do you realize that up until what? Actually by 1940 or 1950, let's say 1950. Could the world blow up in 1950 could the world blow up and we say, Oh yeah. We got some nuclear weapons but we had what we took out two cities. Could they really blow up the world? No. Have we got stuff now that will could blow things to smithereens? Yeah. Much more powerful than we had before. So I'm saying is some of the things that the book talks



about have never happened in the past and have never been possible throughout 2000 years. They are possible now. That just makes me wonder. So the advantage is the first century people understood it, The disadvantages that it, that Christ didn't come back in the first century. Christ did not come back in the first century. So it can't be all about the first century because the book ends with the coming of Christ and Christ has not come

yet. So there are some disadvantages to this approach. Therefore I think it squeezes too much. It takes a whole book of Revelation squeezes it into the first century. I just think it squeezes too much into the first century. The book talks about what must soon take place New Jerusalem at the end of the book, you're going to read New Jerusalem's coming down out of heaven. New Jerusalem hasn't come down out of heaven. Now, Jerusalem now is about ready to explode, with the Arab Israeli conflict. So there are disadvantages to this preterite view. So it makes me say,. Now, another approach to the book of Revelation is that this is really talking about idealistic kinds of concepts. In other words, it's a conceptual book that's talking about, various things that have to do with--it's not about telling the future, but it's telling about spiritual truth. So it's using these images to describe spiritual truths of good and evil, the struggle between good and evil. So some people that take the idealistic view, they say, all we can tell about the book of Revelation is that the good wins in the end? Have you ever heard that? I don't understand the book of Revelation. All I know is that good wins in the end. I want to say that that's good when you're 14 or 15 to say that, but as you get older, you realize that answer doesn't really satisfy. I mean, I'm glad, good wins in the end, but there's a whole lot more in the book of Revelation than just simply the good winds in the end. So I think that this very reductive way to look at it. So the language in this idealistic view, then all these things are talking about symbolic things. I think the problem was is that it's not all symbolic. There's this mix of figurative language and literal language. You've got to sort through those things. The advantage. Why I liked the idealistic view is that it lifts things in terms of the cosmic character of God and allows you

to think big thoughts about God and how the world works and how good and evil works and how those things go. So I think I like that it gives spiritual value to the book. I think the book of Revelation has tremendous spiritual value. So the idealistic view, seeing the ideas that are being portrayed here helps us to understand. The book actually does give us a whole lot of things about

about God and about this world and about ourselves. The disadvantages that it disconnects it from history. The idealistic view puts it all in terms of ideals and it cuts it off from history. What I'm suggesting to you is that the book of Revelation seems to be very well embedded into history. By the way, if the whole book of Revelation is idealistic, what's going to happen then with the return of Christ is the return of Christ idealistic too?. Now, is Christ never really going to come back because it's just idealistic. You know, whatever. So we just kind of go on and Christ never comes back. It's all theory. It's all idealism. It never hits reality. I say Christ actually is physically going to come back. So if you believe he physically comes back, then the book has to touch history. It has to work with history. Now there's a third view, which sees the book of Revelation as historical. That is, it looks back through history and it says Rome fell in, what, 476? I'm making it up, Josh. In the ballpark of 476, Rome falls. That was a huge thing. So the fall of Rome is described in the book of Revelation. Constantinople falls in 1457, Constantinople falls, and now it's called Istanbul. So Constantinople falls, that's a huge.

Then there's the Protestant reformation, let me just, I'm just going to do this just for fun. In the book of Revelation, you've got two witnesses according to the reformation. Then you've got one witness is Martin Luther, the other one's John Calvin. So you've got the two witnesses in the book of Revelation. Do you see what I'm saying? You interpret it in light of church history. That's actually, why I don't just say it's simply like that. So they take the book of Revelation and they stretch it out over 2000 years of church history. They see major events in church history as being recorded in the book of Revelation. So that's cool because you can actually see that in certain times these plagues hit. Some of the plagues that hit were really, really nasty. There are plagues described in the book of Revelation. So when people see these plagues, they say, Hey, this is the book of Revelation being fulfilled. So this is the historical view then says that basically through church history you see the fulfillment of the book of Revelation. Now there are some problems with that. As time goes on in church history. Do these people have to keep changing their analysis because more recent events have happened. So they continually change their perspective. So this historical view is always kind of on the fly changing as more things happen in the church. Where is Billy Graham in the book of Revelation? Billy Graham is one of the greatest preachers probably in 300 years. Where as Billy Graham in a book? Does Billy Graham occur there? Or maybe was this is lamb does the book of Revelation describe Islam. So then

people start making connections. I, I don't do that. I just think it's a wrong road to go down. So you've got to be careful with this historical thing because then people start interpreting these events that occur in the book of Revelation. I think it's very speculative. This is the biggest problem, it is very speculative. It's very speculative in that the speculation changes every 50 to a hundred years. They've got to add all these other things. So I think this is the, probably the weakest of any of the views.

Now, some people take the book of Revelation as being futuristic and this would be the last position. They take it as being in the future to describing a future, what they would call a tribulation period. I grew up with an environment, it was called dispensationalism at this time to even mention dispensationalism at school like this would cause people to laugh because a lot of people have dismissed it. Unfortunately, I think they dismiss it before they really have understood it. But anyway, so what they would take the book of Revelation. They'd say the first three chapters are written to the seven churches and that was for back in the first century. But then chapters four through the end of the book are about the future. So they would look and say, there's going to be a seven year period where things are going to break down in the seven year period of tribulation. There's going to be all sorts of bad stuff happening and then Christ is going to come and there's going to be a millennium coming which is a thousand year reign of Christ. And then ultimately we'll go into the eternal state. So I'll show you a chart kind of how they lay that out. It's very straight forward for a lot of people. This is the problem with it. I like certain aspects of that. The advantage of this approach is that the book is futuristic genre. It's apocalyptic literature, those facilitate the end of all things kind of outlook. It also coordinates with the book of Daniel.

Are any of you guys in churches where they discuss Revelation and Daniel. These are the two books that they camp on. What I'm saying is certain churches, if you're in a reform church, what church are they going to, what part of scripture are they going to camp on? If you're in a reformed Presbyterian kind of background, you do a lot with Romans and Galatians. If you're in a Mennonite you're going to do a lot with the Sermon on the Mount. Peace, love Sermon on the Mount kind of focus. If you're in a more, how should I say? Baptist, a dispensational church you're going to do Daniel and Revelation. You are going to be in those two big books. So these

books, the book of Daniel talks about the future and so you have to coordinate those two things. So there are certain things I like. Now what are the disadvantages of this futuristic approach? The disadvantages that you're left with books like the Left Behind series. Are you familiar with the Left Behind series? So then you're left with these people picking up the newspaper. Back after the civil war when I grew up, there was a book called the Late Great Planet Earth. They had like a million, many multiple millions of copies of this Late Great Planet Earth. When he took the book of Revelation and took what was going on with the Vietnam War and all that was going on then and connected it to the book of Revelation. You're going to see these critters come out and they're going to be like locust with like the head of a man and the stinger of a scorpion in their back. He said basically that he thought those were helicopters in Vietnam because the stinger is in its tail. So the helicopters would shoot out the tails. So he said that these locusts were helicopters from the Vietnam war. This guy was the Hal Lindsey. The book sold millions of copies, actually I thought the guy was probably old enough. I thought he passed away, but I was on some weird television thing and all of a sudden I saw the guy again. He's in his early seventies now. By the way, he's still saying the same stuff and it's just like, some people never learn. But anyways, so that, my problem is the speculative nature, trying to

speculate with a newspaper in hand and say, Oh, this is, this is the end of the world. This person is bringing on this calamity. This person is the antichrist, or that person in the antichrist. What do you remember two years ago there was a guy named Camping that said on May 12th, there was going to be the end of the world. My students then I told them there's no final because it's the end of the world's coming on the 12th. Our exam was on the 13th. You're good to go. And so the problem was is that we passed the 12th and they didn't all disappear. Oh, that's right. He miscalculated. So these people always have some sort of excuse why they're wrong. By the way, when the Bible says if a prophet gives a false prophecy, what's supposed to be done with that prophet? I'm just saying. Chill out. I'm trying to have him stoned, but I just think he's misguided old man and he's wanting Christ to come. I want Christ to come as well. But you got to be really careful about speculating like that. So the futuristic thing, it leads to a lot of this speculation. And by the way, that's a Tim LaHaye and the Left Behind series. If you go down to Liberty University, you'll see whole buildings dedicated and supported by dr Tim LaHaye who made millions on this Left Behind series. So maybe we could use some of that at Gordon.

But anyways, that was a joke. This is really funny where it gets funny. Normally I way walk way over to the left and Ben's taping me. So Ben, I'm wanting to walk way over to the left. Now I'm going to tell you my opinion on this book. Now you say we're students. Why don't you just tell us the facts, what the Bible says. What I'm telling you is that I don't know anybody who knows exactly what's all going on in the book of Revelation. Here's the way I look at it now and I've changed my position in the last three years. I've changed my position on it. So what I'm telling you is what I'm telling you the truth and the answer is: no. Is this something that I've made up trying to understand this book? Yes. Now you say, well, I don't care what you think that's fine. I just happen to be a professor, whatever. But my question is what do you think about the book of Revelation? How do you understand the book of Revelation? So here's the way I look at it. Now I look at the book of Revelation as apocalyptic literature mixed with what I want to call wisdom literature. Wisdom literature and apocalyptic literature go together sometimes. When I'm in wisdom literature, are you familiar with Proverbs? "A wise son or daughter brings joy to a father, a foolish son or daughter's, a grief to his/her mother." (Prov 10:1) Why son or daughters brings joy to a father, a foolish son or daughter brings grief to his mother. When does that happen? How often does that happen? Whenever you have a foolish son, does the mother get hurt. Whenever you've got a wise son or daughter, is the father happy about that? Yes. So that proverb is instantiated in real life repeatedly. It's repeatedly instantiated. So you get the theory of why son or daughter brings joy to his father and a foolish son or daughter brings grief to his mother. Then in each family that's instantiated into real life, I use the word instantiate. Has anybody in computer science seen this. It's a computer term that's called instantiation. What I'm saying is you've got a theory here or paradigm. You've got a proverb here and then you see it actually worked out in life. You see it worked out in life. What I'm suggesting is that the book of Revelation gives us wisdom in that way.

At the end of the book it says this and this is what opened my eyes to this approach. Now I'm not saying I've got it down at the end of the book, it says, "whoever adds to this book," what will be added to him? "Whoever adds anything to this book, the plagues of this book will be added to that person." That means then that if somebody did that around a thousand AD and added something to the book, the plagues, that this book would come on that person. Or if you're in the 21st century the plagues would come on the person that adds to this book. So what I'm saying is

he's saying whoever adds this book, wherever time period read the plagues, his book are going to come upon you. This made me begin to realize that these plagues may have happened repeatedly in history. Perhaps that's why the historical approach says that these things have happened thru church history and they go back and say, well look, this is what happened in the fall of Rome. This is what happened in the fall of Constantinople. This was the big great bubonic plague being described here. So they see it happening repeatedly. So what I'm suggesting is that the book of Revelation is kind of like wisdom literature where some of these plagues and things like that have been instantiated repeatedly throughout history awaiting a coming big one--awaiting a coming big one. So these are, we see

the plugues happen repeatedly in history awaiting a coming big one when this thing will really happen in the antichrist or whoever will show up and then the big one will happen. All right. Does that make sense to anybody? How comfortable am I with that? I'm not very comfortable with it. Let me shoot my own theory down. Here's how I shoot my own theory down question. Hildebrandt have you ever heard anybody else come up with that idea? The answer is, no. When you're the only one saying something, does that tell you something? Yes. It tells you you're crazy. And so what I'm saying is that's the way I look at it. But what I'm saying is that's how I understand it with the best I can do. I work with wisdom and I work with apocalyptic literature this is the best I'm doing now. I'm not saying this is gospel, it's just how I understand the book now. At the time Dave Mathewson turned my head upside down and this is where I kind of tried to land on my feet. And you'd say, Hildebrandt you didn't land on your feet you landed on your head. He turned you upside down. So what I'm saying is that the book of Revelation could aspects of it can be seen repeatedly throughout history and that I'm awaiting a day when Christ will return in reality and the big one will happen. Jesus will actually land on the earth. That's

how I look at it. Those are the old historical approaches and things like that. These are various approaches. I think it's important to think about this stuff. Here is what they call a pre-millennial timeline. This is what a lot of people grew up with in my generation after the civil war. What happens is you go way over to the the side here on the, what's your guys' is the left. You've got 2000 years of church history in which church history happened. The book of Revelation starts this, what they call the seven year period of the tribulation. There's seven years of this what they

call the great tribulation. By the way, this is a dispensational model and I say, Hildebrandt, you don't hold this anymore, but what I'm doing is presenting it. If this was held back in the 1950s and sixties, seventies. This was a big model that was used. So the 7 year tribulation period. Christ then comes. Do you notice there's three markers for Christ's coming. One is before the tribulation period. They call that the pre-trip rapture. Has anybody ever heard of the rapture? The rapture is when Christ comes back and he takes his people out. By the way, there's passages in Thessalonians that say that the dead in Christ will rise first and we will be caught up. In the one, two people be at a mill, one will be taken and one will be left behind. So that's where these books get off. By the way, are those books based on a kernel of truth? The answer is, yeah. Now he goes off and does all this weird. But part of it is. So this is called a pre-trib rapture. Christ comes back before the tribulation.

There's a mid-trib rapture that says in the tribulation period, the first three and a half years aren't so bad and Christ comes in the middle to save his people before the last bad half of the tribulation. Buswell held that and he's dead now so that nobody holds this position any more. That's the mid-trib rapture position. Then people like Gundry out at a school called, what was the name of that school? I think it was West. It's on the West coast. Westmont or something [joke]. Anyways, there's a guy out of Westmont, Robert Gundry who taught that Christ comes back after the 7 year tribulation. The church goes through the tribulation and then boom, Christ comes back. So those are kind of the, what they call pre-trip rapture, Christ comes back before the tribulation. The mid Trib, rapture in the middle and post-Trib rapture. Do you see a pre, middle and post tribulation. Then there's a thousand year reign of Christ where Christ rules over the earth. The lion lays down with the lamb. They beat their swords into plowshares. Everything goes good. Christ rules for a thousand years. Then at the end of that thousand years, this is the Revelation. Chapter 20 is about the millennium. At the end of the thousand years, Satan is loosed again. He deceives humankind once again, and there's judgment made on the earth and then the new Jerusalem comes down. New Jerusalem goes on forever and ever. So that's what goes. This new Jerusalem is Revelation 21 and 22 and how the book ends with new Jerusalem coming. So this is kind of what's called a dispensational chart scheme. Not too many people hold this anymore. But I think there may be aspects of it that are right. And so I just need you to put that

kind of in the back of your head and say this is probably what your grandparents held or perhaps some of your parents.

Now, we went through some of these things. Actually I'll tell you what, why don't we, yeah, take a break and then when we get back. We'll just finish this up and thanks. We talked earlier about the book. One of the characteristics of the book is symbolism. Let me just read some of the symbolism from chapter one that he describes. He says, "I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me when I turned around. I saw seven golden lamp stands and among the seven lampstands was someone like the son of man dressed in a robe, reaching ... the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lamp stands is this: the seven stars of the seven angels of the churches and the seven lampstands" and he goes down. Then he says in chapter 13 he uses this, he says, "this calls for wisdom, if anyone has insight, let them calculate the number of the beast for it is man's number, his number is six six, six." The six six six number was basically to be put on the back of their hands or on their foreheads actually is going to be chips. They're going to insert chips into your head and then instead of creating credit cards, you just go up and do a kind of thing like that for the credit card. Yeah, thanks for laughing. I just made that up anyways. I thought it'd be cool. Or they put it in your wrist and you go up and then so then people cut off your wrist. This is interesting.

Let me just back off while I was making a joke on myself there. It is very interesting. It says this number six six six that you're going to need that number in order to buy or sell anything. That you're going to need that number in order to buy or sell anything. By the way, in the last hundred years ago, could a mark on them and they had to have their money to buy or sell. Would that been possible. Would that have been possible a hundred years ago or 50 years ago? The answer is, no. Is it possible now? Yeah. It's possible now. So what I'm saying is for 2000 years this has not been possible. It is possible now, so don't totally laugh at these guys as being total fools, although you know what I'm saying? You may want to laugh sometimes. You can laugh at me, but it's very interesting to me as some of the stuff that it's talking about actually is able to be done now for the first time in 2000 years. Now the number is six, six, six. I want to go back as I think we need to understand it back then. So some people have noticed that if you take Nero's name in a certain way, that Nero's name comes out to be the numbers 666. Six remember how



we said the numbers and letters are the same and kind of this what they call the gematria, a principle where numbers and letters were interchanged. Some people say that these numbers, six six, six stands for Nero. Nero is a great persecutor of the early church in the second part of this reign. So that's how they would take that as being back then, this number with the six, six, six.

How do you understand that Babylon? As we said, and I've actually got the reference here in 1 Peter 5:13. Peter says, "she who is in Babylon chosen together with you, sends her greetings. And so does my son Mark." So apparently John Mark was with Peter. They're in Rome, they are in Roman at this time and he calls it Babylon. In 1 Peter chapter five, verse 13, stay away from the pit locusts. By the way, the pit locus had long hair and back. there was, when I grew up, there were these groups of people they called hippies. The hippies wore long hair and they actually, my wife liked long hair. It's so, but now unfortunately for her, she wants me to grow a ponytail. That's the truth. I'm serious. I'm dead serious. My wife, meek and mild, you know, straight as an arrow and net picker. She says, why don't you grow a ponytail. Anyways, so we have, you'll say I have marital problems, but anyways, Oh stink. This is on tape. Hi Annette. I love you. But that is the truth. Let me get out of that. What I'm saying is stay away from newspapers. Stay away from newspaper exigesis, where you pick up and whatever's going on in the world, you try to map it into the book of Revelation. I think that really can be really damaging. One thing we should note that's really important. Now, this is really important. The book of Revelation is full of old Testament orientations, allusions and echoes of the Old Testament. The book of Revelation cannot be understood without the Old Testament that is so full of illusions from the Old Testament. For example, let me just use some of them. Chapter 11 verse 19 it says, then God's temple in heaven. Where have we seen God's temple? Remember Solomon and God's temple? God's temple in heaven was open and within his temple was seeing the ark of his covenant, the Ark of the covenant. So this temple in heaven has got the ark of the covenant. Do we know from Old Testament, do we know about the ark of the covenant? Does anybody remember the three things that were in the ark of the covenant? So those are the types of things. Nevertheless, he says, I have a few things against you. "You have people there who hold the teaching of Balaam." Does anybody remember Balaam, the nasty dude, Balaam in Numbers 22 to 24. Actually the book of Revelation refers to to teaching a Balaam "who taught Balak to entice

the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality." So he mentions some of this from the Old Testament.

Let me just do another one in Revelation 2:7 it says, "he who was ears. Let him hear what the spirit says to the churches, to him who overcomes, I will give to right to eat of the tree of life." The tree of life takes us back to what book? The book of Genesis and the garden of Eden. By the way, when new Jerusalem, let me just do this one out of my head. Actually it's chapter 22 verse 14. I see there when new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, what tree is in new Jerusalem, the tree of life. The tree of life is giving forth its fruit 12 times a year. So this book of Revelation is kind of spectacular in some of these Old Testament orientations. And then one that I need, this is really kind of a big deal. The plagues of the book of Revelation are modeled on the plagues out of Exodus. Do you remember the 10 plagues of the sun going dark and the locusts coming out. The 10 plagues in Egypt are actually echoed in the book of Revelation. So these plagues in the book of Revelation are described based on using images out of the Exodus. The allusions are very strong there. Another concept that comes up that's really important in this is the one world concept. In the book of Revelation, you've got the whole world coming together against Christ. So there's this globalization thing going on in the book of Revelation that mentions this. The whole world comes to battle at Armageddon. They gather from all over in this battle of Armageddon where the whole world comes in. So there's this globalization emphasis there. Let me just read Revelation 19:19 "then I saw the beast and the Kings of the earth and their armies together to make war against the rider and the horse and his army. But the beast was captured with him. The false prophet who had performed miraculous signs his behalf."

So they seized, it's interesting to me here we've got the beast. Just do this. We have in the Trinity, we've got what? The father, the son and the Holy Spirit, right? Father, son and Holy spirit. We've got the Trinity. Let's call the Trinity, in the book of Revelation, you have an evil Trinity. You've got an evil Trinity. You've got the beast, you've got the false prophet, and you've got the dragon. And among those three, the dragon is Satan which kind of matches up to God the father. The beast is more like Christ and the false prophet is like the Holy Spirit. So what you've got is this evil Trinity then kind of rises up parroting the true Trinity. So the one world concept again, globalization. When does globalization really hit? Is globalization a big thing now? Yeah, I mean

really big thing now. So it's just interesting this divine judgment, the book of revelation can be summarized by these three sets of judgments. the seven seals. Now what are the seven seals? Seven seals they're opening a book/scroll and it has an on your ring. They would stamp it like in wax and so that the seal and as you pop a seal you can open the book/scroll more. So basically this book/scroll is being opened as the seals break one after another. Another is a judgment on the earth. After the seven seals of this bookscroll are open and the book/scroll is opened, then there are seven trumpet judgments where these angels go up and they sound the trumpet. Every time an angel sounds a trumpet, there's a plague. Then lastly, there are the bowl judgments. These bowls are the wrath of God. That's why people don't like the book of Revelation. It talks about these seven bowls and God's pouring these judgments on the earth from these bowls. So a lot of the book from chapter four to about chapter 18 or so 16 is describing these seven seal judgments, the seven trumpet judgments and the seven bowl judgments. That's kind of how the book is organized. So it's just disasters in 7 years.

The book is actually Christ centered. Christ is the center of the book, which is a theme we probably should develop more. Songs in worship. What do they sing in heaven? Here's what they sing in heaven. It says chapters five verses 8 through 14. It says, "each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered. It was covered with eyes all around, even under their wings. Day and night, they never stopped saying," and this is what they say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord our God almighty who was and is and is to come." So what they say is, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty." Does that sound familiar to anybody? I think they call it the Doxology. Where was that taken from? It's taken from the book of Revelation. That's they're going to be singing up in heaven. So it just is interesting. The songs and worship, the book of Revelation has a lot about the worship of God. Then there is the new world order. The new world order's discussed at the end of the book where basically new Jerusalem comes down and everything is made right. There are the 12 tribes of Israel represented, the 12 apostles are represented and all God's people are there. In the book of Revelation, it says that they wipe away all tears. These kind of wipe away all tears. The fact that he has to wipe away all tears means that what? As new Jerusalem comes down, are there tears? That's, I think it's a very important passage. Are there tears in heaven? Are there tears in heaven? The answer is, yes. The tears are wiped away, which means there must be tears to be wiped away.

So the new world order comes down, there is no temple by the way, at the end of the book, when new Jerusalem comes down, there is no temple. Why is there no temple? Because God is there. In other words, there's no need for a temple. We will experience the presence of God. We will be in God's presence. There is no need for the temple. So ultimately, all history, will climax in the let me just say it this way. The climax of history is when humankind meets God face to face and there's the meeting between us and God and we meet and we live together forever and ever in peace and harmony. And there are all sorts of wonderful things in paradise. So the end of the world is a meeting where we meet Christ face to face. Now the seven churches in the beginning of the book, I don't want to go through all the seven churches and things, although they're fairly interesting. What I do want to do is just read one church. One church is kind of my favorite because I think it's so relevant. The churches comes in this pattern: there is a vision of Christ, commendation, condemnation. So this is the pattern that comes up. I don't want you to know their pattern necessarily, but I do want you to listen to this. This is the church of Laodicea. This is the last of the seven churches. Some people think that the seven churches refer to church history. I don't think that's probably correct, but just listen to the last church.

So the church of Laodicea, see If it sounds familiar. This is Revelation chapter three, verse 14 and following it says, "to the angel of the church at Laodicea, These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness." So it's got a vision of Christ, "the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation." He said, "I know your deeds. that you're neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were one or the other." He says, "I know your deeds. You're not cold or you're not hot. I wish you were one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth." You wonder, why are they lukewarm, or why are they a repugnant to him? "you say, I am rich. I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing, but you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you can become rich and white clothes to wear so that you can be covered, your shameful nakedness and salve to put on your eyes so you can see. To those I love, I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent. Here I am. I stand at the door and knock." Christ says, "if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person. And he, they with me. To the one who is victorious. I would give the right to sit with me on the my throne just

as I was victorious and sat down with my father on his throne, whoever has ears to hear, let them hear what the spirit says to the churches.".

What was the problem with the Church of Laodicea? They thought they were wealthy and Christ comes down and says, no, you're pitiful. You're pitiful because you think you've got all the things of this world and you've got nothing. So I'm saying is that Laodicea something to, I think it's a really relevant to today. So, I don't want to go through that. The millennium. I think I'm going to actually I'm going to call it quits there rather than going through all the millennial theories. There's basically three theories. Actually let me just do this one slide, then we'll call it a day. The pre-millennial theory says that Christ returns before this thousand year reign of Christ. So in Revelation chapter 20, it talks about Satan being locked up in a pit with a lock put under lock and key for a thousand years. Some people think that the thousand years is a figurative term. Other people like myself, actually think it's a literal term. Satan will be locked up for a thousand years. Then Christ comes back before the millennium. So that's called pre-millennialism. Christ comes back before the millennium starts in Revelation 20. Satan is bound for a thousand years that's called pre-millennialism. There's another approach that's called, amillennialism. What if somebody's a-moral? What's that mean? They're not moral. It's an alpha privative. So when you say a-millennial, that means there's no, there's no millennium. The reign of Christ is the church. So the millennium is now Christ rules in our hearts. Satan has been bound by the spread of the church. Satan has been bound. By the way, when you look around this world, can't you just see Satan's bound everywhere, right? So this is the amillennial position that Christ rules in the church and that his reign is, there's no millennium per se. It's the millennium in Revelation 20 is actually describing the history of the church and Christ's rule of his church. My question comes back, is Satan really bound now? I don't think so. Is Satan on the loose? When they're cutting off Christians' heads like ISIS has been, I mean, you've got to ask some questions there.

Then there's post-millennial and post-millennials even better. These people come out of the 19th century and they said the world gets better and better and better until Christ comes after the millennium, post-millennial return of Christ. The world gets better and better and better and finally the world is good that at the end, Christ comes back and he says, these people are just so wonderful. I'm going to come back to them. The world gets so good. Christ comes back at the

end. That's post-millennialism because the world has just gotten so good that he says I can come back now because these people are up to my standards. When we look around the world as a post-millennialist, is the world getting better and better and better. Yeah, so this theory has gone out of favor, but it may come back because we're going to make America great, Oh, excuse me. They'll get off there anyways. Alright. I'm sorry. I had some students last semester freak out in this. It's always making all these political comments. That was a joke. It's just incredible to me sometimes. I'm sorry. I shouldn't joke around like that, but don't think you know my politics by stupid jokes like that. But anyways, these are the three positions of the millennium. So there's pre-millennium Christ comes back at the beginning of the millenni Then there's a thousand years when Christ reigns. The lion lays down with the lamb. They beat their swords into plowshares and the world is in peace of peace and harmony. The amillennial says that the church is, Christ is ruling in the church right now. So now is the millennium and post-millennialism those are the guys in the late 19th century that the world's going to get better and better and still going to be so good Christ's going to come at the end. So it's a post-millennial return of Christ after the millennium but that position has been discredited.

The point is, let me just do this to kind of finish up. Let me just tell you about my father and I'll end with this. This is an important day for our family in certain regards. So my dad was one of, what they used to call the old dispensationalists. He was a fundamentalist. You guys can all laugh and say, stupid fundamentalist, stupid dispensationalist and we can ha ha wasn't he stupid. My dad was educated in high school. He worked in a factory all his life. He worked 16 hours a day. Much of my life, my father worked 16 hours a day. I didn't know what it was like to work 16 hours a day. Now I'm a teacher and believe it or not, I know 16 hours a day teachers actually work. But I remember my dad for much of his life would go to the window and I can remember it. He would go to the window and he'd look out the window and he would say, you know, Christ might come back today. Christ might come back today. Did that change his life? The hope of Christ's return? Did that change his life? The answer is yeah. He lived life saying, I need to love your mother because Christ may come back today and I want to be loving people and I want to be helping people. He so anticipated it, his hope was in the return that he could meet this maker who loved him so much that he could meet him. That changed his life, changed his life. So I'm saying is be careful about dismissing all of his eschatological views. Eschatology means

futuristic things. Develop your ethic, allow your ethic, what you ought to do to be shaped by the fact of, would you do if Christ were coming back now? Would you be caught doing what you're doing now? How can you use your time now to praise God?

Is it possible, and let me just finish with a Wilson statement. I love Dr. Wilson. Is it possible to study, is it possible to study for the glory of God? Is it possible that when Christ comes back, he finds you studying history or something like that? You say, Oh no, no. Yes. Is it possible that that your mind is being engaged in, you're saying, how can I use these studies to glorify God? And so what I would suggest, I don't know if is that, that blessed hope of looking for Christ's return and living in light of Christ's return, and living in light of Christ's return. Some of you have been away from home for a while. Some of you have boyfriends or girlfriends at home. If you knew, how should I say, if somebody is coming home, my kids are coming home. Elliot was supposed to come home this summer. Question, do we look forward to his coming home? if you love somebody, when they come home, is that a beautiful thing? When you love somebody and when they come home? By the way, when you guys go home, many of your parents can be looking for you, just love to have you home now because you've been away for a long time. They love you and they want to see you again. So they, some of you say, your parents say, Hey, forget that man. They're gone. Now we're free. But what I'm suggesting is that if we love Christ, we're going to want to see him. We're going to want to meet him. That's the blessed hope.

So thanks for taking the class and I hope you've had good experience in the New Testament and just, thanks. Awesome. All right. This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his final lecture in New Testament History, Literature and Theology session number 27 this is the book of Revelation..