



Reversed Thunder

The subtlest and most common attack in the satanic assault on God's ways among us is a subversion of the word. This subversion unobtrusively disengages our imagination from God's word and gets us to think of it as something wonderful in print, at the same time that it dulls any awareness that it is spoken by a living God. It has been an enormously successful strategy: millions of people use the Bible in which they devoutly believe to condemn people they do not approve of; millions more read the word of God daily and within ten minutes are speaking words to spouses, neighbors, children, and colleagues that are contemptuous, irritable, manipulative, and misleading. How does this happen? How is it possible for people who give so much attention to the word of God, to remain so unaffected by it? Not, surely, through unbelief, but through lack of imagination: the Enemy subverted the spoken word into an ink word. The moment that happens, the imagination atrophies and living words flatten into book words. No matter that the words are believed to be true, they are not voiced words — Spirit-voiced and faith-heard — and so are not answered. They go through the minds of the readers like water through a pipe...

The intent of the Revelation is to put us on our knees before God in worship and to set the salvation-shaping words of God in motion in our lives. We are always trying to use scripture for our purposes: scripture uses us. God's gracious purpose in giving us his word in written form is not to turn us into Bible students, but to provide a means by which we can hear him speak and be turned into *Christians*— awed worshipers, sacrificing sufferers, devout followers. This last book of the Bible takes the entire biblical revelation and re-images it in a compelling, persuading, evangelistic vision which has brought perseverance, stamina, joy, and discipline to Christians for centuries, and continues to do so.

—Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder, The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination*

I. Introduction

- A. Clinking wine glasses
- B. We employ all 5 senses in reading Revelation
 1. Hearing: Rev 1:10
 2. Seeing: Rev 1:12-13
 3. Touch: Rev 1:17-18
 4. Smell: Rev 5:8
 5. Taste: Rev 10:9

II. What is the book of Revelation?

- A. A letter
 1. By whom?
 - a. Jesus (Rev 1:1; 2:1, 2:8, 2:12, etc.)
 - b. Triune God (Rev 4-5)
 2. Through whom? _____
 3. To whom?
 - a. His servants (Rev 1:1)
 - b. Seven Churches (Rev 1:4)
 - c. Angels/Messengers [*Gk: angelos*] (Rev 2:1, 8, 12, etc.)
 - d. Future churches (Rev 22:16-17)
- B. A letter of prophecy (Rev 1:3)
 1. Prophet's main message: _____
 2. Revelation [*Gk: apokalypsis*]: to uncover, to take out of hiding; to cause something to be fully known — to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.

III. Ultimate intent of Revelation: worship

A. Structure: Seven Visions

1. **Vision 1: The Church on earth** (1:9-3:22)

a. Jesus' glorious appearance (1:9-20)

b. Seven Letters (2:1-3:22)

- Commendations and criticisms

- Resounding phrase: *He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*

2. **Vision 2: God's Throne and the seven seals** (4:1-8:1)

a. Worship in the spiritual realm (4:1-11)

b. The seven seals (purposes of God): 5:1-8:1

3. **Vision 3: The Seven Trumpets** (8:2-11:19)

4. **Vision 4: Aspects of warfare and salvation** (12:1-14:20)

5. **Vision 5: Seven bowls of judgment** (15:1-16:21)

6. **Vision 6: Victory for Christ** (17:1-19:21)

7. **Vision 7: New Heaven and New Earth** (20:1-22:5)

B. The number 7

1. Explicit and implicit (spirits, churches, lamp-stands, seals, horns, eyes, angels, visions, crowns, etc.)

2. Why?

IV. How do I read Revelation?

A. Reading wrongly

B. Reading rightly

C. Application