



# Revelation

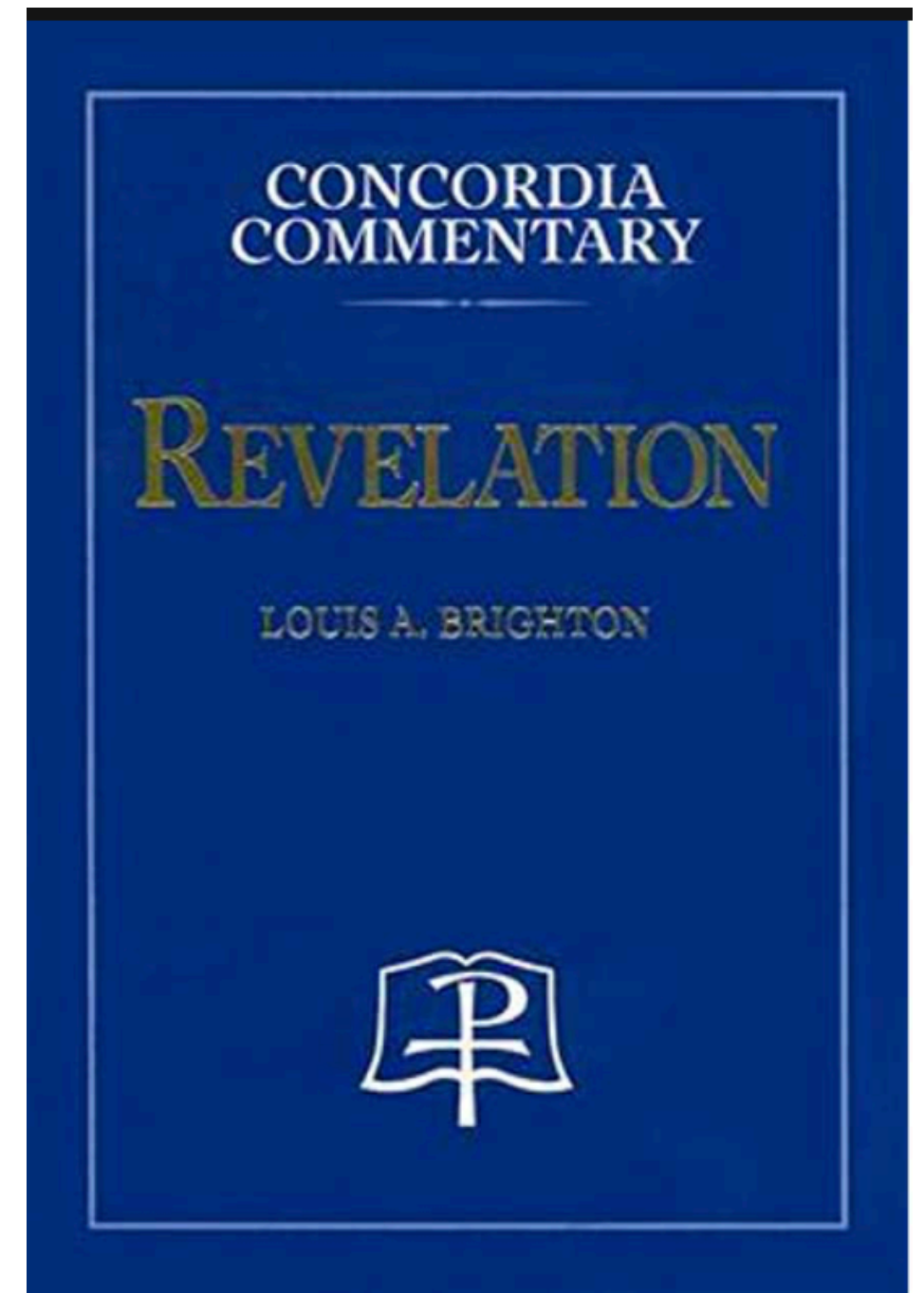
A Historic Interpretative  
Model



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Dr. Brighton was the foremost  
Lutheran Scholar on Prophecy and  
End Times.

He taught the class on Revelation  
at Concordia Seminary for 25  
years.



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# Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

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Revelation 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.”

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Revelation 1:3, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.”

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Revelation 1:11, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”



## From Dr. Brighton's Introduction to "Revelation"

The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible.

The church was led to place it at the end of the canon because the church saw in it the completion of God's revelation.

Nothing further would be revealed by God until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:18-19, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."





## Dr. Brighton Continues ...

Revelation is thus the culmination of the entire story of salvation contained in the Bible.

It is the end point of all that is written in both the OT and NT.

Its final goal is the exalted reign of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords and the fulfillment of the promise of the new heaven and earth.



# Key Concepts for Interpreting Revelation

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Revelation is an example of apocryphal literature and contains highly figurative language and is full of imagery and symbols.

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Revelation, consistent with its Biblical apocryphal literary style, is TRUE but it presents the truth in figurative ways.

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Biblical apocryphal literature is meant to REVEAL not hide its meaning. It is meant, much like poetry and song, to appeal to our emotions at a deeper level than plain narrative.

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Apocryphal books and passages are best interpreted in light of plain language passages in the Bible NOT the other way around.



# Revelation is Best Understood When its Purpose is Kept in Mind

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Dr. Brighton writes in his commentary, “The purpose of the prophetic message, then is not to give a predicable view of history, but rather to give a predictable view of the human condition in suffering and defeat because of human evil and rebellion against God.”

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He continues by explaining that the ultimate purpose of Revelation is to move all people to repentance and faith before the End and to show Christ’s majestic sovereignty.

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Apocryphal scripture should not be used to establish doctrine. However, it is helpful to understanding doctrine. Doctrine is to be establish based on plain language scripture.



# Key Concepts for Interpreting Revelation

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Apocryphal scriptures are best understood when their cultural, geographic and historical context is considered.

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The Millennium, the 1,000 years, discussed in Revelation Chapter 20 is a figurative way of referring to the Church Age.

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The narratives contained in Revelation occur throughout the Church Age.

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The three visions: Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, provide three different perspectives of the same events.



# Consider the Context

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Revelation was written at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

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Rome ruled, dominated and controlled almost every aspect of life within the Empire.

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The prevailing culture of Israel was Hebrew.

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But Greek thought (Hellenism) was also widespread.

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Paganism was also always “just a stone’s throw away.”





# The Millennium

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As previously discussed, the Millennium is a source of much controversy and how we interpret it can dramatically influence how Revelation is understood.

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It is important to keep in mind that nowhere else in scripture is the idea of a 1,000-year special reign of Christ mentioned.

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A literal 1,000-year restoration of Israel and the sacrificial system isn't consistent with the idea that Christ declared "it is finished" from the Cross.

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So, we understand the Millennium to be the Church Age, the time from the Resurrection of Christ to His return.



# Linear or Concurrent

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Many of the more recent interpretative views of Revelation employ a linear understanding of the text.

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Using a linear interpretative model leads to a focus on when something will happen in the future rather than why it happened in the past, is happening now and will continue to happen until Christ returns.

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The linear model leads to a focus on charts, timing and prediction of the “Time of the End” rather than a focus on Christ, His glory and His sovereign reign.

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In the end of it, the linear model focuses on special knowledge and fortune telling of history rather than on the forth-telling of the Gospel.



# Linear or Concurrent

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A better, and more consistent, way to interpret Revelation is to see it as concurrent.

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The concurrent approach to Revelation results in a continuous, simultaneous and most importantly personally relevant view of the end times.

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In the concurrent interpretative model Revelation is understood to present multiple scenes (views) of the events that occur during the Church Age.

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Although the events seen occur throughout the Church Age they intensify as we approach the Time of the End.

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This non-linear approach to Revelation doesn't require special knowledge, predictive timing or identification of specific characters like the antichrist, the beasts the two witnesses, etc.



# Cyclical Views

Dr. Brighton says that Revelation provides us with three seven-fold visions.

These visions are the Seals, the Trumpets and the Bowls.

He goes on to say that these three seven-fold visions are cyclical not consecutive. That is, they repeat the same events but present them from different viewpoints.

The three seven-fold visions, in addition to being seen from different perspectives, have a slightly different focus.



# Cyclical Views

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The Seals Vision emphasizes evil and tribulation among mankind.

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The Trumpets Vision emphasizes natural and demonic forces causing mankind to suffer.

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The Bowls Vision emphasizes the final judgment God pours out on mankind and all creation.

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However, even though each emphasizes a different aspect of suffering and judgment they are all visions of life throughout the Church Age.



# Summary

Revelation is thus the culmination of the entire story of salvation contained in the Bible.

Biblical apocryphal literature is meant to REVEAL not hide its meaning.

Apocryphal books and passages are best interpreted in light of plain language passages in the Bible.

Revelation, consistent with its Biblical apocryphal literary style, is TRUE but presents the truth in figurative ways.

The purpose is to move all people to repentance and faith.

It is best to interpret Revelation as presenting a concurrent, often cyclical view of the end times rather than as a linear view of the end times.

# Helpful Resources

Revelation, Louis A Brighton, Concordia Commentary Series– CPH

Revelation, Mark Andrew Brighton, Reformation Heritage Bible  
Commentary Series– CPH

The End Times, A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism – Lutheran  
Church, Missouri Synod Report

The Lutheran Study Bible – CPH

The Lutheran Difference – CPH

Lutheranism 101 – CPH

Revelation, People's Bible Commentary – CPH

Revelation Four Views, Steve Gregg – Thomas Nelson Publishers

