

THE REVELATION *Of* **JESUS**

Chapter 1 Introduction

The writing and style of Daniel and Revelation bear many similarities. Both deal with God's sovereign rule over the world. Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Psalms all contain former revelation that God gave His prophets about the end times. John also alluded often to Exodus, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. It was said that 278 of the 404 verses in Revelation contain references to the Old Testament (Barclay lists 245).

The Purpose and the Promise

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2. who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even to all that he saw.*

The message of the Book of Revelation, as stated in the opening verses is the revelation of Jesus Christ, given to Him by God the Father, concerning things to come in regard to the fulfillment of time and prophecy. Jesus, after receiving the message from the Father, communicated it to His angel, who then revealed it to the apostle John.

The word revelation is a translation of the Greek word “apokalypsis” which means “unveiling or “disclosure” and is an alternative title for the book. The Book of Revelation, a summary of Scriptural Christology, paints for us a picture of Jesus from the beginning to the end and His ultimate victory before all of creation (Gen. 3:1). Whereas the Gospels reveal Jesus in His humiliation, Revelation reveals Him in His glory. The Book of Revelation could easily be seen as the “Book of the Kingdom of God in conflict with, and victory over, the kingdoms of the world.” (Constable)

Angels (messengers) will be mentioned some 67 times in this book.

3. 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.

The Book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that makes a promise to those who read it.

It is not just the reading of the book, but those who read, hear, and heed the things that are written will be blessed. John makes a distinction between reading this book and any other book. He assures his readers that they will receive a special blessing for reading and obeying the things written in this book. The Greek word translated “time” (Kairos) describes a period of time, rather than a point in time.

Message to the Seven Churches

4. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

The communication of this letter came from God the Father, to Jesus the Son, to an angel, to John, to Christians. John used the number “seven” 54 times, which commonly signified completeness and a work of God. Paul also wrote to seven churches: Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossi, and Thessalonica. The seven Spirits is a reference to the Holy Spirit, in His fullness, providing a clear picture of the Trinity (Isa. 11:2-3; Zech. 4:2-7; Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

Isaiah 11:2-3

2. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;

5. and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6. and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Here we see Jesus as Messiah (king, ruler) over the entire earth. Jesus does not become the ruler of the kings of the earth at this point in time, but He pre-existed always as the King – Ruler over His creation. This is what was expected of Him at His first advent, and when He did not show up as ruler He was crucified (cf. Col. 1:18; Rev. 19). They expected Him to come and fulfill the prophecy of Messiah ruling on the throne of David.

Colossians 1:18

18. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Note that it was the blood of Christ that released us from our sins, not our works of righteousness. We were bound to sin because of Adam’s blood; Christ gave us a blood transfusion which removed, over time, the blood of the first Adam and ultimately will purge us from all sin. This was done because of His love which transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Note, **“He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father”** (v 6).

7. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

“Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him.” At the second coming of Christ, all will see Jesus in His glory. Every eye, both living and dead, all will see Him at this time.

8. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

We now see the true picture of Jesus, “I am the Alpha and Omega.” This points us, as the gospel of John does, to Christ’s eternity. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (also used in Rev. 21:6; 22:13). He is also described as the One who is, and who was, and who is to come (cf. 4:8; 11:17), the Almighty (pantokratōr, “the all-powerful One). It is used 10 times in the New Testament, 9 of them in Revelation (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22).¹

The Vision

9. I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

This is John’s third mention of himself (vv. 1, 4, 9) and the first of three times that he will use the term “I John” (cf. 21:2; 22:8). It is well worth noting that in the Gospel of John he simply referred to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 19:26, 20:2; 21:7, 20) and in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1 he referenced himself as an elder. This is the first of John’s writings where he uses his actual name to identify himself. He also identifies himself as a brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and the kingdom. This tribulation was not unique to John, but rather the plight of all the apostles (cf. 2 Tim. 1:8; 2:3, 9; 3:11; 4:5). They too were a part of the kingdom and partaking in the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification; not only the apostles, but all those who loved Christ’s appearing (2 Tim. 4:8; Jam. 1:12).

John clearly states why he was on the island of Patmos. It was due to his teaching of the Word of God. John faithfully preached the Word of God and imparted the true knowledge and testimony of Yeshua (Jesus). John is not simply writing a good book, but from his unique experience living with Jesus and having (as far as we know) been the last one to see Yeshua, provides a personal testimony about Him.

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11. saying, “Write in a book what you see, 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.”

¹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 929). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Dr. Walvoord provides an excellent commentary on the book of Revelation for those seeking to glean a better understanding.

“...in Spirit on the Lord’s day,” is most likely a reference to “the Day of the Lord” that was referenced in both the Old and New Testament (cf. Isa. 2:12; 13:6, 9; 34:8; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph. 1:7–8, 14, 18; 2:3; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5; 1 Thes. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). “The term “in the Spirit” could also be rendered “in [my] spirit” (cf. Rev. 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).”² In other words, John was projected forward in a realm not of this world, while still being in his earthly body; his body did not physically leave the earth, but his spirit did (2 Cor. 12:2, 4).

2. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

4. was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

Note: The information in this book is not coming from John; he is simply the scribe in this picture. As Yeshua and His angel speak to John and show him what will take place, John then records it in this book. This book is literally the “Words of Jesus” concerning Himself. Notice to whom Christ addresses the book, “to the seven churches.”

A Picture of Jesus

12. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13. and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

Daniel 7:13, 14

13. “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. 14. “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”

14. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. 17. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18. and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”

Having a best friend is something most people are able to relate to, but imagine having a best friend who would make you fall to your knees in worship. John was most likely the closest friend to Jesus when He was on earth, yet when he sees Him in His glory he is in awe. This is the same

² Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 930). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

suffering Servant who came to die for the many, but has now revealed His true nature. John now beholds not the humanity, but the deity and is overwhelmed. His white wool like hair is showing forth his purity; His eyes of flame are showing forth His righteousness in judgement; His feet of burnished bronze are showing forth His might; His voice, like the sound of many waters, is a demonstration of the power of His voice; the stars in His right hand are a sign of His rule over His church; the sharp two-edged sword is a demonstration of the power and authority of His words; His face, like the sun shining in its strength, is a picture of His essence as the eternal light; when John saw this he fell as a dead man.

Jesus had to comfort John by placing His hand on him and telling him not to fear. Remember, there was no one closer to Jesus than John, yet John is in complete fear of Him. Jesus said to him, **“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”** Jesus introduces Himself to John as the first and the last (in the Greek language Alpha and Omega) the living One. The term “the living One” is pointing to the fact of the next statement, **“I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.”** This is pointing to the reason and hope of the Christian faith, that is, the resurrection of Christ. It was the resurrection that gave Him the keys to death and Hades; by rising from the dead, He destroyed the power of death and the place of the dead.

19. “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. 20. “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

The Book of Revelation is written in three sections as seen in chapter 1:19.

- Section (1) chapter 1 covers **“THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN.”**
- Section (2) chapter 2 covers **“THE THINGS WHICH ARE.”**
- Section (3) chapter 4-22 **“THE THINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THESE THINGS.”**

This is very important to understanding the context of the Book of Revelation. First, ‘the things which you have seen,’ speaks to John’s personal witness of Christ in His glory, after seeing Him at the First Advent in His sufferings. John’s unique perspective of Christ in his gospel is even more revealing in this book. This chapter then must be read in light of John’s unique experience and relationship with Christ (as seen throughout his gospel and letters). Second, “the things which are” chapters 2-3 then deal with the present predicament of the state of the church during the time of this letter and Christ’s view of them. In keeping with textual accuracy, one must then view these churches as literal churches that were in the regions mentioned by John. Christ, via correspondence, is sending these letters directly to the churches to inform them of His personal evaluation of them. Note, Christ will evaluate all of us (who are called by His name) on the Day of Judgment (John 5:22, 27, 29; Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:0; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). Third, “the things which will take place after these things” chapters 4-22 have yet to occur and are yet future; therefore, must be viewed in that way.

About 1/8th of the Book of Revelation covers the seven churches and there are five distinct characteristics to take notice of when approaching these letters.

1. We must understand the similarities of each letter

a. Each letter is written to the angel of the church (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)

b. Each letter begins with a unique description of Jesus Christ

- **EPHESUS (2:1) – “The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands...”**
- **SMYRNA (2:8) – “The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life...”**
- **PERGAMUM (2:12) – “The One who has the sharp two-edged sword...”**
- **THYATIRA (2:18) – “The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze...”**
- **SARDIS (3:1) – “He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...”**
- **PHILADELPHIA (3:7) – “He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens...”**
- **LAODICEA (3:14) – “The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God...”**

c. Each letter begins with an acknowledgment “I know your deeds...”

- **EPHESUS (2:2) – “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance...”**
- **SMYRNA (2:9) – “I know your tribulation and your poverty...”**

- **PERGAMUM (2:13) – “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith...”**
 - **THYATIRA (2:19) – “I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first...”**
 - **SARDIS (3:1) – “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead...”**
 - **PHILADELPHIA (3:8) – “I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut...”**
 - **LAODICEA (3:15) – “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot...”**
- d. All, but two of the letters (Smyrna and Philadelphia) have a stern rebuke*
- e. Each letter has a special promise*
- **EPHESUS (2:7) – “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”**
 - **SMYRNA (2:11) – “He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.”**
 - **PERGAMUM (2:17) – “To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. “**
 - **THYATIRA (2:26) – “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations...”**

- **SARDIS (3:5) – “He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments...”**
- **PHILADELPHIA (3:12) – “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore...”**
- **LAODICEA (3:21) – “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”**

f. *Each letter has the same concluding sentence, “HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)*

2. We must also understand each letter in its personal application.

Each letter was written to a specific church at the time of John; each letter also addressed a specific era in the church age; each letter also addressed the individual Christian in every church, in every age, including today’s church.

3. We must understand the intent of the letters. John did not send parts of the book to the churches. In other words, he did not simply send the letter to Ephesus to the church at Ephesus, but rather the entire book. Each church then saw what was being said about the others.

4. We must see the spiritual development of the church through the age of Grace.

5. We must see these letters as Christ’s evaluation of His church throughout time.