

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER 1

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WELCOME to a study of the Book of Revelation. As we begin, we recommend that you read Chapter 1. There is a blessing associated with this. No other book in the Bible has such a blessing promised and bestowed upon those who will read the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:3 (KJV) tells us,

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

Satan tries especially hard to prevent men, women, and young people from receiving this blessing.

The Prophetic Nature

Looking back at Revelation 1:3, we see the confirmation that this final book in your Bible is a source of blessing and a prophecy of things to come. It is a look into the future.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Although many Bible translations indicate on the opening page of Revelation that it is “The Revelation of Saint John the Divine,” this is inaccurate. This book is actually “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The name *John* is only the man to whom the revelation was given. Throughout the Book of Revelation, Jesus is the subject and the predicate—He is preeminent.

Likewise, many have perceived Revelation as a dark book; however, this is also inaccurate. It is a book of prophecy that tells the future and reveals Jesus and His future kingship on the earth. It picks up where the Gospels stop.

Although many people label the book as the *Book of Revelations* (plural), it is but one Revelation (singular). Let’s look at the outline of the *Book of Revelation* to obtain a better picture.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

- I. Introduction** (*Revelation 1*)
Introduction to the Author and Object of the Book, Jesus Christ Himself
- II. The History of the Professing Church** (*Revelation 2-3*)
Introduces and describes the seven churches representing the course of Christendom’s history from Pentecost to the Rapture
- III. The Translation of the Body of Christ** (*Revelation 4:1-2*)
The true Church within the professing Church

- IV. **The Church in Heaven** (*Revelation 4:2-11*)
- V. **The Seven-sealed Book** (*Revelation 5*)
- VI. **The First Half of the Tribulation Period** (*Revelation 6-10*)
Corresponds to the first half of Daniel's Seventieth Week
- VII. **Parenthetical Portion** (*Revelation 11-13*)
An introduction to the chief participants in the last half of the Tribulation period
- VIII. **The Great Tribulation** (*Revelation 14-19:11*)
Corresponds to the last half of Daniel's Seventieth Week
- IX. **The Second Coming of Christ** (*Revelation 19:11-21*)
- X. **The Millennium** (*Revelation 20*)
The Binding of Satan and the First Resurrection
- XI. **The Final Judgment** (*Revelation 20:11-15*)
- XII. **Eternity** (*Revelation 21-22*)

THE THREE MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The outline of the Book of Revelation can be broken down into three main divisions, as described in **Revelation 1:19**:

19 "Write (1) the things which thou hast seen, and (2) the things which are, and (3) the things which shall be hereafter;"

These can be further described as (1) things which thou hast seen: Vision of Jesus, (2) things which are: Church Age, and (3) things which shall be hereafter: After the Church Age.

The Things Which Thou Hast Seen

This is the first chapter of Revelation: He saw Jesus!

The Things Which Are

This was a revelation of the Church Age. There are literally seven churches mentioned in Revelation, but their names were chosen by Jesus to set forth the Church Age. The seven churches represent the successive chronological history of professing Christianity.

The first church mentioned was Ephesus, which represented the present church of that time. It had the distinctions of being first, a church of the apostles, representing the church that began on Pentecost, a glorious church. Six more churches were named (seven total), all the way down to Laodicea, considered to be the apostate church.

The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter

This covers what will happen after the Church Age expires—after the Dispensation of Grace comes to a close. It is the rest of the Book of Revelation, after the Church is caught up in Chapter 4 until the end of the book.

JOHN SEES JESUS

As this Bible study of great prophecy begins, we will look at Jesus apart from how we know Him in the Gospels. John waxes eloquent in describing Jesus' coming.

He Cometh with Clouds

Revelation 1:7 says,

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

John wastes no time. Right away, he broached the subject of the Lord's return. John tells us Jesus is going to return! It is the keystone to the Book of Revelation.

Acts 1:9-11 addresses this:

***9** “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. **10** And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, two men stood by them in white apparel; **11** Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”*

Every Eye Shall See Him

In **Revelation 1:7**, John says he is coming with the clouds OPENLY.

***7** “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”*

Every eye shall see Him. Not the mind. Not the emotions. BUT every eye. This phraseology is interesting: “Cometh with the clouds” and “every eye shall see Him.” Let's look at Jesus at His trial with the High Priest.

***62** “And the high priest arose, and said unto him, answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witnesses have against thee? **63** But Jesus held his peace, and the high priest answered and said to him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. **64** Jesus saith unto him, Thou has said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. **65** Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what more need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. **66** What think ye? They answered and said,*

He is guilty of death. 67 Then they did spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palm of their hands,”

Matthew 26:62-67

Jesus Describes His Coming

27 “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Matthew 24:27-30

These passages speak of JESUS' SECOND COMING! He will come (1) in power, (2) with clouds, and (3) every eye shall see Him!

Second Thessalonians Describes Jesus' Coming

6 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

II Thessalonians 1:6-10

JESUS' COMING AS A THIEF

There is a paradox in the Book of Revelation: Jesus is (1) coming in the clouds openly for all to see, but the Bible also says He is (2) coming secretly as a thief.

42 “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”

Matthew 24:42-43

1 “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

I Thessalonians 5:1-2

8 “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning

*his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”*

II Peter 3:8-10

“A thief in the night” seems like a violent contradiction to coming brilliantly with clouds, but (1) there will be a group that will see Him coming secretly as a thief in the Rapture. (2) Then, seven years later, a Second Coming will occur openly, with brilliance. Every eye sees Him. There has never been a human born who will not see Him somewhere, sometime, in some place, and stand face-to-face with Jesus Christ.

Two acts complete the Great Drama of the Consummation of the Ages:

First Act: The Rapture

Jesus comes as a thief to take out from the earth His own. He is coming for His people. They are the Ecclesia (Greek), commonly translated as “the Church,” the called-out ones, the called-out assembly.

Second Act: The Second Coming

This is the other great drama in which Jesus returns with His people, His saints, to the earth visibly, where every eye will see Him. All unbelievers shall see Him.

First, SECRETLY as a thief, unannounced, at any moment (any day, any time, any hour), He is coming for His people to take them out of this world as precious jewels of great worth. (Enoch was suddenly translated with no announcement or word. No one knew when he was gone or where he went.)

Next, OPENLY for all to see as the Book of Revelation describes Jesus’ coming back in great power and glory as the final act of a mighty drama. He is coming to be King over the nations, to be the Restorer of the earth, and to establish His Kingdom.

WAIL

The word “wail” is a strong word to use in the English language, but it is not as strong as John uses it here:

7 “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

Revelation 1:7

“Wail” comes from the Greek word *koptó*, which means to cut down, as you would cut a branch or cut down a tree. The intent of the word is to imply that when people are in such great despair or horror, they cut themselves. This Scripture could read, “*...And all kindreds of the earth shall fall into such despair (a picture that their hopes and dreams of a world of their own making have failed) that they shall cut themselves (koptó wail) because of Him.*”

Now, look at **Revelation 6:14-17**:

14 “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. **15** And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; **16** And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: **17** For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

THEY WHICH PIERCED HIM

“They which pierced Him” were the ones that rejected Him. In **Revelation 1:7**, John uses the word “*kindreds*,” the Greek word *Phulé*, which means tribe.

7 “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

God will pour out His grace upon Israel’s supplications:

10 “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

Zechariah 12:10

They will wail because they see Him coming with 10,000 of His saints:

14 “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, **15** To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Jude 14-15

The Great Judge appears, and the ungodly are lost and undone!

FELL AS DEAD

John then continues in **Revelation 1:17-18**, saying,

17 “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: **18** I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

John Knew Jesus:

- He put his head on Jesus at the Last Supper.
- He was a disciple of the inner circle.
- He stood at the foot of Jesus' Cross.
- He saw blood and water flow out.
- He saw Jesus after His resurrection.
- He saw Him ascend into Heaven.

Yet now, when John sees Jesus on the island of Patmos, he falls at Jesus' feet as dead! You would think John would be overcome with a feeling of bliss and peace, but instead, great fear fell on him. Jesus had to say, "Fear not!" What happened?

First, he was looking upon unveiled deity.

In the days of Jesus' ministry, His Godhead was covered, shrouded, and curtained by flesh. At the Transfiguration, Jesus shined and glistened softly; but now, on Patmos, he is looking at the Ancient of Days, whose countenance shined like the sun! He was looking in the eyes of the Judge of all the Earth! His eyes burned like fire! He was face-to-face with the living God! So, John fell as dead.

Second, he fell as dead because he became overcome by his own nothingness.

We must never become too familiar with the Presence of God. How can a man look upon God? Compared to the Ancient of Days, John became aware of his own insignificance and humanity.

Daniel had a similar experience, as shared in **Daniel 10:8**:

8 "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."

Isaiah likewise had a revelation of his unworthiness, as shared in **Isaiah 6:1, 4-5**:

1 "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Abraham also recognized his unworthiness, as shared in **Genesis 18:27**:

27 "And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:"

Israel also recognized its state, shared in **Exodus 20:19**:

19 “*And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*”

RIGHT HAND ON ME

17 “*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:”*

Revelation 1:17

John heard the voice of Jesus! He looked upon His face! He then fell at His feet like a dead man. He was so different from the Jesus of Galilee and the resurrected Christ on the Emmaus Road. BUT then...Jesus laid His right hand upon John...such a tender passage.

The right hand speaks of favor and power, of supporting the weak, of lifting the fallen, and of giving strength to those who have no strength. He could have only spoken to John, but He laid His right hand on him, a fallen and helpless disciple.

Jesus laid His hand on the sick. His hand touched blind eyes and deaf ears. He blessed babies with His hand. He even touched a leper.

2 “*And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. **3** And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*”

Matthew 8:2-3

The outward glory overwhelmed John, but Jesus' loving and tender inner beauty was still there. Jesus has not changed. He's still the same. The eyes of fire are the same eyes that wept over Jerusalem and at the tomb of Lazarus. The feet of brass are the same feet that walked the paths of Galilee.

But now, the Lord describes Himself.

JESUS DESCRIBES HIMSELF

17 “*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: **18** I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”*

Revelation 1:17-18

These are words of deity alone! JESUS has the keys of hell and of death! He is saying:

- “I hold in My hand the keys of Hades.”
- “I am the ruler of the unseen world.”
- “I rule over the regions of the damned and the world of demons.”

Jesus keeps steadfast all the souls that trust in Him! He shuts in all that belongs to Him and faithfully makes sure we are kept by the strong hand of God's authority.

God shut the door to the ark, and all inside were safe. God locked that door, and Noah and his family, all eight of them, were kept safe.

Jesus is saying, "*I have the keys of hell and of death, and no one can pluck them away from Me.*" God calls death an enemy and an intruder. It was not planned. Death has touched every life, but Jesus says that it is over! He has the keys of death! Death is in the hands of God. Death only opens in the permissive will of Heaven. No man can enter hell or death unless Jesus permits it.