

Revelation 1

Revelation 1:1-3 NKJV

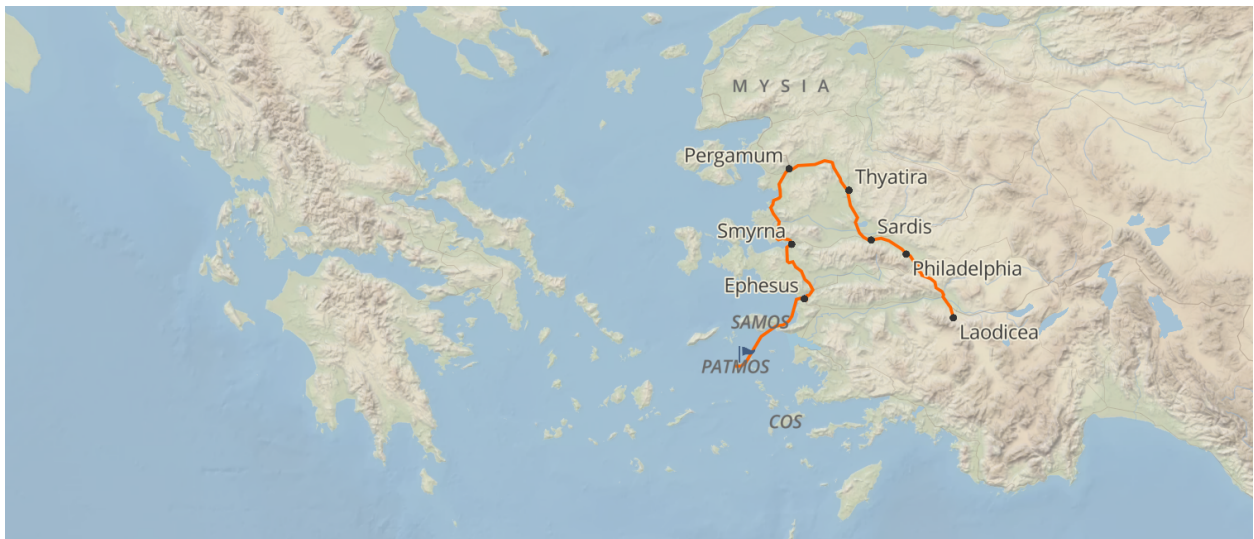
The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, [2] who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. [3] Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Introduction (vv 1-3)

Background:

- Author → The Apostle John (undisputed)
- John most scholars agree wrote Revelation around 95-96 AD
 - That is when John was on Patmos
 - He was exiled there during the second persecution of Christians under Domitian.
 - Why?
 - They dared to worship God and not the emperor
 - Anyone who taught about the truth was persecuted, imprisoned, and even martyred
 - Tertullian writes that John was taken to Rome where he was thrown into hot oil. When he remained unhurt, he was sent to exile on Patmos.
 - Domitian ruled from 90-95 AD
 - John was released from Patmos under the rule of Trajan (98 to 117 AD)
 - During this time John pastored at Ephesus teaching the “church fathers”
 - The last of the “church fathers” to be disciplined by the Apostle John was Polycarp.

- (Saint Polycarp was a 2nd century Christian bishop of Smyrna. According to the Martyrdom of Polycarp, he died a martyr, bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to touch him. It is recorded that he had been a disciple of John the Apostle)
- Patmos→ (A small island in the Aegean Sea off the southwest coast of Asia Minor)





(verse 1)

- John is the writer, but JESUS is the author
- Revelation→ the unveiling of divine mysteries (literally- to take the cover off)
 - Jesus is the mystery that is revealed
 - AND the revealer of it to man
- *“...which God gave to His servants...”*
 - God the Father→ Jesus→ Angel→ John→ You
 - Servants=Christians (although the immediate context here could refer to the pastors (Christians btw) who received this letter originally)
- *“...things which must shortly take place...”*
 - must→ It’s gonna happen! Because GOD decreed it!
 - shortly→ is a relative term (Jesus is revealing this to John) (cf. 2 Peter 3:8)
- *“...He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John...”*
 - angel→ a spiritual messenger (can refer to an heavenly, angelic being or to an earthly messenger as well) (In this case it is an angelic being)
 - Cf. (methods used with Moses, Joshua, prophets, etc...)

(verse 2)

- *“...who bore witness to the word of God...”*
 - Referring to the Apostle John
 - John bore witness of the word of God
 - The Word incarnate→ Jesus Christ
 - The word spoken by Him to John through the angel
 - The visions John saw
 - John was an eyewitness to so many things (1 John 1:1)
- *“...testimony of Jesus Christ...”*
 - The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ are synonymous (Rev. 22:16)

(Verse 3)

- *“...blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words...”*
 - This is the 1st of 7 statements of blessing in Revelation
 - This promise is to those who read it aloud, those who hear and keep it
 - To be read aloud in the churches
 - Can you imagine the very first time this was read in one of those seven churches?
- This book is a book of important prophecy
 - But there is a call here to HEAR and ACT!
 - To OBEY the commands in the book
 - Obedience accompanies the blessing whether reader or hearer

Verses 4-8

Prevailing Theme: All of creation, all history, all Scripture, all eternity begins and ends in Christ.

Parallel Passages

1:4	1:5	1:6	1:7	1:8
Exodus 3:14	Ps. 89:27	Exodus 19:6	Daniel 7:13	Amos 3:13
Isaiah 41:4	Psalms 130:8	1 Peter 2:5-9	Matt. 26:24	Amos 6:18
	Isaiah 40:2	Isaiah 61:6	Mark 14:62	2 Cor. 6:18
			Luke 21:27	
			Zech. 12:10-14	

● (verse 4)

- John (Apostle John) → the Apostle of love
- To: the seven churches in Asia → Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea
- “Grace and peace to you”
 - Revelation is primarily a book about judgement but it begins with “grace” and “peace”
 - Common greeting
 - Grace (receiving what you don’t deserve)
 - Peace (the enmity caused by sin is removed)
- Notice the source of the blessing (the Trinity)
 - Who is...was...is to come → God the Father
 - Seven Spirits → Holy Spirit
 - 7=number of fullness (fullness of the Holy Spirit)

- Isaiah 11:2
 - Of the Lord
 - Wisdom
 - Understanding
 - Counsel
 - Strength
 - Knowledge
 - Fear of the Lord
- Jesus Christ
- **(Verse 5)**
 - Jesus Christ
 - The faithful witness→ He witnessed to the world what His Father gave Him (John 8:14)
 - *Firstborn* from the dead→ (protokos) priority and sovereignty
 - Ruler over the kings of the earth→
 - He has already come as the Lamb of God (Genesis 22:8), but...
 - He is coming again to rule with a rod of iron
 - He is sovereign!
 - Colossians 1:16-18
 - Remember all His foes are already defeated (death was the last to be conquered (1 Cor. 15:20-28))
 - Who loved us...washed us
 - His love (John 15:13) has loosed us from the power of sin and death (Romans 6:7)
 - He has washed us in His own blood (Acts 20:28) (Hebrews 9:12)
 - He has gotten rid of the “chains” and the “stains” of sin
- **(Verse 6)**
 - “Has made us kings and priests”
 - He has given us the majesty of a prince

- He has given us the ministry of a priest (what does that ministry entail in the OT?).
- So we have power with men and power with God (all we need)
- “Glory and dominion forever and ever”
 - Glory (doxa) → we get our word doxology→ shekinah glory
 - Dominion (kratos) → strength and power
 - In response to verse 4 & 5
- **(Verse 7)**
 - He is coming with the clouds
 - The clouds have been clothing for His glory
 - Remember how He cloaked himself as he led Israel in the wilderness
 - All of the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him
 - When He comes, men will be engaged in a useless war (Armageddon)
 - They will stop everything and realize in terror their utter inadequacy when they see Him (shock and awe)
- **(Verse 8)**
 - Alpha and Omega...Beginning and End...is...was...is to come.
 - All things begin and end in Christ!!!! (John 1:1-3)

Verses 9-20

Parallel Passages

1:13	Eze. 9:11	Eze. 9:2	Dan. 10:5	Dan. 7:13
1:14-15	Dan. 7:9	Eze. 1:24	Eze. 43:2	
1:16	Is. 49:2			
1:17	Is. 44:6	Is. 48:12		
1:19	Dan. 2:28	Dan. 2:29	Dan. 2:25	

- Verse 9
 - “Your brother”
 - Through Jesus Christ
 - God is our Father
 - Companion→ (soong-koy-no-nos)
 - From root koinonia→ fellowship and participation
 - Prefix (soong) → assigns the action
 - John was definitely a co-participant!
 - Exiled (probably doing hard labor)
 - Victorinus, the first to write commentary on Revelation, stated that John worked as a prisoner in the mines located at Patmos.
 - “Tribulation and kingdom and patience of Christ”
 - They were not suffering as evildoers
 - But, were suffering for the cause of Christ

- Verse 10
 - “In the Spirit”
 - A visionary state facilitated by the Holy Spirit
 - Similar to the experience of Peter in Acts 10
 - “Lord’s day”
 - It is best to view this as Sunday
 - Not the “day of the Lord”
 - “Loud voice, as of a trumpet”
 - Voice of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Loud, piercing, clarity

- Verse 11
 - “what you see, write”
 - Jesus commands John to write what he sees
 - To distribute the writings to the 7 churches in Asia Minor (present day Turkey)
 - Rome was divided into 7 postal districts
 - Each city represented one of those districts

(verse 12-16)

- (v 12) “Seven golden lamp stands”
 - Most of the commentators agree that this lampstand is not the menorah.
 - But rather, one light per stand (seven in total)
 - With Christ in the midst (as the high priest in the OT)
 - The church is unified in Christ (the Great High Priest) through His atoning work
 - Notice the candlestick (church) is not the light, but bearers of the light (John 1:6-9)
- (v 13) “garment down to the feet...girded about the chest with a golden band”
 - These are high priestly garments
 - The Greek word for robe here is used in the Septuagint for the high priestly robes described in the OT.
- (v 14) John moves from His garments to His person
 - Hair white like wool, white as snow
 - Eyes like a flaming fire
 - Daniel 7:9-10
 - Matthew 10:26
 - He is Holy
 - Christ is the purifier of the the church
- (v 15) Feet like fine brass (white hot, no impurities)
 - Voice as the sound of many waters (LOUD)
 - Ezekiel 43:2
- (v 16)
 - “In His right hand seven stars”

- “Out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword”
- “His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength”
- Matthew 17:2

- (v 17-20)
 - (v 17) Notice John’s reaction
 - “Fell at His feet as dead”
 - No different than others reaction
 - One of dread and awe
 - Man’s sinfulness when confronted with His holiness
 - Luke 5:8 (sinlessness vs sinfulness)
 - Isaiah 6:1-5
 - Ezekiel 1:26-28
 - Job 41 & 42:5-6
 - Acts 9:3-6
 - The voice spoke
 - “Do not be afraid”
 - Positively identified “I AM the first and the last” (cf. Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)
 - (v 18)
 - He who lives, and was dead, ... alive forever more”
 - “Keys of Hades and death”
 - Synonymous terms
 - Keys represent authority
 - Jesus Christ has authority over death!
 - Assurance to believers
 - John 11:22
 - Philippians 1:23
 - Hebrews 2:14-15
 - (vv 19-20)
 - Write these things down
 - What you see now
 - What you see later
 - Lampstands = the 7 churches
 - Stars = angels of the seven churches