

# Revelation

## Intro

The purpose of this study is to uncover the mysteries of the book of Revelation. Over the next 12 weeks we will be walking verse by verse and chapter by chapter through this fascinating book. Admittedly there will be questions left unanswered. This is due to the fact that we will do our best not to make unsubstantiated speculations regarding portions of the book that John or other Bible writers do not shed light upon. That being said this study should give us a good grasp on the book of Revelation and the insights it gives us regarding future events.

## Getting Started

### Revelation 1:1-2

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, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

### Revelation 1:1-2 NLT

“This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

“I received this revelation about the future from God and I am faithfully declaring what I saw to you”

The opening verse provides us with both the **title** and the ultimate **purpose** of this book

## Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation -

- from the Greek “apokalupsis”

From which we get the English - apocalypse

- **Apocalypse-** (Synonyms would include; destruction, annihilation, devastation or catastrophe)

One definition called apocalypse a Cosmic cataclysm

or the complete and final destruction of the world

- Hollywood is fascinated with the idea

Apocalypse caused by

- Global warming
- Cosmic activity; like Asteroids and Meteor showers
- Global pandemics
- Nuclear Holocaust
- Or alien invasion

- This is due to the fact that in recent decades every generation seems to see itself as the last

- Grew up in 50's - communism was the global threat
- 80's - it was nuclear
- 2000's it is climate change

- Problem - the Greek word does not mean that at all

**“apokalupsis”** means to uncover or to reveal

To take that which was previously covered and uncover it.

In the book of Revelation, we see what we could not otherwise see any other way...

This book will reveal what the future actually holds

Jesus Christ will return to restore all things

**“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”**

The Book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the sense that it belongs to Him

- He is the one doing the revealing
- And He is the object being revealed

**This book is not primarily about devastation but about revealing to us the person of Jesus and the future as it relates to Him**

If you are looking for lottery numbers, investment advice or if a current world leader is the antichrist, you will be disappointed. But as we go through the book of Revelation, we will discover much of what the future holds and much more about who Jesus is.

The gospels reveal to us much about Christ but their portrayal is limited. For us to have a full or complete view of Christ we must consider how He reveals Himself in Revelation.

## The purpose

Things which must shortly take place.

The book of Revelation is predominately about the future.

In addition to revealing Jesus John tells us this book is designed to reveal things that much shortly come to pass.

The summit of this is the return of Christ.

This is a reoccurring theme in Revelation,

- It opens and closes the book

Revelation 1:7

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 22:20

I Am **Coming** Quickly

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am **coming** quickly."

Amen. Even so, **come**, Lord Jesus!

- And is oft repeated throughout the book

Revelation 3:11

Behold, I am **coming** quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Revelation 22:7

"Behold, I am **coming** quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Revelation 22:12

“And behold, I am **coming** quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

- This is also a reoccurring theme in the gospels, the book of Acts and the writing of the apostles

John 14:3

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will **come** again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Acts 1:11

who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so **come** in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Titus 2:13

looking for the blessed hope and glorious **appearing** of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Luke 12:35-40

Great illustration of this

- In light of the return of Christ the primary message of Scripture is to be ready and watchful

Mark 13:33

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

- And to be about the business of the kingdom

Acts 1:6-8

Acts 1:6-8

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. **But** you shall **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be **witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Things which must shortly take place.

- According to Strong this phrase could mean:

“To arise, appear in history, come upon the stage”

John is shown the things that will step on to the stage as the world moves closer and closer to the time of Christ’s return.

Things which must shortly take place.

- Some have struggled with the idea of “shortly take place” or or “Coming quickly”

The word carries the idea of rapidity or perhaps suddenness

Perhaps no verse expresses the rapidity of the return more than

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

- Peter also addresses those who would question God or even those who would mock the promises of scripture because God seems to delay His coming

2 Peter 3:3-4

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

God’s delay is by design. He is giving humanity opportunity to turn to Him. The signs of the times should wake us up to the urgency of coming to Christ

## Verse 1 - 2 continues

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

John **further explains** that this revelation was given to him through an angelic messenger while on the island of Patmos

## Revelation 1:9-10

I, John, both your brother and **companion in the tribulation** and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos **for the word** of God **and for the testimony** of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

- History teaches us that John was sent to Patmos as a prisoner during the reign of Domitian (181-196 AD) for declaring the message of the Gospel and for his leadership in the church
- It is worth noting that this book was written by a man experiencing persecution, to churches undergoing persecution.
  - This information was given to the church to provide comfort in tribulation **as well as** to produce confidence in the power of God and effectiveness of the gospel.

As the pages turn, we will see God triumphing over evil and the gospel spreading like wildfire.

- In modern times (past 150 years) some have suggested that the book of Revelation is not Prophetic but symbolic. They suggest that the book was written earlier (AD 60's) to encourage believers undergoing persecution from Emperor Nero.

This view is inconsistent with the historical record:

The earliest extra-biblical records state that John wrote during the close of the 1st century.

This view is inconsistent with the internal evidence:

It is unlikely the church of Ephesus could have gone from how Paul describes it in Ephesians to how Jesus describes it in Revelation so quickly.

Laodicea is described as wealthy. A terrible earthquake devastated the city in the mid 60's it would take decades to rebuild.

## Revelation 1:3

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.

- Before giving any details regarding the visions he saw John promises a blessing to those who will take the time to read the book and apply its truths to their living

This book is often avoided because it is confusing. John seeks to persuade us to face the challenge by promising a blessing to all who read it

Biblically speaking the idea of blessing is that we experience the life that Jesus intends for us

A careful study and application of the teaching of Revelation will help us to more effectively live in the way of Jesus especially during trying seasons

- For the second time he speaks to the urgency of the message when he declares that the time is near

He then introduces the original recipients of this letter.

#### **Revelation 1:4**

John, to the seven churches which 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.

MAP

True to his purpose in writing the book John begins to reveal Jesus to the readers

**John tells us 7 things about Jesus**

#### **Revelation 1:5-7**

and from Jesus Christ, the **faithful witness**, the **firstborn** from the dead, and the **ruler** over the kings of the earth.

To Him who **loved us and washed us** from our sins in His own blood, and has **made us** kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold, **He is coming** with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

- He is the faithful witness -

Jesus alone reveals what God is truly like

In an interesting conversation with the disciples recorded in John 14 Thomas wants to know the way to heaven

John 14:5

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

To which Jesus replies

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Philip then desires to know what God is like.

John 14:8

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

Again, Jesus replies:

John 14:9

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Whatever thoughts we might have of God they are incomplete without looking at Jesus and listening to what he tells us about the God, heaven, eternity and life itself.

- He is the firstborn from the dead

Jesus was the first to rise from the dead to die no more.

Notice, He is the first... many will follow.

Paul refers to Him as the First-fruits of the resurrection. His resurrection to life proves that all who trust in Him will also rise to new life.

- He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth

The resurrection speaks to a past event, ruler of the kings of the earth speaks to the future. We see evidence of Christ ruler over the affairs of men, but the day will come when we will see the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord

#### **Revelation 11:15**

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"



This is what the entirety of the scriptures is moving toward

- He is the One who loved us and washed us from our sins.

This love has been forever settled in the work of the Cross.

The Bible teaches that the death of Christ was substitutionary and designed to provide atonement for sin.

- He is the One who has made us kings and priests to His God and Father

**Kings** might speak to a future experience when we will reign with Him but **priests** speak to our current role.

- We represent men to God by praying for others.
- We represent God to men by living as lights in a dark world.

You were meant to stand out not to fit in.

Like a city set on a hill or a lamp turned on to provide light in the house.

#### **Matthew 5:14-16**

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Notice one is to the outside world the other is within the home.

- He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.

#### **Matthew 24:30-31**

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The apostles lived in such anticipation of Christ’s return that they expected Him to come back the very day He ascended

### **Acts 1:9-11**

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

## **Jesus Speaks**

After John describes Jesus for us; Jesus Himself speaks for the first time providing us with a further revelation or understanding of who He is.

Revelation 1:8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

This is called parallelism. Jesus says three things about Himself or He says one thing about Himself 3 different ways. He is the eternal God who has always **been**, will always **be** and currently **is**.

## **John explains how he came to know the things he wrote about**

### **Revelation 1:9-11**

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. , and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

### **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day**

This likely refers to both the day that these events transpired and what transpired.

- On the Lord's Day (Sunday; first day of the week)
- Or Unto the Lord's Day

The day of the Lord speaks to the events that begin with rapture of the church and Cary until the New Heaven and earth

John was transported in time to watch the events of the book transpire

# John's first view of Christ since the ascension

Revelation 1:12-16

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, **clothed** with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. **His head** and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and **His eyes** like a flame of fire; **His feet** were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in **His right hand** seven stars, out of **His mouth** went a sharp two-edged sword, and **His countenance** was like the sun shining in its strength.

- John had spent a lot of time with Jesus but this vision of Jesus is quite different than the humble carpenter that he first met
- **Remember, no view of Jesus is complete without the revelation of Him given in this book**

John notes several things about the glorified Christ

- First, He was in the midst of the seven lamp stands

Revelation 1:20

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 which you saw are the seven churches.

- Jesus, although risen and glorified still resides in the midst of the church He established

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

- Jesus is in the midst of the church as head. He is there to provide comfort, strength, guidance, instruction and correction

*It is important to note that some of the imagery in the book is defined much is left for us to discover. We must be careful not to go beyond what the text allows*

- Noticed how he looked
  - Clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

This reminds us of the clothing of the High Priest

The Bible teaches us that the role of Christ in the life of the believer is as our High Priest

He intercedes on our behalf

- His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow,

This reminds us of His holiness

- and His eyes like a flame of fire;

This reminds us of the all-seeing eyes of Christ from whom nothing is hidden

This should assist us in times of great temptation to sin

- His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace,

Brass is used symbolically in scripture to speak of justice or judgment

- and His voice as the sound of many waters;

The speaks to the tremendous power of His word.

In this age we often hear him like Elijah did, in a soft whisper but His word is no less powerful when he whispers a when he shouts.

- He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

We have already seen the symbolism of the Stars, the sword would speak of His Word.

This symbolism is found elsewhere in the scriptures.

- and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

This would no doubt take John back to the Mount of Transfiguration where he saw a glimpse into the glorified Christ

Matthew 16:28

Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

## John's Response

**Revelation 1:17-18**

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

## The Outline

### Revelation 1:19

Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

The chapter closes with an outline for the book

Notice it is in 3 parts

- The things you have seen

Past tense

What we read in chapter 1

- The things which are

Present tense

The events transpiring in John's day

Chapters 2-3

- The things which will take place "after this"

Future tense:

*Meta autos* - after this

This is the opening phrase of chapter 4:

Revelation 4:1

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

- The book naturally divides into these 3 sections

Past

Present

Future

## Conclusion

- Revelation is a book written by the aged apostle John during a time of persecution and difficulty. It is designed to provide comfort and strength to the church by revealing the person of Jesus and the things to come.
- The proper response to the prophetic revelation is to surrender to and live for Christ and His kingdom.