

Series: **The End of Time**
Today's Title: "**John's Vision of Jesus**"
September 17, 2023 – Revelation 1:1-20

Objective: To reveal the glory and majesty of Jesus and His desire for us to know His plan for the end of time.

Turn to Revelation 1 – p. 1028

Opening prayer

The glory and revelation of Jesus. vs. 1-3

Read vs. 1-3

As we begin walking through the book of Revelation, know that the Greek word behind our English word "revelation" is:

Apokalupsis (English: Apocalypse)

This Greek word appears 8x in the N.T. – and when used of a person it means '*to become visible*'.

Luke 2:32 – *Simeon, speaking of the infant Jesus.*

"...a light for revelation to the Gentiles..."

Romans 8:19 – *Paul, speaking of the transformation of believers in the end of time...*

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."

The book of Revelation is not a mystery – some sort of secret code that we need to decipher.

It's a clear revelation from God – a clear and lucid revealing of what **The End of Time** will be like.

God wants us to know what He has decreed for **The End of Time**.

He wants us to know the details of His plans for the future of this world – of the entire creation!

But even more than those details, the book of Revelation reveals the glory, power, majesty, strength, and sovereignty of Jesus Christ.

It describes His judgment of sin – His redemption of believers and of the creation – and His sovereign rule over the heavens and the earth.

- *In His first advent* – His first coming, Jesus took on flesh and lived in humiliation – humbled Himself – to the point of death – even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).
- *When He returns – in His 2nd advent* – He will return in exaltation – in glory – in power.

In His 1st advent, His deity and power were veiled – revealed to only a few people.

In His 2nd advent, “...every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” – Philippians 2:10-11

Jesus is the central focus – the central figure – and the central theme of Revelation.

Revelation was written by the Apostle John – toward the end of his life – when he was exiled to the island of Patmos – which at that time was a prison camp. He wrote this book around 95 AD.

The book details a “revelation of Jesus Christ” – not something John thought of or came up with in his own imagination.

God’s timing of the end of time. vs. 1, 3b

Why has this taken so long?

Is the Bible wrong when it speaks of these things happening “soon”?

It’s been 2,000 years!!!

1:1 - “...things that must soon take place.

1:3 - “...for the time is near.”

It’s important for us to know that these are not a reference to how soon something will happen.

The Greek word ‘*chronos*’ refers to time on a clock, dates on a calendar, etc.

But the Greek word ‘*kairos*’ refers to ‘*a season, epoch, era*’.

In vs. 1 (“...things that must soon take place.”) – neither of these words are being used – but another Greek term that refers to when something does happen, it will happen quickly or suddenly – without delay.

This is not saying that from the late 1st century – when John has this vision – that these events will happen at a time close to the end of the 1st century.

It means that when these events do take place – when they start – they will occur quickly or suddenly.

In **vs. 3** (“...for the time is near...”) – the word John uses is *‘kairos’* – which refers to *‘a season, epoch, or era’*.

What John is saying is the next ‘season’ or great ‘era’ of God’s plan of history is “near” – it is the next item on the list.

The blessings of Revelation. vs. 3

Read vs. 3

There are actually 8 blessings stated in the book of Revelation.

Other than the blessings, or Beatitudes listed in **Matthew 5** – the Sermon on the Mount, I don’t think there’s another book in Scripture that lists so many blessings.

8 Blessings in Revelation

1:3 – 2 blessings

“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.”

14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

16:15

(“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”)

19:9

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

20:6

“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

22:7

“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

22:14

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”

God has put blessing in the beginning of this book – and at the end of the book – and all throughout the book.

He wants us to know His plans...

He wants us to know this book...

He wants to bless those who know this book...

The greatest blessings are revealed in this book!!

A letter from the Triune God. vs. 4-8

In this section, John makes it clear this letter is not from him – not something he dreamt up in his imagination.

This is a letter to the 7 churches in Asia – from the Triune God who will return in glory and power before all the earth.

This is a summarizing section of the primary figure (Jesus) and the central event – His 2nd coming.

Read vs. 4-8

John hasn't recorded the vision yet. That will begin in **vs. 9**.

In **vs 4-8** he's giving a summary of what the book contains.

First – **vs. 4** - he's writing this to the 7 churches in Asia Minor. “John to the seven churches that are in Asia...”

See map of 7 churches

These were the primary churches in Asia Minor at the end of the Apostolic era.

Those seven churches were located in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Next week we'll cover the letters to these churches which are recorded in **chapters 2 & 3**.

These churches were located on a trade route – a mail route of sorts. From these churches other churches in the regions surrounding these cities would be reached.

John credits the Triune God in **vs. 4-5**.

God the Father: “...from Him who is and who was and who is to come...” John highlights the eternal nature of the Father.

The Holy Spirit: “...and from the seven spirits who are before His throne...” In the Bible, 7 is the number of completeness – fullness.

Jesus Christ: “...and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.”

The point.

This letter – this message – is from the Triune God – not from John’s thoughts, ideas, or dreams.

In **vs. 6** John reminds us of the forgiveness of sins we have through the blood of Jesus, and that our redeemed state has a purpose beyond our own salvation.

God “...made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father” – meaning our job – to reconcile people to the Lord!

vs. 7-8 – John previews the coming appearance of Jesus. “Behold, He is coming with the clouds...”

In the Bible, clouds can picture the glory and power of God.

In the Exodus, the presence of God was manifest by a pillar of cloud.

A cloud would appear over the tabernacle or temple – signifying the presence of God.

In **Matthew 26:64**, during His unjust trial, Jesus tells the Sanhedrin “...you will see the Son of Man... coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Acts 1:10-11

And while they were gazing into heaven as He (Jesus) went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus,

who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”

At His 2nd coming, Jesus will appear to all people as He comes from heaven to the earth.

Some see the clouds as a symbol of the Church.

Hebrews 12:1

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...”

Revelation 19:14

“And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses.”

I think the most obvious answer here is that Jesus comes to the earth from heaven – with the power of God.

Can the clouds also be referring to the Church?

Possibly – but you don’t have to make that the meaning – since the normal arrival of Jesus through the atmosphere is clearly taught in Scripture.

He says, “every eye will see Him”.

His return will not be some isolated event in some remote field of Iowa.

It won’t be a distant event in an isolated desert, forest, or a remote island in the South Pacific.

Everyone on earth will see it.

“every eye” might be hyperbole – but the idea is this will be a public – world-wide event.

Technology – like our cell phones – will likely be how this is a world-wide event.

His appearance will go viral!!!

“...even those who pierced Him”

This is a reference to the Jewish people (See Zechariah 12:10) – although Jesus – because of His love for us - willingly went to the cross to atone for our sins.

Isaiah 53:5

“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.”

“...and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him.”

All people who witness the appearance of Jesus will “wail” – mourn / lament / due to tragic loss.

This is because those who witness this are unbelievers. They will realize judgment is coming.

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

“Alpha” and “Omega” – the 1st and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

Like we say, *‘Everything from A to Z’*.

The phrase sums up everything – nothing left out.

Jesus is everything.

In Him everything exists.

The eternal nature of God is referred to.

“...who is and who was and who is to come...”

All history is wrapped up in God.

“...the Almighty.”

Speaks of God’s power.

In the N.T. this word is used 10x.

9 of those uses are in Revelation (2 Cor. :18) – because the power of God – the power of Jesus is realized in **The End of Time** like no other time in history.

The beginning of John’s vision. vs. 9-20

The entire book of Revelation lays out the vision John had from Jesus.

Here, starting in **vs. 9** – John records the beginning of the vision.

John was a pastor at the church in Ephesus, and either during that time or after his ministry in Ephesus, he was arrested in the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Domitian.

John was sentenced to prison on the island of Patmos – which was a prison camp (see location of Patmos on map).

There were mines on Patmos – and the prisoners worked at mining the rock – and marble.

It is as he was exiled to the prison island of Patmos that John had this vision from Jesus – of God’s plan for **The End of Time**.

Read vs. 9-16

The glory and majesty of Jesus. vs. 9-16

vs. 12 – “...and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man...”

The “lampstands” are menorahs – there are 7 of them.
“son of man” - This is a Messianic title that first appears in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 7:13

“...one like a Son of Man”

This was the primary title Jesus used in describing Himself (Matthew 12:32; 13:37; Luke 12:8; John 1:51).

vs. 13 - “...clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.”

This is a picture of what the High Priest would have worn in the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple.

This was a long robe that would go to the ground.

The “golden sash” is also pictured in Exodus 28, 29, and 39 as part of what the High Priest wore.

The significance of this in ancient Israel, the High Priest interceded to God on behalf of the nation.

The symbolism here – which has a literal reality behind it – is that Jesus intercedes for His Church – before the Father.

vs. 14 – “The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the roar of many waters.”

His white hair matches Daniel’s description of the “Son of Man” – of God – in **Daniel 7:9** and it symbolizes the purity and glory of Jesus.

The description of His eyes picture that Jesus sees all things – nothing is hidden from His sight.

“His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace...” – This points out the purity of Jesus. In ancient times metal was purified and strengthened by heating it. Heating gold – or even bronze – would get rid of the impurities in the metal.

Judgment was also pictured in a figurative way as someone going through the flames (Malachi 3:2; 1 Cor. 3:13-15) and their sin and selfish works ‘burned off’ in the process.

“His voice was like the roar of many waters.”

There are many rocky shores and cliffs on Patmos and the waves crashing against those large rocks and cliffs makes a loud noise.

The loud voice refers to the authority and power of Jesus.

Jesus resides among His Church. *vs. 12, 16*

vs. 12-13a “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man...”

We know from the end of **vs. 20** that:

“...the seven stars (vs. 16) are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

The “angels” are not spirit beings, but rather are the pastors / leaders of the 7 churches.

When John has this vision, he sees Jesus in the midst of the churches – residing among the churches.

Jesus taught on many occasions that He would be with His followers – He would never abandon them.

Matthew 28:20, “Lo, I’m with you always.”

John 14:18, “I will not leave you.”

John 14:23, “If anyone loves Me, I will make My abode with him.”

(Also: John 6:37-40)

Jesus is in His church - not in the building, but He has taken up residence in the people.

If you have Christ, you have the Spirit of Christ—**Romans 8:9**—living in you.

Christ cannot, will not forsake His Church.

vs. 16 - “In His right hand He held seven stars, from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

“In His right hand...” - This pictures Jesus leading and guiding the pastors of the churches.

“...from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword”

This is about truth. Speaking the truth.

Out of Jesus' mouth comes the truth.

The truth that cuts through to the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Revelation 2:15-16

“So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of My mouth.”

“...and His face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

This is the glory of Christ.

Luke 9:29 – The Transfiguration of Jesus

Matthew 13:43

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

2 Corinthians 4:6

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Our response or reaction to seeing Jesus. vs. 17-19

Read vs. 17-19

John sees Jesus – after 50+ years he sees the risen, glorified Jesus!

All he can do is fall on his face.

Jesus tells him not to be afraid.

Look what Jesus tells John.

“I am the first and the last, the living one.

I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

Jesus was very clear on who He was / is.

He is not merely a great teacher – a great moralist or ethical teacher.

He is not like the other religious leaders in history: Gandhi / Buddha / Muhammed.

They are dead – and buried.

Jesus is “alive forevermore”!

Jesus has “...the keys of Death and Hades.”

Apply it...

Worship Jesus in His glory and majesty.

Do you worship Jesus?

Do you recognize His glory – His holiness – and your sin?

Do you treat Him as ‘the big guy’ – or do you have a knowledge of your sin and a reverential fear that recognizes His holiness?

Come to Him – worship Him – believe in Him as your Savior.

There is no other way to Heaven.

All other religions – all other religious leaders don't even come close to who Jesus is – and what He has done.

And what He will do.

Close in prayer