

The Book Of
REVELATION
THE APOCALYPSE BEGINS
Revelation 1:1-20

Introduction & Benediction

Revelation 1:1-3

Introduction

An Unveiling

The book is sometimes referred to as

- The Revelation
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ
- The Revelation to John
- The Apocalypse

Revelation

- Greek = apokalypsis
- Definition = laying bare, making naked, a disclosure of truth, unveiling

Illustration

Unveiling – stage curtains to reveal what has always been their waiting

Isaiah 46:9-10

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

Our God knows the end from the beginning

- He declares the end to us, His servants
- By giving it to His Son, Jesus Christ
- Who sends it to John via an angel

The stage is already set

- The end is already known
- This is an unveiling of what will take place

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Formal Equivalence | Word for Word (literal) | KJV, NASB |
| 2. Dynamic Equivalence | Thought for Thought | NIV, NLT |
| 3. Paraphrase | Idea for Idea | TLB, JB PHILLIPS |

Revelation 1:1-2 The Living Bible (paraphrase)

This book unveils some of the future activities soon to occur in the life of Jesus Christ. God permitted Him to reveal these things to His servant John in a vision; and then an angel was sent to explain the vision's meaning. John wrote it all down – the words of God and Jesus Christ and everything he heard and saw.

Just An Allusion

"things that must shortly take place"

An allusion to **Daniel 2:28,29,45**

A vision of statue with four sections

- Each section represented four kingdoms that would come on the earth
- The statue was destroyed by a stone that grew to be the kingdom of Jesus Christ
- The fourth section (Roman Kingdom) was still flourishing
- The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not far away

This is the first of over 500 allusions to the Old Testament in Revelation

- We will not be exploring them all

The Author

The Lord gave His revelation to the Apostle John

- He would have been a very old man by this point
- He was the only surviving member of Jesus' twelve

The Holy Spirit used the apostle John to bring us three kinds of inspired literature

- The Gospel - To believe - **John 20:31**
- The Letters - To be sure - **1 John 5:13**
- The Revelation - To be ready - **Revelation 22:20**

John 20:31

but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Sealed Until The Last Days

When Daniel was given a prophecy concerning the future he was told:

Daniel 12:4

"shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end;"

John was given the opposite instructions:

Revelation 22:10

"Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

Question: Why the difference in directive?

Answer: Daniel's words were to be sealed "until the time of the end"

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

The writer to the book of Hebrews declares we are in the "last days"

- So now is the time to make these things known
- The Lord wants His church to know the things contained in this book

Benediction

A Message To Be Heard

To underline God's desire that He wants His church to know the things contained in this book

- He promises a blessing on anyone who reads this book

Revelation 1:3 The Living Bible (paraphrase)

If you read this prophecy aloud to the church, you will receive a special blessing from the Lord. Those who listen to it being read and do what it says will also be blessed. For the time is near when these things will all come true.

The verb, "read" means, "to read aloud"

- **Revelation 1:4** tells us the intended recipients were the seven churches in Asia (Turkey)
- This book would have been read aloud in the church meeting

- Paul sent letters to seven churches (Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae and Thessalonica)
- John sends one letter to seven churches
- **Revelation 2-3** each church has a special message

A Message With Benefit

Many Christians read the book of Revelation to

- Satisfy their curiosity about the future
- This is not why the book was written

There were three clear benefits intended:

1. Encouragement
2. Examination
3. Equipping

Encouragement

At the time of writing the Christian world was under fierce persecution

- This book would have provided encouragement and hope
- This book would have provided strength in face of opposition

Examination

The letters to the seven churches called for self-examination

- This book would have also caused the believers to examine their lives
- And determine the areas that needed correction

Blessed is he:

- Who reads
- Who hears
- Who keeps

Equipping

John wrote with the intention that the church would "be ready"

There are great quarters of the church ignorant about Bible prophecy

- These aren't ready
- They are not looking up with expectation of the Lord's anytime return

There are other quarters who are obsessed with Bible prophecy

- These aren't ready
- They are so concerned with prophecy, they lack the examination the book calls for

The Lord would have us equipped with a healthy sense of expectation

- Mingled with a life of examination and encouragement

A Message of Sevens

The Book is a book of sevens

- Seven seals
- Seven trumpets
- Seven bowls
- Seven stars
- Seven lampstand

Seven beatitudes

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy...

Revelation 14:13

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.

Revelation 16:15

Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Revelation 19:9

Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.

Revelation 22:7

Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Seven is the number of spiritual completeness

- In this book of sevens
- God tells us how he is going to complete His work in earth
- Establish His eternal kingdom

Greetings to the Seven Churches

Revelation 1:4-8

The Greeting

Like the majority of the New Testament letters

Sender *John*
Receiver *to the seven churches which are in Asia*
Greeting *Grace to you and peace*

The greeting confers on the churches a blessing from the Godhead

- In a book full of the judgement of God for unbelievers
- The Lord only has grace and peace intended for His children (believers)

Revelation 6 Judgements begin 6

Revelation 2-3 Examination – Are you in the right place with God?

The Godhead

The Father: *Him who is and who was and who is to come*
Holy Spirit: *the Seven Spirits who are before his throne*
The Son: *The Faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth*

The Father

- Presented as the eternal one
- The one who presides over the entire history of mankind
- The one in authority

The Holy Spirit

The Seven Spirits refers to the Holy Spirit

- Before the throne denotes a servant of the Father (submission)
- Father will dispatch the Holy Spirit to minister to each of the seven churches
- *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”*

The Seven spirits an allusion to **Zechariah 4:1-10**

- Seven lamps are presented as the Holy Spirit
- Zechariah was one of the three post-exilic prophets
- He spoke to the remnant of Jews who returned to Israel after the Babylonian captivity
- The message of **Zechariah 4** is that the work of God must be completed in the power of the holy Spirit
- This is a reminder to the churches how they are to operate

The Son

The second person of the Godhead

- Is placed in third position
- To facilitate a greater expansion of His person and work

Three Titles of Jesus

- The Faithful Witness - He is reliable and trustworthy
- The Firstborn of the Dead - He is pre-eminent and validated by His resurrection
- The Ruler Over the Kings of the Earth - He superior and authoritative by virtue of His position

Three Works of Jesus

- *who loves us* - We are in position of love and care
- *released us from our sins by His blood* - We are in position of freedom and debt
- *has made us to be a kingdom of priests* - We are in position of ministry and purpose

The Theme

Revelation 1:7-8

The overriding theme of the book is

- The return of Jesus Christ
- The final defeat of the enemies of Jesus Christ
- The eternal reign of Jesus Christ

His Coming

The nature of Jesus Christ's return is described

"Behold, He is coming with clouds"

This is elaborated on in **Revelation 19**

- Is the time when He returns to establish His earthly kingdom
- It is a fulfilment of the words of the two men at the Ascension

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 towards heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who 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."

- As Jesus ascended in the clouds
- So, Jesus will return on the clouds
- As Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives **Acts 1:12**
- So, Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives **Zechariah 14:4**

His Appearing

There is difference between Jesus return and His appearing

His return will be on the clouds

- *"His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives"* **Zechariah 14:4**
- *"every eye will see Him"* **Revelation 1:7**

His appearing will be in the air

- We will be *"caught up"* to *"meet the Lord in the air"* **1 Thessalonians 4:17**
- Only those who are born again will see the Lord **1 John 3:1-3**

His Witnesses

The entire world will witness the return of Jesus Christ

- *they also who pierced him* - Jews
- *all the tribes of the earth will mourn* - Gentiles

Question: How will the whole world see Him?

Answer: Darkness will cover the earth prior to His coming
Clouds surround earth
Armies of heaven come from four corners?
A triumph (not a coronation)

I am persuaded the church

- Will not be witnesses of Jesus Christ's return
- Will be participants of Jesus Christ's return

Zechariah 14:5

Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

The church will be caught up at least seven years prior to Jesus Christ's return

- He will return with His angels **Matthew 25:31**
- He will return with His saints **Zechariah 14:5**

His Titles

Revelation 1:8

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

In context, these are titles of God the Father

The idea behind these titles is God is

- Before all things, and
- Will remain beyond all things

There is innate authority in

- Preceding and superseding all things *"the almighty"*
- That covers all things in-between

- God is in control of history and mankind
- God has a plan for history and mankind

Our lives are not subject to blind fate

- To random meaningless
- To endless cycles with no resolution
- God directs all human history

God gives us freewill to

- Live our lives how we choose
- Let Him direct our individual lives

Evolution denies this, it leads to a conclusion

- That life is random and meaningless
- There is no purpose, plan or reason
- Individual lives have no worth or value

At the core of all our being is a sense that

- My life is worth something
- I can make a difference
- There is purpose to my existence
- There is a reason life happens (Why is this happening to me?)
- At the core of our being we deny evolution and assert the reality of God

The Patmos Vision

Revelation 1:9-20

The Setting

Revelation 1:9

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

On The Island of Patmos

John was exiled to Patmos

- A small Greek island in Aegean Sea
- Closer to Turkey (Asia Minor) than Greece
- The Alcatraz of the Roman Empire (Prison Island)
- Many inmates were engaged in forced labour for marble (*Victorinus of Pettau*)

John appeals to his reads as “*your brother*”

- Confirms this book is intended for believers
- Despite being able to assert authority as an apostle
- He places himself on an equal level as a brother (love)

Partaker In Tribulation

fellow partaker in the tribulation

John, along with the church of the day, had faced persecution

- Caesar Domitian (AD 81-96)
- Commanded all the lineage of David be put to death
- John was boiled in oil, before being exiled on Patmos (*Tertulian 155-240AD*)
- Revelation written as an encouragement to persecuted believers

Persevering In Tribulation

John was persevering through the tribulation

- Perseverance is the pathway to bearing fruit
- Enduring during through trial results in the character God wants for the believer

- We either persevere by “*leaning on the everlasting arms*”, or
- We collapse in defeat by “*leaning on the arm of flesh*”

- The flesh wants to rail against the Lord in the midst of trial and tribulation
- We must learnt to fall on our knees and cry out to our Saviour to endure through hardship

What John Heard

Revelation 1:10-11

In the Spirit

That John “*was in the spirit*”

- Tells us he was in a place of great intimacy with the Lord when he heard Him speak

The spirit is the part of man that communes with God

- The spirit can be stirred up through, prayer, bible study, worship, fellowship, etc.
- When aroused, communion with the Lord is clearer

The Lord's Day

That God spoke on “*the Lord's day*”

- Has led many to think this was Sunday (historic day for Christian's to meet)
- Nowhere else in Scripture is Sunday referred to as the Lord's Day
- Six times Sunday is referred to as “*the first day of the week*”
- The day the Lord chose to appear

A Loud Voice

When the Lord spoke it was “*as of a trumpet*”

- i.e. a startling sound, calling to attention
- Startling, because this a voice John has not heard for sixty years (Jesus)

The owner of the voice identifies Himself as *“the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last”*

- This is clearly Jesus Christ
- God the Father identified Himself as *“the Alpha and Omega”* in **Revelation 1:8**
- This is declaration of Jesus divinity

That voice proceeds to give three charges

- To See
- To Scribe
- To Send

What John Saw

Revelation 1:12-16

The Vision

John’s reaction at hearing the familiar voice of His former Rabbi and Master

- Is natural, He turns to face the voice
- What he sees is incredible

seven gold lampstands -
one like the Son of Man -

This is later explained to represent the seven churches
This is a similar vision to **Daniel 7:9-14**

The Man

In Daniel this *“one like the Son of Man”*

- Is the coming King to rule the fifth and final kingdom of the earth
- *“His dominion is an everlasting dominion”* **Daniel 7:14**

The *“one like the Son of Man”* has clear attributes

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The White Hair | - | His eternality | The Ancient of Days |
| 2. The Eyes of Fire | - | His judgement | The eyes weighing who is to be judged |
| 3. Brass Feet | - | His judgement | The feet bringing Him to judge |
| 4. Voice of Waters | - | His authority | His voice drowns out all others |
| 5. Two-edged sword | - | His weapon | means by which He executes judgement |

Isaiah 11:4

He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 6. In His right hand seven stars | - | the angels of the seven churches |
| 7. Brilliant face | - | the brilliance of Jesus’s glory |

This would have cast John’s memory to the Mount of Transfiguration

- When along with His brother James and Peter
- They saw Jesus with His glory unveiled

Matthew 17:2

There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

What John Did

Revelation 1:17-18

John is overwhelmed by the vision

- The apostle who once leant on Jesus’ breast
- Now falls as if dead at Jesus feet
- All too often we approach Jesus like He appeared at His first coming
- We need to approach Jesus more as He will appear at His second coming
- With awe, with reverence and with fear

Jesus stoops down and touches John tenderly

- God draws near to the humble

- He speaks kindly and lifts up those who approach Him reverently

Jesus has the keys of Hades and of death

- With those keys he released the Old Testament saints from Hades
- With those keys he frees us from the fear of death

The Commission

Revelation 1:19

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

- It's not only an unveiling of future things: *the things which will take place*
- It is an unveiling of things present: *the things which are*
- It is an unveiling of things past: *which you have seen*

Revelation 1 *which you have seen*

Revelation 2-3 *the things which are*

Revelation 4-22 *the things which will take place*