



A Study of Revelation

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As we begin our study of Revelation I would like for you to read this document. I will discuss it with you and then we will begin our study. I have not put a schedule together as I will not because we will be directed by Jesus to show us the Truth on His timeline. One of the most important things you can take from this study is the statement found in chapter 1, blessed is the one who reads, hears and keeps the Words of this prophecy. With that said, read this prophecy every day, and let the love of God bless you daily.

Just as Genesis is the book of beginnings, Revelation is the book of consummation or completion. Several things happen in Revelation but we will focus on two main themes: 1) Redemption is brought to completion. 2) The Holy name of God is vindicated. Jesus will no longer be viewed as a lamb but a lion! No longer will you see Jesus as the lamb. His strength and power and coming judgment will be in full view.

I. TITLE:

- A. A revelation of Christ (1:1)
- B. The English title comes from the Latin *revelatio* which in its verb form means “to reveal or unveil that which has previously been hidden.”
- C. The Greek title is Apokalypsis Ioannou, meaning Revelation of John.

II. AUTHORSHIP: The Apostle John of the sons of Zebedee

A. External Evidence:

- 1. In accordance with the writer’s statement that he was in exile on the isle of Patmos (1:9), the church Fathers identify this John as the Apostle John
- 2. In chapters 2 and 3 the writer seems to be over the churches of the province of Asia and strong history places the Apostle John in this position
- 3. Style is a major objection to apostolic authorship, however, this can be answered:

B. Internal Evidence:

1. The writer calls himself John (1:4, 9; 22:8)
2. The writer speaks with great authority as a prophet (1:3; 22:6-10, 18-19)
3. The writer calls himself John without any further description, therefore, he must have been well known
4. Similarities exist between the Revelation and other writings of John:
 - a. Both use the imagery of “the lamb,” “the water of life,” “he that overcomes,” “keeping the commandments,” and the adjective “true.”
 - b. There is an invitation to “him that is thirsty” (Jn 7:37; Rev 22:17), a commandment received by Christ from the Father (Jn 10:18; Rev 2:27), white clothing for angels, (Jn 20:12) and the worthy (Rev 3:4).
 - c. There is the sharp contrast between good and evil.

III. DATE: It seems best to place the writing of Revelation under Domitian (AD 95-96)

A. There are two primary views concerning the time this book was written:

1. Early in the seventh decade of the first century during the reign of Nero
2. Late AD 95-96 during the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96). This is probably the better choice:
 - a. The churches of Asia Minor have a considerable history (2:4; 3:1)
 - b. The persecution of Domitian was more universal than that of Nero, which was centralized in Rome

IV. PLACE OF WRITING: internally and externally the evidence seems to support Patmos, an island off the coast of Asia Minor not far from Ephesus as the place of writing (Rev 1:9)



V. THE RECIPIENTS: The seven churches of Asia Minor and the Church today.

- A. The immediate destination for the book was the churches of Asia Minor described in chapters 3 and 4
 - 1. It is believed that John pastored the church at Ephesus and supported these other churches
 - 2. Their order is due to their appearance on the road

- B. Since this letter is from the Lord of the Church, it has application to all of the Church.

VI. INTERPRETATIONS: There are several different schools of thought regarding the interpretation of the seven churches in Revelation:

- A. The Church as an Individual Soul
- B. The Corporate condition of a Church
- C. Time periods of “The Church” itself

VII. THEME OF THE BOOK:

- A. Throughout the book there is a conflict of earthly personalities and people directed and energized by demons and especially Satan in order to overthrow Christ’s rule on earth
- B. But the book climaxes with God’s ultimate triumph through Jesus Christ to overthrow evil and establish the kingdom
- C. This is accomplished by John taking the reader behind the scenes to see the power which rests in the line of Judah, the Lamb that was slain, the throne room of God and all while addressing issues such as judgment (14:7; 20:11-15), redemption (1:5; 5:6; 7:14; 12:11) and the kingdom (5:10; 11:17; 12:10; 20:4)

VIII. There are many ways in which the structure of the book can be determined:

- A. It can be outlined by means of summarization wherein chapters 12 through 19 summarize chapters 6 through 11 or by having the seven trumpets and bowls summarize the seven seals
- B. It can be outlined on the basis of 1:19 wherein chapter 1 refers to the ‘things seen,’ chapters 2 through 3 refer to the ‘things which are’ and chapters 4 through 22 refer to the ‘things hereafter.’ This is the outline, which will be followed in this study:
 1. There are those who oppose this approach based on the third point, the hereafter, far outweighs things seen and things which are. But since the book is a prophetic writing, this makes absolute sense in that what lies ahead is the main focus.
 2. Some argue that such an emphasis on chapters 4-22 makes the bulk of the book irrelevant to the seven churches; however, the seven

churches were laying the foundation to that which would come. Additionally, the seven churches did not know when Christ was going to return, it would be as relevant to them as is today, especially since it was written in light of their persecution (1 through 3).

3. Within the last major division of the book concerning the ‘things which will be hereafter’ (4:1 through 22:21) there seems to be a basic chronological development:
 - a. This section begins with a prologue in 4:1-5:14
 - b. Then it moves through the tribulation in 6:1-19:21 wherein judgments are delivered. These judgments are part of the historical development of the book being themselves telescopic wherein the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet introduces the seven bowls, which conclude the tribulation

- c. Then in chapter 20 the millennium is described culminating in the eternal state (21-22)

IX. PURPOSES OF THE BOOK:

- A. To complete the prophetic theme presented earlier in the prophecies of the Old Testament
- B. In view of the early addresses in chapters 2-3 to the churches John desires to comfort and encourage believers in the midst of suffering and persecution at the hands of evil ones by assuring them that Jesus Christ, and thus they themselves, will ultimately and finally triumph
- C. To challenge the churches to godly living in view of the certain return of Christ and the certain judgment of evil

Revelation Chapter 1

- I. Introduction and Benediction
- II. Greeting the Seven Churches
- III. Vision of the Son of Man

I. Introduction and Benediction

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things that must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John,

This is a revelation of Jesus Christ, the Greek for the word revelation is *apokalypsis*, ä-po-kä'-lü-psēs, a disclosure of truth, instruction, to unveil, laying bare, making naked. This is a revelation from God to His servants to show what will come to pass. The word phrase shortly come to pass in the Greek is *tachos* (tä'-khos) and means a brief space (of time). So when we see this in context we must understand that what is being conveyed to us is that when the events of Revelation begin there will be rapid succession of the events. They will happen speedily. This Revelation was sent 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.

John is an eyewitness to three things, the Word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ and all the things that he saw through the ministry of Jesus. John is laying out who He is for us and it is important to note that all John is was centered and focused on Jesus. He bore witness of the Word of God. He saw the Word of the Holy Scriptures come to life; he bore witness to Jesus Christ in the flesh. John saw, heard and was taught by the Words of Jesus Christ. John was an eyewitness to many miracles and happenings and is now an eyewitness to the heavens and is going to give to us in words what 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.

John then turns his focus to the reader and the listener and the doer of the Words of this prophecy as he declares blessings on the one who reads and hears and does the Words that will follow. It should be noted that the actions are connected with the conjunction “and” which carries the requirement of all being

done and all being required for the blessing. I believe that satan does not want you to read this book because his demise is contained within this book. Additionally satan does not want you to be blessed. Read the book out loud, listen to it on cd, mp3 or whatever else you can get it on. As you read it and hear it then do it. The time is near so you cannot afford to wait, start reading and doing and studying now. Here is the message from Dr. David Jeremiah it is later than it has ever been.

II. Greeting the Seven Churches

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, John identifies the recipients of his revelation and greets them with grace and peace not from John but from Him who was, and who is and who is to come and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne. John sent one letter to seven churches. Paul sent seven letters to seven churches, but John sent one letter to all seven churches. These churches if you look on a map form

somewhat of a circle. I believe there is a focus here of God the Father as verse 5 begins with ‘and from Jesus...’ Obviously we know the two are one but there is an emphasis of their distinct beings here as well as their unity. Some declare Revelation was written only to the seven churches or congregations of Asia Minor. These churches are specifically addressed in Chapters 2 and 3. There exists much evidence this revelation had specific audiences in address; however, it was also intended for the Lord’s people, the Disciples of Jesus, in general, as well as for His people the Jews. There were more than seven assemblies of Believers in Asia Minor. The distinctly different characteristics of the seven from each other point to the fact today that they are representative of many congregations and churches today can be placed in one of these categories. It should be noted that seven is the number of completeness in Revelation: seven spirits before the throne (1:4), seven candlesticks (1:12), seven stars (1:16), seven lamps (4:5), seven seals (5:1), seven horns (5:6), seven eyes (5:6), seven angels standing before Jesus (8:2), seven trumpets (8:2), seven thunders (10:3), seven thousand people killed (11:13), seven heads (12:3), seven crowns (12:3), seven angels (15:1), seven plagues (15:1), seven bowls (15:7), seven

mountains (17:9), and seven kings (17:10). Because Revelation is the prophecy of the completion of all things and what will occur during the final years of history, it can be applied that the seven churches represent different characteristics of congregations in general throughout history. The Revelation was also written to the angels of the seven assemblies (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). This is an interesting concept because obviously the angels must have some responsibility in delivering to the churches this revelation. I will note that many attribute the description of the seven spirits here to be the seven fold characteristics of the Spirit as discussed by our prophet Isaiah in 11:2-3 The seven spirits are before the throne. It is God that is directing and conducting and the angels and the elders and the spirits that are receiving instruction throughout revelation.

5 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,

As pointed out earlier, here it is revealed to John the message “AND JESUS CHRIST,” the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. Jesus is seen in His divine nature as Savior and Messiah - the witness to Himself, the great “I Am” (John 8:24). The Greek word for witness is *martys* (mä'r-tüs) a witness, in a legal sense. He is the firstborn from the dead. Jesus Conquered the grave, even those who arose at the resurrection did not get out of the grave until Jesus arose, He is the firstborn because He defeated the grave and is now in Heaven. John points us to Jesus. Our cleansing comes from His love. Our redemption comes from His love. It is His Love that has set us free, washed us from our sins by the blood from His sacrifice.

6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus is King of Kings (Revelation 19:16); and Redeemer (Titus 2:14) making us part of a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus through salvation has made us kings.

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.

Jesus will return and He will come from above and every eye will see Him! Even the ones who pierced our Lord will see Him, all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. There is a day of reckoning and there is a day where those who hurt Jesus and deny His saving grace will mourn for their transgressions and yes they will wish they had done it differently. Many mistake this for the rapture but keep in mind the rapture comes like a thief in the night. The second coming of Christ is seven years later. This is where the difficulty of what you have always been taught will begin to give you difficulty. Remember, John is giving us an overview of the book right now, establishing the overall message of the book, with details to follow.

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.”

John then receives what we will all receive one day the declaration from the Lord of just who He is and the power that He brings. The Alpha is the beginning. The Omega is the end. He declares what is the absolute Truth, He is, He was and He will always be! He is the Almighty!

III. Vision of the Son of Man

9 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.

John says to us I am your brother and I am your friend, your fellow traveler in the tribulation, the persecution and struggle of this walk with Jesus. This is evidence that John knew his audience. He then states the same in reference to the kingdom of Jesus Christ and the patience of Jesus Christ. The disciples all wanted to see the kingdom come and come quickly, but

thankfully Jesus Christ is patient and is giving us a chance. John lets us know He was exiled on the island of Patmos for the Word of the Lord and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Basically this can be read “on the account of.” John preached the word and was exiled to Patmos because of it. But He claims this to be a testimony. John said speaking the Word has gotten me exiled, but being exiled furthers the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

In the Spirit on the Lord’s Day is John being completely in tune with God, no distractions, no interference complete and total devotion to the Lord and the Lord spoke to Him with a Loud voice as of a trumpet. You need to understand I believe this to mean He was truly in Spirit in that he was not constrained by the body but in the Spirit was moved above the earth into the heavens to see things from above. I believe He was not constrained by time and was able to see without the constraints of time.

11 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.”

The voice brought declaration of who He was, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, followed by instruction, write down what you see, write it in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia. There is no doubt these words have application to us today, but there is also no doubt that the Words of Revelation have specific purpose to specific people in Asia, seven distinct bodies of Christ who all received the letter.

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

The voice spoke with me is a beautiful statement. We would most likely say the voice spoke to me but John’s words are clear and directed the voice spoke with me. That is a beautiful picture of life always being about relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and our Messiah. The seven golden lampstands are the

seven churches and I believe they are representative of all churches.

13 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.

One like the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to His feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. No longer does John see Jesus stripped of His clothes naked and abused but instead He is clothed down to His feet, in a display of royalty girded about his chest with not just a belt, but a golden belt. In chapter 6 of Isaiah he says, ‘and the train of His robe filled the whole temple.’ He is seeing our glorified risen Lord that is no longer to be viewed as a lamb for slaughter but the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The Son of Man is used some 70 times in the Bible to describe Jesus. Jesus is in the midst of the seven lampstands, Christ is in the center. Jesus must be the center of us all.

14 His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

His hair was white like wool representing wisdom and strength. Let us be clear not grey hair, white as snow. His eyes like the flame of fire. His eyes would consume you! John at one time saw the eyes of Jesus filled with tears but now He sees in them a consuming fire. Psalm 11:4 says, the eyes of the Lord will try men.

15 His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

Brass in the Bible always speaks of judgment. These are the feet that once carried the Words of the gospel and peace but not are the feet that will bring about judgment. His voice was as the sound of many waters. It extends from the small streams to the roaring of a crashing ocean.

16 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.

The right hand always represents Lordship, control and authority, Ephesians 1:20. He has in His right hand the seven stars, which are the angels of the seven churches. The word angel here means the messengers of the seven churches. He holds the messengers in his right hand. His mouth brought about the two-edged sword, Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, Revelation 2:16, Revelation 19:15, 21. The weapon of Jesus Christ is the Word of God He is a warrior and uses His Word to war against all that oppose Him. The encouragement of Jesus Christ will always be His Word. He will always give you a Word, look for it and don't move until you receive it. His countenance or face was like the sun, (Matthew 17:2, Acts 26:13, 2 Peter 1:19, Revelation 22:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

17 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.

John was so overwhelmed that he fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on John, saying what He says many times throughout His scriptures, in the voice of many waters with the right hand of authority and judgment, He touches John with compassion and mercy and grace and says Do not be afraid. He then conveys to John once more who He is, the first and the last.

18 *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 Lord continues to explain to John why He should have no fear, He says, “I am He who lives and was dead.” Jesus has overcome death, John belongs to Jesus and there is nothing to fear. He continues with the truth that He will live forever. John say I have the keys to death and Hades so these things cannot hurt you.

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

Jesus then instructs John to go to work, He says write these things which you have seen, The things which are happening right now and the things which will take place. Jesus tells John get it all and write it all down.

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.

Now Jesus does what He did many times with the disciples, He explains the story to John. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.