

A Future Journey with Christ

The Unveiling of Revelation

Revelation 1:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

Mark Revelation chapter one because we will be returning to it frequently.

We have been going through the groundwork of learning how to read and interpret Revelation. Now we are going to use this groundwork as we start going through the scriptures and try to determine exactly what John was trying to say when he wrote the book to the "seven" churches. The ultimate goal is not to try to use the book as a means of identifying all of the end time events and putting them into chronological order as is the goal of many people today. Instead we want to understand what Jesus, through John, is trying to teach us **so we can be transformed by it!**

Some people believe that we are not supposed to mess with this book. They declare that it cannot be understood. Well, it is the Spirit's job and not man's to ensure that the Word is understood. The title of the book is found in verse 1. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. It is given to reveal unto us the purposes, the person and the plans of the Lord Jesus. Instead of these things being hidden as some say, the name Revelation actually means "**an unveiling**". We **can** understand the book and we can learn much from it. Let's read the first 8 verses of Revelation.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 1:1-8 (NASB)

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

⁴ John to the seven churches that 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, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—⁶ and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Prayer

The Greek word for "Revelation" is 'apocalypso', from which we get the English word 'apocalypse.' The basic meaning of the word is an uncovering or an unveiling. This letter is primarily an **UNVEILING**, an uncovering, a drawing back of a veil. John is going to reveal to us through his vision from Christ what is going on behind the scenes from God's perspective. We will understand what is happening before our eyes here on earth from a totally different perspective - **God's!**

Revelation is primarily about Jesus! It reveals Him in all His glory carrying out His plan for the ages. Do not let the details and our own questions obscure the key figure – Jesus Christ. Jesus will not answer all our questions but He will become our answer. Through this great **unveiling** we will come to know Christ better; we will learn what Christ is up to and how He works.

It's like the unveiling of a statue in honor of someone. When the covering is lifted people see an image they know yet have never really seen before.

Unveiling has symbolic meaning to us because it reminds us of the curtain in the Jerusalem Temple being torn in two at the death of Christ. It was an uncovering, or a drawing back, an unveiling of that which had hindered our access to Christ. Each of us now have direct access to God. We no longer have to depend on an earthly priest to intercede for us behind the veil in the Holy of Holies.

which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place;

So this letter is not designed to cover up and hide. it is not meant to be mysterious. It is to be a revelation of "**the things which must soon take place**";. We are going to encounter symbols that, on the surface, may be hard to understand, but like our communion service the SYMBOLS POINT TO A GREATER REALITY! Anyone who gets hung up on the literal nature of the bread and wine will never understand or appreciate the communion celebration. The bread points to Christ's body that was slain on the cross and the wine points to His blood that was spilt for our sins. Thus we eat of the bread and drink of the cup, not for nourishment, but to remember what God, through Christ, did for us on the cross.

John 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

When we partake of the Lord's supper we envision a totally different meaning than just eating and drinking. Likewise anyone hung up on an exact, literal interpretation of the symbols in Revelation will never understand or appreciate its real message.

BODY:

I. THE UNVEILING OF HIS PURPOSE.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place;

The purpose of the revelation or the unveiling was "to **show to his servants what must soon take place**". Jesus is going to open up the veil and "**SHOW**" the Christians in John's time and us what is going on behind the scenes.

As for the "**SOON**", IT DENOTES THE SPEED WITH WHICH, NOT THE TIME AT WHICH, things will happen; not how soon, but the rapidity of execution. Like a tachometer, it measures velocity.

ILLUSTRATION:

Each day of our lives seems like it takes a long time. Especially when we were younger. I remember when I was in grade school, I thought it was taking forever to get into high school. When I was in high school, I thought I would NEVER be old enough to start driving a car. Time seemed like it was crawling. But now that I am in my senior years, I look back on my life and realize how quickly my life has passed by.

This is, no doubt how God views time. God's time is different than ours – with Him a thousand years are as a day.

2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

What we will learn is that history is not a series of unrelated events. HISTORY IS A DIVINELY DECREED ORDERING of that which must come to pass. History deals with the conflicts between **faith and unbelief, righteousness and evil**, and **Christ and Satan**. The **PURPOSE** of revealing these factions is to encourage us that everything is controlled by God's hand. So even if it seems that bad things are happening to us and we can't understand why, we just need to remind ourselves what Paul told the Romans...

Romans 8:28 (NASB)

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Another **PURPOSE** for writing the letter is that those who heed the things which are written it will be blessed.

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it;

This is the only book in the Bible that directly proclaims a blessing on those who read, understand, and do what is written in its pages. As we discussed a few weeks ago, verse 3 is the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation. The number seven indicates completeness. The mention of beatitudes seven times indicates that the believer will have "complete" blessings from God.

Then John adds and recapitulates an additional phrase...

"for the time is near."

Another **PURPOSE** of the letter is to remind us that Christ is coming again and we must be prepared!

Christ **is** coming again! Again, this is not suggesting how **soon** he is coming from our earthly perspective, but how **quickly** it will happen. Every generation of man from the time of Christ until now must have the expectancy that Christ could return today. We must remain ready for His coming.

IMPORTANT! Even if Christ does not return during our lifetime, our death here on earth will equate to Christ's second coming for us because our time for salvation will end at the moment we die. And we all know that we could die at any moment! **What if our death or Christ's return were today? Are you ready?**

II. THE UNVEILING OF HIS PERSON.

In verses 4-5 John begins to address the seven churches of Asia Minor. After the salutation, he starts **unveiling the person of God.**

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace,

"Grace and Peace to you". A standard salutation. It has a lot of significance to the people in John's day. The Roman background between those two words is quite fascinating! Because both of the words were greatly utilized in the Roman Empire. Both of them talk about what Rome itself was claiming to give to the world. They were giving the world both grace and peace. In other words, honor and security.

Christians added to that formula. "Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come,"

1. **Grace** - That God's mercy is available to all, and that He will see His people through.
2. **Peace** - That even in the midst of turmoil, He is still the Prince of Peace.

The difference between the Roman's grace and peace and God's grace and peace was that God's grace and peace was for EVERYONE who will come to Him and His grace and peace is ETERNAL!

Who is God?

from Him who is and who was and who is to come,

What is the most important thing you can know about God? His love? His patience? His power? His Forgiveness?

How about the fact that HE is the God **WHO IS, ALWAYS HAS BEEN, AND ALWAYS WILL BE!** What great expectations it gives us in our difficult times of life! God is here. Even as He was in the beginning, and will be at the end, so He is here now! Through Jesus, He is the creator, sustainer, and director of life. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith!

Colossians 1:16-17 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Remember what we said about numbers? We must WEIGH them instead of MEASURING them! Seven stands for completeness, fullness, perfection. Here it reminds us that the Holy Spirit – sent by Christ at Pentecost – is within us in all His fullness and perfection! He will help us understand and live!

Who is Jesus Christ?

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, , the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

In verse 5 we meet JESUS again. This time as “the faithful witness”. When Christ came to this earth, He witnessed perfectly to God. He showed us who God is.

And He is "the first-born of the dead". His resurrection to glory was not the last but the first! That means more will be born from the dead. What an expectation for those, like the initial hearers of this letter, who were faced daily with death! We will die, but we will rise again to glory with Jesus!

To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus loves us! You need proof? He came down from the glories of heaven to live a sinless life as a man and became the perfect sacrifice on the cross for our sins! Thus we will be found righteous before God on Judgment Day. He has delivered us from this sinful earthly kingdom ruled by Satan to His eternal kingdom and gave us direct access to God. **To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever! Amen.**

John salutes the "seven" churches with the presence of God in all His fullness! God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Remember to weigh the number seven. John is writing to the "complete" church. Everyone who **has been, is,** and **will be** in Christ's Kingdom. That includes us today!

III. THE UNVEILING OF HIS PLAN.

⁷ Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

Jesus is coming again! The first time He came He was **veiled** as a child; the next time He comes, His return will be **unveiled** and abundantly clear to all.

The first time He came only a few attended His arrival; The next time He comes EVERY eye will see Him!

The first time He came as a baby; the next time He will come in judgment. That is why those who pierced Him, those who rejected Him, will mourn. They will know they were wrong. They will see Him for who He is! And the animals will lie down together, nations will beat their swords into plowshares, and there will be no more crying, pain, sorrow, or death anymore! There will be only life!

Matthew 24:27-31 (NASB)

²⁷ For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹ “But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

These scriptures do not tell us **when** He will come but **how**, and **what** it will be like. We will know it; everyone will see it! We shall all stand before Him at the throne of judgment! **"Every knee shall bow; every tongue confess; that Jesus Christ is Lord!"** Notice how verse 27 suggests that Christ's second coming is going to happen quickly. **"As the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west,"**

Revelation is ultimately a message of TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL. We can expect to be judged! Yet we are told not to fear but to look up because we know our redemption is drawing nigh! That is another message from Revelation – there will be a great and devastating judgment, but for God's people, judgment will be a time of great salvation!

⁸ **"I am the Alpha and the Omega,"** says the Lord God, **"who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."**

One more recapitulation. Verse 8 introduces the ALPHA AND OMEGA, and then repeats the **"one who is, who was, and is to come."** The difference is that here it is said even more strongly. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. As written here it includes all the letters in between as well. Jesus is with us **every** day as He works out His plan for the ages! HE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT IN HISTORY, from beginning to end.

CONCLUSION:

What are you looking for in life? Gusto? A coke and a smile? To 'have it your way?' A 'Slim Fast' figure? A piece of the rock? The "good life?" Or are you looking for something eternal? Choose Christ! He has promised **eternal** life with Him if we remain steadfast.

Prepare yourselves to be leaving this world soon! In the meantime, there are lost people all around who need the message, invite them to these studies and tell them of the Lord. The time is short, Satan is working, and God's people need to be also!!

John has **unveiled** to us that Jesus is coming again! We **DO NOT** know the day or the hour! He is coming as a thief in the night. Are you prepared to meet Jesus should you die or He come today?

What if it were today!

God, through His Son, has done His part. Have you accepted His free gift of salvation? He is patiently waiting for you to make your decision.

He is Lord!