

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

WEEK 2: CHAPTER 1 TEACHING NOTES

CHAPTER 1

The Things which You Have Seen (1:1–20)

The Prologue (1:1–8)

- Here is our central theme...Jesus Christ in His present and future glory.
- The word *revelation* is the translation of *apokalypsis* without the article, meaning a “revelation, disclosure, or unveiling.” It is a revelation of truth *about* Christ Himself, a disclosure of future events, that is, His second coming when Christ will be revealed. It is as well a revelation which comes *from* Christ.
- **Verse 1** gives us the chain of this revealing of revelation...
 - God to Jesus to an Angel and then to John
- Angels means messenger and just as the Law was given to Moses from angels, so this book was given to John via angels as well.
 - **Acts 7:38, 53** “This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. ... {53} you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”
- **Verse 2** is important because John puts his own reputation out there and says that I am a witness, an eyewitness to what Jesus wants him to see and then subsequently record.
- **Verse 3** is unique to this book. It is the only book of Scripture which contains a blessing for the reader, a blessing for the hearer, and then a blessing for the doer of what they have read and heard.
- As Walvoord has said, “It seems to anticipate that many would neglect this book or ignore its prophetic revelation. It is singular that the one book in the New Testament which invokes a special blessing on the reader should be often left unread.”
- The last phrase in **verse 3** is also very important, *for the time is near*.
 - This Greek word is **καιρός** for time, not **χρόνος**.
 - **καιρός** is a season of time or a period of time
 - **χρόνος** is like time on a clock

- This means that John is not talking about a specific time on a clock, like these events are going to occur immediately.
- His reference is that the next major event on the eschatological (end times) timeline is what he is going to be revealing.
- **Verses 4-8** is a simple greeting to the churches and an introduction which is common...grace and peace.
- John is writing to the 7 churches in Asia. This means that this letter is what is referred to as a circular letter...to be read to the whole circuit of churches.
- It was to be read sent in a clockwise direction starting in Ephesus; then North...a postal route...
- **Verses 4-5** we have the Trinity in full view in greeting...
- From God the Father...Him who is, who was and who is to come
- From the Holy Spirit...7 Spirits (not 7 but meaning complete...from Isaiah 11:2)
 - It isn't that there are seven different spirits of God, rather the Spirit of the Lord has these characteristics, and He has them all in fullness and perfection.¹
- From Jesus Christ...Notice the titles for Jesus in **verse 5**
 - His character as the faithful Witness (truth), the Firstborn of the dead (referring to His resurrection), and the Ruler of the kings of the earth (total power and sovereignty).²
- Also, in **verses 5-6** we are told what Jesus has done for believers.
 - He loves us...this is a present active verb...it is a continual action from Jesus to us.
 - He released us from our sins by His own death...an aorist active taking place in the past as a once and for all...a display of His love and our redemption
 - In the past He released us by His death, in the present there is a nonstop continual love.
 - He has made us to be a kingdom, to be priests to His God and Father...Believers form both a priesthood and a kingdom (cf. I Peter 2:9; Rev. 5:10). The full manifestation and exercise of prerogatives of this royal priesthood are subject to future manifestations. (Walvoord)
- In **verse 6**, after seeing the greatness of Jesus (His **transcendence**) and the intimacy of Jesus (His **immanence**) John just worships and praises Jesus.
- In **verse 7** we have our first description of the return of Jesus.
 - We are told to **behold!** It's an imperative...a command used some 26 times in Revelation.
 - Pay attention because Jesus is coming back with the clouds (a reference to Dan. 7:13). The clouds relating to the Old Testament cloud of glory called the *Shekinah*.
 - The reference to Daniel 7 is important...it is *revealing* previously hidden truth.

¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/revelation/revelation-1.cfm?a=1168001

² Walvoord

- This doesn't mean that every person will see Him, nor does it mean that only the ones who murdered Him will see Him.
- Walvoord states, "The difficulty is solved by reference to Zechariah 12:10 where Jehovah declares, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Not only Israel as a nation shall behold Him, but also "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." This expression is almost identical to that found in Matthew 24:30, where it states, "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn."
- In other words, the believing Jewish remnant at Christ's return will weep for what they did to their Messiah and it is likely that all unbelievers of the world will also mourn when they see Him at His Second Coming.
- In **verse 8** the same description for Jesus is given that was for the Father in **verse 4**.
 - The eternity, present power, and future glory of Christ are in view. (Walvoord)
- Jesus Christ is the central figure of the opening eight verses of Revelation. (Walvoord)

The Vision of the Glorified Christ (1:9–18)

- **Verses 9-11** give us the context and background of the vision that John received.
- He was of course well known to the churches to whom the book is addressed. He was bound by ties of spiritual life and kinship and therefore was a companion (partaker or sharer) with them in their time of tribulation. (Walvoord)
- He was the last living apostle, likely in his 80's or 90's at this point
- He was exiled on the island of Patmos "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (vs. 9)
- He had served faithfully as pastor of the church in Ephesus, preaching the Word
- Because of this, he was arrested and *first boiled alive in oil and lived*...then sent to Patmos as a prisoner
- Patmos was an island – 10 miles long and 6 miles wide – which served as a place where Rome sent its prisoners
- He was imprisoned under the Emperor Domitian and later released and allowed to return to Ephesus.
- John's statement in verse 10 that he was in the Spirit refers to his experience of being carried beyond normal sense into a state where God could reveal supernaturally the contents of this book. (Walvoord)
- John hears Christ's voice, that like a trumpet, coming from behind him.
 - I think this would have been encouraging for John. Patmos was a desolate place; John was imprisoned there for being faithful in Ephesus...he may have started to wonder if Jesus had left him or not.

- John is commanded to write a book and then send it out to the 7 churches.
- **Verses 12-16** we have John's description of the Son of Man
- The lampstands are explained in **verse 20**
 - The symbolism of the lampstands...The seven lampstands represent the seven churches and are significant symbols of the churches in their principal function of giving forth light.
- Christ is portrayed in verse 13 as in the midst of the lampstands, that is, in the midst of the seven churches. The title assigned to Him is that of "the Son of man," a frequent title in the Gospels, but infrequent in Revelation, being found only once more (14:14). The title emphasizes His humanity and Messianic character. (Walvoord)
 - Christ in the "middle of the lampstands" is important in that it demonstrates that Christ is moving, operating, and working in the midst of His church in a direct relationship.
 - He is involved in affairs of each church...remember, this is Christ's church...
- Then there is a glorious description of Jesus...Walvoord does a great job at this if you want to read more in-depth as to what this all means.
- But look at **verse 16**...Jesus has the 7 stars in His hand...we from **verse 20** that the 7 stars are the angels from the 7 churches.
 - This does not mean that churches all have angels...it is a reference to the church leadership...the elders / pastors / overseers of the individual church.
 - Listen to Walvoord, "The spiritual significance is that these angels are messengers who are responsible for the spiritual welfare of these seven churches and are in the right hand of the Son of Man, indicating possession, protection, and sovereign control. As the churches were to emit light as a lampstand, the leaders of the churches were to project light as stars."
- Christ is ruling His church through their appointed leaders / **just like we're talking about in Ephesians**
- Also in **verse 16**, the sword from Jesus's mouth is the judgment that He is bringing with Him. He is not coming as a babe in a manger but a conquering King.
- **Verses 17-18** record John's most obvious response...*I fell at His feet like a dead man*...Remember, John had seen Jesus and been with Him during His earthly ministry...that was about 60 years prior.
- The heart and compassion of Jesus is shown here...He comforts John and tells him that He has defeated death and there is no reason to be afraid.

The Apostle's Commission to Write (1:19-20)

- Jesus tells John to write and gives the outline of the book...past, present and then future.