

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 27TH–28TH, 2024 // REVELATION

CREDIBLE WITNESS (REVELATION 1:1–3) THE TITLE PAGE OF REVELATION

Think of vs. 1–2 as the title page of Revelation. This is *the revelation of Jesus Christ written by John to the followers of Jesus Christ*.

- This revelation exclusively belongs to Jesus but is delivered to John so he can write down “whatever he saw...because the time is near.”

SOON IS A RELATIVE TERM

This book was written 1928 years ago, so “...because the time is near” has to be taken from heaven’s perspective. With God, a thousand years is like a day (2 Peter 3:8).

- **The point of Revelation isn’t to pinpoint exactly when Jesus returns, but to make sure we’re ready when He does.**

JOHN TESTIFIES ON BEHALF OF THIS REVELATION

Think of John as a court reporter. His primary role is to observe and document. What he is writing will bless “the one who reads” it if they “keep what is written in it.”

- The recipients of Revelation (us) are to do three things: **read, listen, and take the message to heart (obey).**

FOCAL POINT (REVELATION 1:4–8)

GRACE AND PEACE

Similar to the works of Paul, Revelation begins and ends with the idea of grace, but the actual word is only used in v. 4.

- The source of grace is the **Triune God**: “the one who is, who was, and who is to come,” “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness,” and “the seven spirits before his throne.”

SUBTLETIES

It is easy to miss, but the common order of God’s title “Who was, is, and is to come” is switched two times in chapter 1 to “Who is, was, and is to come.”

- This is to show that **God is not confined to time and space**—something important to remember when studying Revelation.

SEVEN SPIRITS?

We get our first symbol that we have to do a little work to decipher. This term only shows up here, but ls.11:1–3 gives some clarity.

- The “seven spirits” most likely represent the **7 characteristics of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, reverence, and fear.**

SOLIDIFYING WHO THE REAL KING IS

John was an exile from the dominant Roman Empire. To establish Christ’s superiority, he reminds us that Jesus is the “firstborn from the dead,” meaning the only One to conquer death.

- Jesus is also “the ruler of the kings of the earth,” showing that **He is sovereign over all things** including Rome (or any government).

MORE THAN JUST POWERFUL

Jesus is in control, but John also tells us He “loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests...”

- **At the core of Revelation is God’s grace and love for His people. Jesus died for our salvation and has adopted those who follow Him as heirs to His Kingdom.**

“LOOK, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS...”

V. 7 encompasses the narrative of Revelation and is also its first prophecy. V. 7 echoes Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 and gives a glimpse of the contrast between Jesus’ 1st and 2nd coming.

- Jesus’ 1st coming was meek and somewhat private. His 2nd coming will be a glorious public event.

“SO IT IS TO BE. AMEN”

When the “Alpha and the Omega...the one who is, who was, and who is to come” returns, those who chose not to follow Him will mourn.

- **Revelation gives no indication that His return will prompt repentance from people who chose evil lifestyles, only sorrow when they realize they’re wrong.**

EXILE (REVELATION 1:9–11)

“YOUR BROTHER AND PARTNER IN...AFFLICTION”

John wanted his readers to know that he was not above them. The early Christians shared in suffering and needed great endurance in order to be faithful.

- This is the first mention of **persecution**. John tells us he is on Patmos—a result of persecution from the Roman government.

TRUSTING GOD AT ALL TIMES

It can be difficult to see God’s plan, especially in times of “affliction.” But, in His wisdom, He allowed Domitian to persecute and exile John.

- Without these events, we wouldn’t have this info. **Sometimes, hardship is our only way to learn things. We must trust that God has a plan and wants the best for us.**

“IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD’S DAY”

The “Lord’s Day” was probably Sunday. After the resurrection, the followers of Jesus formally worshiped on Sundays instead of Saturdays. John was probably enjoying some worship time when something supernatural happened.

- John heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind him.

“WRITE ON A SCROLL WHAT YOU SEE”

The voice commanded John to write 7 letters to 7 churches located in Asia Minor (western Turkey): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

- These are churches that had been ministered to by Paul and they work as examples for all Christians to learn from.

LOOKING AT GOD (REVELATION 1:12–16)

TURNING TO SEE WHO IS SPEAKING

As John turned to see Who was speaking, he saw seven golden lampstands. In the OT this would’ve been the tabernacle menorah but in the NT it represented seven churches.

- **Just as the candles bring light, the local church is to also shine in the darkness** (Matthew 5:14).

SEEING THE GLORIFIED SAVIOR

Though artists have gone to great lengths to depict Him, nowhere in the Gospels does it describe what Jesus looked like. What John sees is a blend of symbolic and literal, but it is safe to say more symbolic.

- Keep in mind that John is doing his best to describe what seems to be indescribable.

“ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN”

- Even in His glorified state, Jesus has human form. Remember, we’re made in His image.

GOLDEN SASH AND LONG ROBE

- Resembles OT High Priest. This reminds us salvation and authority come through Jesus.

HAIR “WHITE AS WOOL—WHITE AS SNOW”

- Symbolizes respect, wisdom, and omniscience.

EYES LIKE “FIERY FLAME”

- God is a God of grace, but here we see that the persecution of His people gives Him righteous anger against evil.

FEET “LIKE FINE BRONZE”

- Gives imagery of an established king that has the world as His footstool (Isaiah 66:1). It also shows God’s omnipotence (unlimited power).

VOICE LIKE “CASCADING WATERS”

- A voice that must be acknowledged and obeyed.

IN HIS HAND HE HELD 7 STARS

- V. 20 explains the stars to be the “angels of the seven churches.” Some believe this means guardian angels of the churches, others believe it is pastors. The main point is God’s sovereignty and protection.

A SWORD CAME FROM HIS MOUTH

- This is obviously symbolic. The sword is His word and ability to judge mankind.

“...SHINING LIKE THE SUN AT FULL STRENGTH”

- Lastly, John says that His face was as bright as looking at the sun at noon. This is another reminder that John isn’t just looking at a man, but God Almighty!

HOLDING STARS (REVELATION 1:17–20)

“...LIKE A DEAD MAN”

John responded to the sight of God similar to Moses in Exodus 3, by falling at God’s feet in fear. This isn’t an unhealthy fear, but a reverence and understanding of how powerful God is.

- **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 1:7). The present-day church often lacks this kind of reverence.**

“DON’T BE AFRAID. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST.”

The same hand that holds the seven stars reaches over to John to comfort and bless him. Jesus reminds John, and us, that He has overcome death and holds “the keys of death and Hades.”

- **If we love and honor God, we have no reason to be afraid of Him.**

“THEREFORE WRITE WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN”

The main point of John recording Revelation is to tell people that Christ is the “Living One,” and through Him we can have eternal life.

- **Through Christ, we can overcome our sinful nature, rid ourselves of debilitating shame and guilt, and find joy in this life and for eternity!**

STARS AND LAMPSTANDS

Now that Jesus has comforted John, he is ready to begin Revelation. Jesus clarifies that the stars are the “angels” of seven churches, and the lampstands are the churches.

- The Greek *angelos* simply means *messenger*. Again, this could be angels or the pastors of these churches (Matthew 11:10).

REVELATION’S FIRST SECTION

Ch. 1–3 are intended to **warn churches to address their internal problems, or they’ll fall to external pressures.**

- Jesus said in Matthew 24:38–39 many will be like those in Noah’s day, **just doing life but never taking serious inventory of how they live.**

TURNING TO LOOK AT JESUS

- Will we choose to acknowledge that **Jesus not only exists but is the all-powerful Savior and Righteous Judge Who has a calling for those who will accept it?**
- Are we even positioning ourselves to hear and learn from God? **Are we praying, worshiping, obeying, and looking?**

CHOOSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE SIN

- If we choose to properly acknowledge Christ, we must then properly acknowledge any sin in our lives because **sin destroys, dishonors, and will separate us from God.**
- **If we fail to let Jesus address our internal sin, failures, and struggles we will inevitably fall to external pressures.**

LEANING ON A CAPABLE SAVIOR

- A lampstand cannot give light by itself. It can only hold light. The people of God are lampstands, incapable of producing light unless God, the Light, is in them.
- Fortunately, **we have a loving, willing, and capable Savior Who longs for a relationship with us that will enable us to produce “light.”**