

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 28TH, 2024 // REVELATION

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

Think of vs. 1-2 as a 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?

This book was written 1950 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), so "soon" to God looks different than it does to us.

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

## JOHN IS TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF THIS REVELATION

Think of John as a witness in a courtroom. His primary role is to observe and note what is coming. What he is writing will bless those who read it if they "keep what is written in it."

- The recipient of Revelation (us) is to do three things: **read, hear, and take the message to heart.**

## FOCAL POINT (REVELATION 1:4-8)

### GRACE AND PEACE

John starts with a very formal greeting 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 this grace is the **Trinity**: "the one who is, who was, and who is to come," "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness," and "the seven spirits before his throne."

## WAIT, THAT ISN'T IN THE CORRECT ORDER

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 essential to remember when studying Revelation.

## SEVEN SPIRITS AROUND THE THRONE?

We get our first symbol, which we must do some work to decipher. This term only appears in Revelation, but Isaiah 11:1-3 gives us clarity.

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

## ESTABLISHING WHO THE KING IS

John was an exile from the globally dominant Roman Empire. To establish Christ's superiority over all things, John 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.

## MORE THAN JUST IN CONTROL

Not only are we reminded that Jesus is in control, but John tells us that 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 love for His people. Jesus died for our salvation and has adopted us as heirs to His Kingdom.**

## THE THESIS OF REVELATION

V. 7 encompasses the narrative of Revelation and is also its first prophecy. It echoes Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. It shows the stark contrast between Jesus' 2nd coming and His 1st.

## FIRST COMING

- Lowly and meek
- Private and few saw it
- Was judged and punished
- People rejoiced over His "defeat"

## SECOND COMING

- Glorious / Magnificent
- Public for all to see
- He will judge evil people
- People will mourn over His victory

## "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 didn't follow Him will mourn. **Revelation does not indicate that His return will prompt repentance, only sorrow when people realize they were wrong.**

## EXILED (REVELATION 1:9-11)

### "YOUR BROTHER & PARTNER IN THE AFFLICTION."

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

- This is the first mention in Revelation of **persecution.** John tells us he is on Patmos due to persecution from the Roman government.

## PERSECUTION AND A GOOD GOD?

It can be challenging to see the plan of God, especially in times of "affliction." God is in control, and in His wisdom, He allowed Domitian to persecute and exile John to Patmos.

- **Without these events, we wouldn't have this book in front of us. Though hard, we must trust that God knows what He's doing!**

## "IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY"

The "Lord's Day" was more than likely Sunday. After the resurrection, the followers of Jesus formally worshipped on Sundays instead of Saturdays. John was probably enjoying some time worshiping 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 all churches that Paul ministered to either directly or indirectly.

## SEEING GOD (REVELATION 1:12-16)

### TURNING TO SEE WHO IS SPEAKING

As John turned around to see Who was speaking to him, he saw 7 golden lampstands. In the OT, this would've been the candelabrum of the Tabernacle (menorah), but it represented 7 churches in the NT.

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

## JESUS AMONG THE LAMPSTANDS

It is interesting that nowhere in the Gospels does it tell what Jesus looked like, though artists have gone to great lengths to depict Him. What John sees isn't literal but more symbolic.

- Remember that John is doing his best to describe what seems indescribable.

## "ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN"

- Jesus, even in His glorified state, has the essential form of humans.

## GOLDEN SASH AND LONG ROBE

- Resembles OT High Priest. This reminds us that our salvation comes only through Jesus.

## HAIR "WHITE AS WOOL—WHITE AS SNOW"

- Symbolic for respect, wisdom, and omniscience (knows everything).

## 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"

- This gives the imagery of an established king who has the world as His footstool (Isaiah 66:1). It also shows God's omnipotence (having unlimited power).

## VOICE LIKE "CASCADING WATERS"

- A voice that must be obeyed and cannot be ignored.

## IN HIS HAND, HE HELD 7 STARS

- In v. 20, these are the "angels of the seven churches." Some believe this means guardian angels of the churches, while others believe it means pastors. The main point is God's sovereignty.

## A SWORD CAME FROM HIS MOUTH

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

## "...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 similarly 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), and we seem to lack it in our day.**

## "DON'T BE AFRAID. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST."

The same powerful hand that holds the 7 stars reaches over to John to comfort and bless him.

## Interestingly, if we honor God, we have no reason to be afraid of Him.

- Jesus reminds John and us that He has overcome death and holds "the keys of death and Hades."

## BECAUSE HE LIVES, WE CAN TOO

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

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

## READY TO START THE JOURNEY

Now that Jesus has comforted John, he is ready to begin Revelation. Jesus clarifies what the stars and lampstands represent. The stars are the "angels" of the 7 churches, and the lampstands are the churches.

- Ch. 1-3 are intended to **warn churches to deal with their internal problems, or they'll fall to external pressures.**

## THE ALMIGHTY GOD

- Chapter 1 gives us a glimpse of Who we are receiving this revelation from: God, Who knows all and has unlimited power, the Creator of all things, and the Risen Savior, Who has shown us grace and forgiveness.

- **Do we revere and "fear" God?**

## REVERSING THE SPOTLIGHT

- God wants us to humble ourselves and address our garbage because if we don't, our internal weaknesses will allow external pressures to overcome us.

- In a time when it's everyone else's fault, **are we willing to turn the spotlight on our dark corners?**