



A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF
REVELATION



An open book with a gold bookmark is shown at the bottom of the page. The pages are filled with text, and the book is set against a dark, textured background with decorative flourishes.

Michael Spradlin, PhD
mspradlin@mabts.edu

Bradley Thompson, EdD PhD
bthompson@mabts.edu

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF
REVELATION

CHAPTER 1A

COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY



Introduction

John was an apostle who was part of the inner three and also the one closest to Jesus. He was the last living apostle (the others were martyred in various ways) and received a revelation from God while exiled on the isle of Patmos by the emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.) who was the first emperor to have himself officially titled in Rome as “God the Lord.”

How many men named John in Scripture? At least 5:

1. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ (Matt. 3:1)
2. John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, and brother of James the "Greater" (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; Mark 1:19; 3:17; 10:35). He was the writer of the Gospel of John, 1,2, and 3 John Letters and the Book of Revelation.
3. A kindred of Annas the high priest, who sat in the Sanhedrin when Peter and John were tried (Acts 4:6).

4. John Mark, designated by this name in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, was the writer of the Gospel of Mark and the cousin of Barnabas. He was also Peter's spiritual son and Apostle Paul's associate.

5. The father of Simon Peter (John 1:42; John 21:15 , John 21:17 , margin "Greek Joanes : called in Matthew 16:17, Jonah").

John wrote five books:

- The Gospel of John- so that we may know how to be saved
- I, II, III John- so that we may be sure of our salvation
- Revelation- so that we may be ready for His return

He was an older man when he wrote this book- maybe 90 years old or older

There have been various schemes to interpret the book of Revelation. The four most used are:

1. The Preterist (Latin- “past” or “beyond”)
approach- Most of the book was fulfilled in the decades immediately following the establishment of the church. Everything in the books ends prior to 70 A.D. under Nero. Though the book of Revelation does briefly address the distant future, most notably the return of Christ and final judgment, the majority of the

book is concerned with the original readers' present reality. Revelation describes much of what has already taken place.

2. The Historical Approach- This approach draws parallels between John's vision and significant historical events. In recent centuries, Historicists have drawn parallels between

Revelation and events such as the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the rise of the Papacy, the Protestant Reformation.

3. The Idealist Approach- The idealist view or the spiritual view uses the allegorical method to interpret the Book of Revelation. The allegorical approach to Revelation was introduced by ancient church father Origen (185-254 A. D.)

and made prominent by Augustine (354-420 A. D.) According to this view, the events of Revelation are not tied to specific historical events. The imagery of the book symbolically presents the ongoing struggle throughout the ages of God against Satan and good against evil.

4. The Futurist Approach- The futurist view interprets the book of Revelation as literally as possible. This view leaves little room for symbolism. In fact, symbolism is only considered when something cannot be understood in a strictly literal fashion. Therefore, for the Futurist, the vast majority of Revelation has yet to take place. Events matching those described in the book have not

occurred. After Revelation 3:22, the entire book is understood to refer exclusively to the events surrounding Christ's return. Futurism is most concerned with the time and the signs immediately preceding the return of Christ and the state of God's people at that future point.

The Golden Rule of Hermeneutics:

Take every word of Scripture at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context indicate otherwise.

Revelation 1:1-4

Verse 1, 2- 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 bondservant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw.

Verse 1-2 The Greek word translated Revelation is *apokalupsis* (apocalypse). The word simply means “a revealing, an unveiling.” The Book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the sense that it belongs to Him. He is the one doing the revealing. It is also Jesus’ Revelation in the sense that He is the object revealed; Jesus is the person revealed by the book.

Chapters 1-3 are an introduction to the book, so this is an introduction to the introduction- a prologue.

This is not **a** revelation, but **the** revelation of Jesus Christ. This is not one in a series of revelations. He is taking the cover off the facts of His return.

It is a revealing, not a covering. Daniel is told to seal up his vision. This is the opposite.

It was given by the Father to Jesus and
communicated by an angel

Angels are mentioned 67 times in the book of
Revelation. Usually, in Scripture, they are telling
people not to be afraid or to get up!

Soon take place- this is the Greek phrase *en tachei*,
which means “quickly or suddenly coming to pass,”
indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning
takes place. The idea is not that the event may occur

soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden.”
(Walvoord)

-

- *Sent-* word for “apostle” - commissioned with a message

Verse 3- Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

This is one of seven blessings (benefits) in the book of Revelation

- Sevens in Revelation:

There are seven **churches**, seven **spirits**, seven **candlesticks**, seven **stars**, seven **lamps**, seven **seals**, seven **horns**, seven **eyes**, seven **angels**, seven **trumpets**, seven **thunders**, seven **heads**, seven **crowns**, seven **angels**, seven **plagues**, seven **vials**, or **bowls**, seven **mountains**, and seven **kings**, seven **blessings**. seven **years of judgments**, seven **“I AMs”** about Christ, and there are seven **doxologies in heaven**.

Why? Genesis 2:3- *God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

Seven means it's over- it's complete

Notice the triplet- we are blessed if we read, hear, and keep.

There are seven blessings in Revelation and one curse:

1. “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” (1:3)

There are seven blessings in Revelation and one curse:

2. “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.’ ”(14:13)

3. “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.” (16:15)

4. “Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’ ” (19:9)

5. “Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” (20:6)

6. “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”
(22:7)

7. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” (22:14)

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (22:18-19)

The time is near- there are two words for time used- *chronos* (chronological time), and the word used here is *kairos* (proper or opportune time of action)

Verse 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,

Verse 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,

Seven churches- these were actual churches.

1. Ephesus- the gateway to Asia Minor, was located at a major harbor on the Aegean Sea and housed one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (a temple to Artemis). Founded by Paul, this was the most prominent church in Asia Minor.

2. Smyrna- the home of Homer and the temple of Athena, was a beautiful, bustling seaport. In the second century A.D., Rome martyred Polycarp, its bishop.

3. Pergamos- the location of Rome's provincial capital, was a major cultural hub that housed a library rivaling the famed Alexandrian library.

4. Thyatira- founded under Alexander the Great, was noted for its trade, particularly purple dye. Lydia, one of Paul's converts, came from this region (Acts 16:14).

5. Sardis- the ancient capital of the Lydian kingdom, was situated atop a plateau and sustained a series of foreign conquests.

6. Philadelphia- the “Gateway to the East,” was renowned for its grapes, textiles, and leather goods.

7. Laodicea- the ancient capital of Phrygia, gained wealth through trade and banking. It was also known for its medical school and costly fabrics.

Nothing remains of these churches today. Persecution has been an ongoing threat to Christianity in Asia Minor, particularly since Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453. Estimates place the current number of Christians at about two percent of Turkey's population.

The seven spirits- three possible interpretations:

1. The Holy Spirit (represented as 7 for the number of completeness)

2. A reference to Isaiah 11:2- The Spirit of the Lord will...

- rest on Him,
- The spirit of wisdom
- and understanding,
- The spirit of counsel
- and strength,
- The spirit of knowledge
- and the fear of the Lord.

3. Seven literal angels- Revelation 8:2-7

2. A reference to Isaiah 11:2- The Spirit of the Lord will...

- rest on Him,
- The spirit of wisdom
- and understanding,
- The spirit of counsel
- and strength,
- The spirit of knowledge
- and the fear of the Lord.

3. Seven literal angels- Revelation 8:2-7