

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## The Book of Revelation

*End Times Series by Marsha Medders*



“Blessed is he who reads &  
those who hear the words of  
the prophecy & heed the  
things which are written  
in it, for the time is near.”

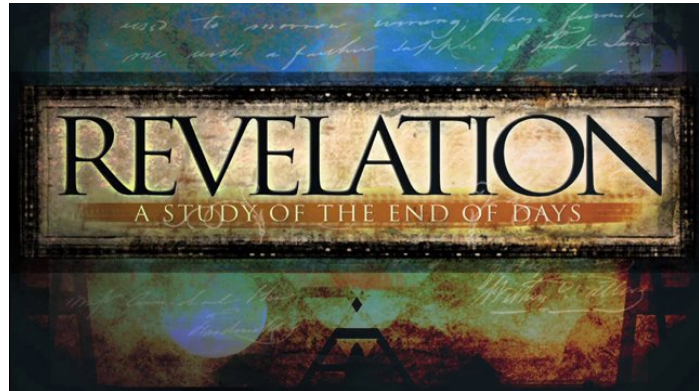
Revelation 1:3

## Revelation - Chapter 1

### Introduction and Jesus Revealed

#### Introduction

The book of Revelation provides the most detailed look into the future in all of Scripture. The creation account was written in clear detail in the book of Genesis and God gives us a detailed record of how everything ends in the book of Revelation. This amazing book reveals the future history of the world with the return of Jesus Christ and His glorious kingdom. It culminates with a happy ending, as sin and death are banished forever.



The Book of Revelation has been said to be the most neglected, misunderstood and misinterpreted book in the Bible. But there is one over-riding and very important reason that we should all study the book of Revelation. Jesus Christ, Himself, tells us that,

*"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."* (Revelation 1:3)

To understand the entirety of the Book of Revelation and avoid great mis-interpretation, one must also understand God's plan for Israel and the Church and many of the covenants and prophecies of the Old Testament. We will explore a summary of these topics now. You may read further about these topics on our website.

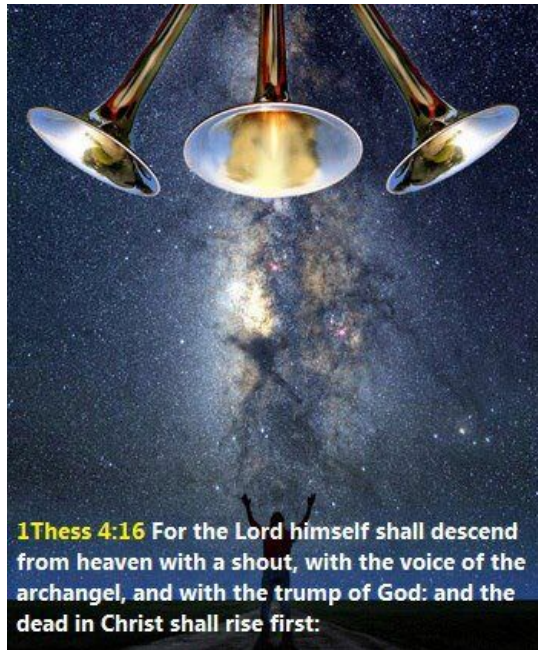
#### Interpretation of Prophecy

During this study of the book of Revelation, I will be using the literal interpretation of the Bible versus the allegorical method and the Premillennial view of the return of Christ. The literal translation gives to every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage and emphasizes that the meaning of Scripture is determined both by the literal words and the historical considerations. It was used by the early church and Jesus who also interpreted one passage of Scripture by appealing to another passage to add further clarification.

Proponents of the allegorical or spiritualizing method believe that it is impossible to apply the literal method to all Scripture, especially in the prophetic portions. Some Scripture is interpreted literally while other Scripture is interpreted symbolically. The



allegorical or spiritualizing method arose out of a Greek Pagan period and not from a desire to understand the Scriptures. <sup>1</sup>



The Premillennial view holds that the Church will be raptured before the Tribulation Period, Christ will make a literal second coming to the earth to destroy His enemies, and then set up His literal Kingdom of peace and righteousness on the earth for one thousand years. Christ and His saints will reign on the earth in fulfillment of Old Testament and New Testament prophecy.

The Premillennial view holds a distinction between God's plan, purposes, and programs for Israel and God's plan, purposes and programs for the church. The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are fulfilled literally during Christ's reign on earth. The millennial period is possible and necessary because all the

promises given to Israel have not been fulfilled.

## Israel and The Church

Five-sixths of the Bible is about Israel - from Genesis 12 to Revelation 22. Israel is the only nation that has its origin, history, ups and downs, and destiny all written out in advance for the diligent. Every time you encounter a Jew you are witnessing a miracle. No race on the planet has endured more systematic, heavily resourced attempts to wipe it out than the Jewish race.

From the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Haman in the book of Esther, Hitler, Iran, ISIS and many more, we see a long list of people and nations that have wanted to destroy the Jewish race. Throughout history, the judgements of God have fallen heavily upon Israel's oppressors - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Rome and in more modern times, Spain, Germany, and Russia.

How tragic it is when, even in Christian theology, Israel has been substantially dismissed. The Bible says more about the current period of time in history than it does about any other period of time, including the time that Jesus walked the shores of Galilee and climbed the mountains of Judea. At a time when we could be united as Christians that Jesus is surely coming soon, the Christian world hardly recognizes "the

signs of the times.” Jesus warned of not knowing the signs of the times twice; to the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 16:3 and in Luke 19:42-44, “because you did not recognize the time of your visitation” as prophesied in the book of Daniel the Jews would remain in Jerusalem in 70 AD and be slaughtered.

The history of the Bible can be viewed as a Tale of Two Cities: Babylon as the City of Man; Jerusalem as the City of God. The Bible focuses on 3 primary promises:

- God’s covenant with Abraham - in His seed all the nations will be blessed
- God’s covenant with the nation Israel - if they faithfully served Him they’d prosper and if they forsook Him they’d be destroyed
- God’s covenant with David, that his family would produce the Messiah who would reign over God’s people forever.

### **God’s Chosen People**

In the book of Genesis we learn about how God created the world and that:

- God selected a distinct people to be their God
- God chose to dwell among His people
- God chose to set aside a priestly kingdom and a holy nation for the world to see.

We don’t know why God specifically choose the Jews but we do know from the Scriptures that God choose the Jews to be His chosen people in perpetuity. (Ex 6:7-8; 19:5-6; 33:15-17; 28:43; 29:44-46; Deut 11:12). The rest of the Old Testament is about God’s relationship to Israel including pointing to Jesus Christ, His birth, death, resurrection, and second coming.

### **The Unconditional Covenant With Abraham**

When God called Abraham to leave his home God also made an unconditional covenant with Abraham. This covenant is made in Genesis 12:1-3 and confirmed and enlarged to him in Genesis 12:6-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-4; 22:15-18. The covenants entitled Abraham and Israel certain basic promises:

1. That Abraham’s name shall be great.
2. That a great nation should come from him.
3. He should be a blessing so great that in him shall all families of the earth be blessed.





4. To him personally and to his seed should be given Palestine forever to inherit.
5. The multitude of his seed should be as the dust of the earth.
6. That whoever blessed him should be blessed and whosoever cursed him should be cursed.
7. He should be the father of many nations.
8. Kings should proceed from him.
9. The covenant shall be perpetual, “an everlasting covenant.”
10. The land of Canaan shall be “an everlasting possession.”
11. God will be a God to him and to his seed.
12. His seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.
13. In his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

### **God Dwells With His Chosen People**

God continued His presence with His people when He confirmed His relationship with Abraham through an animal sacrifice. The presence of God passed through the animals Abraham killed. God’s covenant to the Israelites was further confirmed to Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, through Jacob’s twelve sons, the 12 tribes of Israel.



God continued His relationship with His people throughout the years through:

- Animal sacrifice - First performed by God to cover Adam and Eve’s shame at their sin, sacrifice was a principle established by God, where the blood of another could substitute for the sins of the sinner.
- Giving of the Law - God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai and gave Moses the ten commandments; their standards of righteousness to live by (Ex 24:15-18; 26:30).
- Tabernacle - God gave instructions to build a Tabernacle or structure so that God could continue to dwell with them, they could have communion with God and to worship God (Ex 25:1-8; 26:30).
  - Through the sacrificing of innocent animal blood at the Tabernacle, Israel could atone for their sins and be restored to God. God would let Himself be known to the High-Priest, who would communicate God’s will to the people, and the priest would intervene before God on their behalf (Leviticus 16).
  - God dwelt in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, enthroned above the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:1–2).

- God wanted a holy people and His presence among the Israelites was what made them holy (Exod. 19:5-6; 3:5; 33:15–17).
- Although portable at first, the Tabernacle would later become a permanent structure called the Temple. David would buy the land for the Temple and his son Solomon then would build the Temple.
- Every detail of the Tabernacle points to Christ. See attached Tabernacle charts and pictures.
- More space is devoted in the Scriptures to the description of the Tabernacle than any other single subject except Christ Himself. God used 50 chapters to explain the Tabernacle and only 2 chapters to explain creation.

### **God Establishes A Nation For Israel**

God guided and directed His people throughout the years to establish a nation for them and claim the land promised to them:

- The Israelites entered Egypt as a family and emerged from Egypt as a nation.
  - God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been enslaved, with a series of plagues, instituting the Passover, exodus from Egypt and a miracle parting of the Red Sea so they could leave.
  - He appeared as a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night. They could see the glory of God as he led them through the wilderness (Ex 13:21-22).
- Through the leadership of Moses, Joshua begins the process of claiming the land that God promised them.
- As Israel struggled with the other nations and sinned with idolatry they became contaminated with their false religions and apostasy from God. Through judges such as Samson, Gideon and Debra, God delivered His people. The theme for this period in Israel's history is "and everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:21).
- David, the sheep herder, was singled out by God to be king over the Israelite nation. This period of Israel's history is known as the United Kingdom.
  - God's confirms and further's Israel's covenants with a covenant to David that through David's family line God would send the Messiah who would redeem the world from their sins (Isaiah 9:6-7, II Samuel 7:12-14).
  - David buys the land for the Temple and his son, Solomon, builds a magnificent Temple. The ark of the covenant is now in Solomon's Temple (2 Car 35:3).
  - After David's son, Solomon's death, the kingdom of Israel was split into two nations due to a civil war: Israel to the north with ten of the twelve tribes and Judah to the south with the remaining two tribes.
- For the next 300+ years both Israel and Judah had competing kings, many of the kings turned the people toward the idols of the land and away from God, such as

Ahab who worshipped Baal. Some of the kings remained true to the Lord such as Hezekiah and Josiah.

### **God's Judgements On Israel and Judah**

God's continual presence and relationship with the nation of Israel and its people was contingent on Israel's obedience. If Israel obeyed they would be blessed, but if the nation turned away from the Lord, then they would be scattered and the Temple destroyed (1 Kings 9:6-9).

- During this period God intervened by sending prophets to warn the peoples to repent and turn back to God or God's judgments will follow:
  - Elijah battled the false prophets of Baal in the valley of Carmel (1 Kings 18).
  - Three Major Prophets were there to testify to the sins of the nation, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. All three lived in Jerusalem before the judgments, Jeremiah was the oldest.
  - Israel and Judah's sins were many and ran deep. Jerusalem was labeled "the bloody city" because of its violent crimes and child sacrifices to Molech. God gives Ezekiel a vision of the abominations in Jerusalem; it is sickening (Eze 8).
  - Ezekiel 16 is so sad and indicting that some of the ancient rabbis did not allow it to be read in public.
  - Ezekiel talks about the progression from violence to wickedness. There was a war for the soul of the nation.
- Israel was judged first in 722 BC. God sent the armies of Assyria to destroy the land and take the people captive. In their place other people were settled in the land. Later Babylon defeats the Assyrians.
- Judah was judged and invaded by Babylon 3 times under leadership of Nebuchadnezzar - 605, 597, 587 BC:
  - 587 BC Babylon destroyed the Temple and the city, tearing down its walls. Jeremiah wrote the *Book of Lamentations* witnessing the destruction of the people and the city.
- All these defeats were judgments against the land, because the people were turning away from the Lord. The people caused God to judge the land; because they turned away from God and worshipped the gods of Babylon, Egypt, Moab and the Philistines.
- Israel is like an abandoned child. The Israelites had no place to offer atoning blood, thus bearing their sins without relief.



- One of the most distressing Scriptures in the Bible is when Ezekiel describes the Glory of the Lord departing the Temple.

*“Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.”*  
(Ezekiel 10:18)



- Sadly, the exile and affliction did not make the Jews more responsive to God; rather they were hardened by their sufferings.

### God's Covenants Remain

Even when God did judge His people for their failures, He promised that He would still continue with His covenant; He had not forgotten His people. Through His prophets, God gave the Israelites breath taking visions of the Throne of God (Isaiah and Ezekiel) while giving His Word that:

- Babylon will fall (your time is up).
- Jerusalem will be restored and rebuilt. This occurred under Nehemiah and Ezra.
- There will be a New Covenant which was announced by Jeremiah.
- Nebuchadnezzar would usher in a “time of the Gentiles” when Israel's national life is dominated by Gentile nations that would eventually end with the Second Coming of Jesus. Daniel receives a vision that tells of the beginning and end of Gentile rule. The “time of the Gentiles” will be characterized by continuous degeneration and decay:
  - Deteriorating morality in human government.
  - Increasing power in human government.
  - Disintegrating unity of human government.
  - Iron will of authority and the clay like voice of the people.
  - As kingdoms degenerate in immorality they will increase in force. As we near the end of this age the tension between



the forces will increase until nations are torn apart by strife both internal and external. All attempts at unification with other governments will fail. This will prepare the way for the antichrist world rule.

- There will be a terrible time of trouble for the Israelites in the last days, called Jacob's trouble, which will last 7 years (book of Daniel):
- In the middle of the 7 years a coming world leader described in detail, will establish an idol in the Holy of Holies: this act is called the Abomination of Desolation. The last half of that 4 year period is labeled by Jesus as "The Great Tribulation".
- The Magog Invasion in the end times coming from the uttermost parts of the north - Russia, Iran (Persia), Ethiopia (Cush), Libya and North Africa (Phut). (Described in the book of Ezekiel)
- Jesus will establish His Kingdom for 1000 years which is called the Kingdom Period.
  - All of Israel will be saved.
  - Israel will be restored as a nation, and granted it's land.
  - A Millennial Temple will be built and offerings and sacrifices will be resumed but not like the Mosaic sacrifices. It will be open on the Sabbath Day and on New Moons. (9 chapters in book of Ezekiel)
  - All the nations will come to worship there.
- God will establish an eternal New Heaven and New Earth.

In the Old Testament there are many prophecies regarding the last days:

- Jesus - 36
- Great Tribulation - 9
- Millennial Kingdom - 129
- Time and Eternity - 23



## **God Establishes Israel's Return From Exile**

At the appointed time as predicted by Jeremiah, a remnant returns to Jerusalem from Babylon. There were two primary restorations from Babylonian captivity. Nehemiah a strong governor and Ezra a devout teacher played key roles in the restoration.

Their return to their land showed that they were still God's people, despite the years of exile and the difficulties they had experienced since their return. The first group of returning exiles restored worship of the Lord, culminating in a rebuilt temple, but Ezra, who led the second group, re-established the Israelite community under Mosaic law, culminating in putting away mixed marriages.

Although the Temple is rebuilt it is not restored to its original glory:

- The Ark of the Covenant is gone
- The Holy of Holies stands empty

## **The Silent Years**

This includes a 400 year period in which no prophet was heard.

## **John the Baptist**

John the Baptist ushers in the New Testament period.

## **Jesus**

Birth, Ministry, Crucifixion and Ascension of Jesus Christ and Pentecost. Jesus ushered in a period of grace in which those who accept Him as Lord and Savior can be reconciled to God. Jesus died on the Cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus substituted for us and paid our penalty for us. His death on the cross is an atonement for our sins and appeases God's wrath against our sin. Jesus chose to die for us so that we could live with Him forever.

## **The Church**

The body of Christ or the body of people saved by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit who live to glorify and enjoy God until Jesus raptures the Church.

## **Diaspora**

Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed again in 70 AD as predicted in the book of Daniel. The Romans laid siege in Jerusalem for nine months and over a million were slaughtered. Israel is scattered all over the world.

As Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He weeps for the city, because He knows they will be destroyed as Gabriel had prophesied to Daniel. Its citizens will also



be slaughtered because they did not know the Scriptures and as a result did not leave the city.

*“saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. “For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:42–44, NASB95)*

## **Israel the Nation**

In 1948 Israel becomes a nation again. Old Testament prophecies were literally fulfilled.

## **Summary**

God is not finished with Israel. Which of the covenants have been fulfilled and which are *yet to come*? In reviewing the covenants there are seven great promises to Israel:

- A nation forever
- A land forever
- A King forever
- A throne forever
- A kingdom forever
- A New Covenant
- Abiding blessings

Israel must be regathered and restored to *the land* promised by God and then experience the blessings of the New Covenant discussed in Jeremiah 31:31-34 *in the land*. History records no such sequence. This means that these events are still to come.

You might ask, “Well what about the New Covenant?” Jesus instituted the New Covenant and as Gentiles we do receive the blessing, but the New Covenant was made with Israel and not the church.

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each*

*man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:31–34, NASB95)*

By faith Gentiles can become the children of Abraham and thus become participants in the New Covenant (Rom 4:16; Gal 3:7) . It just means that for Israel the New Covenant is not yet realized. Christ instituted the covenant but Israel as a nation will not realize it until it is confirmed and made actual to them at the second advent (coming) of Christ, when all Israel shall be saved (Rom 11:26-27).



Judgements play a big part in the book of Revelation. Evil nations have been against God and His people throughout the Old Testament and the age ends with empires compared with wild and ferocious animals (book of Daniel). This present age is evil, under the dominion of the kingdom of darkness and will be followed by a judgment on the present cosmic order.

Jesus stopped Israel's timepiece in Luke 19. The clock has one 7 year period left yet to be ticked off. Nothing else needs to happen. All prophecy before Jesus' second coming has happened. He could come at any time.

## **Revelation - Chapter 1**

### **Jesus Revealed**

#### **Who Wrote the Book of Revelation**

Imagine John's exhilaration as he sees Jesus, His Lord and Savior and old friend. You can hear the excitement, joy, and just how overwhelmed he was to receive a message about Jesus and His return and then to actually see the glorified Jesus.

John the author is none other than John the apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James. John loyally testified to the first coming of Christ so now John faithfully proclaims all that he saw concerning Jesus' second coming.



At ninety years old John is nearing the end of his life. It is AD 95, John is alone and exiled to Patmos, a small, barren, volcanic island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Greece and about forty miles offshore from modern-day Turkey. Patmos is ten miles long and six miles wide. The island was considered the Alcatraz or Devil's Island of its day, where Roman prisoners were sent to spend the rest of their days imprisoned in exile.

Yet this is the time in John's life when God choose to share one of the most glorious messages in the Bible - the return of Jesus. Imagine what a blessing this was for John at what was probably the second lowest point in his life, the first was when he witnessed Jesus being crucified and now John is suffering severe persecution for the cause of Christ, exiled like a common criminal.

John was exiled to Patmos for eighteen months, beginning in AD 95 for refusing to confess the emperor, Domitian, as "lord and god." Domitian was known to be cruel and even exiled his own niece to another island. Conditions for John would have been very harsh. Exhausting physical labor in the mines under the watchful eye of a Roman guard, insufficient food and clothing and having to sleep on the bare ground would have taken their toll on a ninety year old man.

When the Emperor Domitian died in AD 96, his successor Nerva let John return to Ephesus where he directed the churches of Asia until his death after the crowning of Emperor Trajan in AD 98.



## **First Thing**

The very first thing John tells us is that the information in this book he has written is the revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1). No lengthy opening, no background information, no build up - one can hear the excitement and urgency in his cadence as he gets to the point of his book immediately.

The word “revelation” is a translation of the Greek *apokalypsis*, meaning “an unveiling” or “a disclosure.”<sup>1</sup> The book is an unveiling or disclosure of truth about Jesus Christ.

## **How John Received the Information in Revelation**

John shares that the information contained in this book was given to him by God the Father, then to Christ the Son and then revealed by an angel to John (Rev 1:1).

The book of Revelation is unique in the New Testament because it is the only book sent and communicated by angels. Angels appear in every chapter of Revelation except 4 and 13. The words “angel” or “angels” are used seventy-one times in the book of Revelation - more than in any other book in the Bible. Angels were involved in the giving of the book of Revelation to John, just as they were in the giving of the Law to Moses. The name of the angel coming with the revelation to John is not given, however many have suggested it is Gabriel.

John states here and thirty-eight other occasions that he was recording things he saw (Rev 1:2). His words paint vivid pictures to reveal the future through memorable symbols and images.

## **Purpose of the Book of Revelation**

John tells us that his purpose in writing this book is to *show us things to come* (Rev 1:1). Throughout the ages people of all societies and statuses have wanted to know what lies ahead, what will happen in the future. Here is the answer from our omniscient, sovereign God, through Jesus Christ Himself!

Revelation’s emphasis on future events also sets it apart from all other New Testament books. The first four books of the New Testament are about the past, especially the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the next twenty-two are about the present, especially the life of the church. Revelation, though it contains some information about the past (Rev 1) and the present (Rev 2–3), it mainly focuses on the future (Rev 4–22).

## What John was to do with the Information

Jesus, Himself tells John to, “Write in a book what you see” (Rev 1:11,19). This is the first and second of twelve commands in the book of Revelation for John to write what he sees. John compares Jesus’ voice to a trumpet (Rev 1:10). Throughout the book of Revelation, a loud voice or sound indicates the seriousness of what is about to be revealed.

## Who was John Writing the Book to

Early in the chapter, John states that the revelation of Jesus Christ is for Jesus’ bond-servants or His followers - those who have chosen Jesus as their Lord and Savior (Rev 1:1).

In Revelation 1:9, John introduces himself again very humbly and simply as a *brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus*, emphasizing the experiences he shared with those who would read his letter. *Partaker* is derived from the Greek word *synkoinōnos* and is related to the concept of fellowship. The Greek word for *perseverance* means to remain under, that is, to patiently endure difficulties without giving up. *Tribulation* refers to general trials and persecutions experienced by Christians then and of every era. *Kingdom* refers to the future earthly kingdom which Christ will establish at His second coming.

John describes fellowship with his fellow Christians to include perseverance through tribulation in light of the coming Kingdom. The closer His second coming gets, the more intense the persecution will become for His followers. <sup>2</sup>



After writing the vision, John was commanded to send it to the seven churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Rev 1:11) which are located in the Roman province of Asia which is modern Turkey today. These seven churches were located in the key cities of the seven postal districts into which Asia was divided. They were points for sharing of information.

## Special Blessing

Another unique feature of Revelation is that it contains a special blessing to those who *read, hear and heed* what is written in it (Rev 1:3). No other book of the Bible contains such a promise. We will be blessed when we read Revelation because we will understand how God will ultimately bring sense to our suffering, it will unlock the mystery of history - we are moving toward a goal of Christ assuming His rightful place as eternal Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and it will bring stability to our souls in these chaotic times we live in. If you look forward to His coming you will have stability. Simply put: We Win!!

## Preview Glimpse of Jesus' Glorious Return

John begins the first prophetic oracle of Revelation (Rev 1:7) when he gets our attention with the first *behold* - a word that is used 25 times in Revelation and is intended to arouse the mind and heart to consider what follows. What follows is that Jesus is returning.



And Jesus returns in all His glory literally (Rev 1:7). John gives us a preview glimpse of the glorious descent of Christ at the final battle of Armageddon. Christ will be robed in the Shekinah glory of God (*coming with the clouds*) and the brilliance of innumerable angels and the redeemed who accompany Him will be both an indescribable and terrifying event. Everyone will see Him (Rev 1:7). Those who have not accepted Him as their Lord and Savior will mourn which is prompted by their terror over their impending doom (Rev 1:7). Those who have accepted Him will enter the Millennial Kingdom with Him.



## Patmos Vision

After John is told that Jesus will return and how He will return, John receives a vision supernaturally, *in the spirit* (Rev 1:10) on Sunday, *the Lord's day*. Even while exiled for his faith, living in harsh conditions on a rocky penal colony, John the elderly apostle set aside time on Sunday, the Lord's Day, to worship and pray. Even though his experience transcends the bounds of normal human understanding,



such encounters have occurred with other leaders in the Bible, such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, and Paul.

John began with his back to the voice, so he turned to see the voice, and he first sees seven golden lamp stands and in the middle of the lampstands is the glorified Jesus! John, the elder, theologian, evangelist, apostle and elite member of Christ's inner circle was instantly reduced to a trembling sinner lying powerless before the King of kings and Lord of lords. In a word, he was terrified.

Such fear was standard for those few who experienced such unusual heavenly visions. Yet in the midst of the apostle's heart-stopping terror, the unsurpassable Son of God stooped down, reached out with His nail-pierced hand, and comforted His old friend just as he had done at the transfiguration.

Then John starts his incredible description of the glorified Jesus. This is not the Jesus he traveled with and saw heal the sick, preach to the multitudes, and suffer on the cross, but the Jesus that he saw at the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus briefly unveiled His glory. Now sixty years later at the end of his life, John was seeing Jesus in all His glorious splendor.

No doubt John used the best descriptions he could come up with considering human words could only partially describe the glorified Jesus that stood before him (Rev 1:13-16):

- Clothed in a long robe - Such robes were worn by royalty, prophets, and high priests. The robe here pictures Christ in His role as the Great High Priest of His people.
- Golden sash across His chest - High priests in the Old Testament wore such sashes.
- Head and hair white as snow - Depicts the Ancient of Days (God the Father), Christ's work of chastening and purifying His church
- Eyes like a flame of fire - Flaming searching gaze penetrates to the very depths of His church



• Feet burnished glowing bronze - The bronze altar in the temple was related to sacrifice for sin and divine judgment on it. Kings in ancient times sat on elevated thrones so those being judged would always be beneath the king's feet. The feet of a king came to symbolize his authority. The red-hot, glowing feet of

Christ picture Him moving through His church to exercise His holy scrutiny.

- Voice like the sound of many waters - Christ no longer speaking with the trumpet like voice but now like the eternal God described in Ezekiel showing another parallel affirming Christ's deity.
- Seven stars in his right hand - Represents the seven churches and being held in His right hand depicts sovereign possession.
- Two-edged sword in His mouth - denotes judgment against enemies from inside the church
- Brilliant shining face - Radiant glory evident on His face depicts the glory of God through Christ shines in and through His church, reflecting His glory to the world with Christ being ultimately glorified.

Then Jesus describes Himself in exalted terms (Rev 1:17-18):

- I Am - The covenant name of God
- The first and the last - signify Christ's eternity and His all-inclusive power.
- The Living One - God is the eternal, uncreated, self-existent One.
- I was dead and behold I am alive forevermore - The Greek text reads, "I became dead." The living One, the eternal God who could never die, became man and did die.
- Alive forevermore - Christ lives forever in a union of glorified humanity and deity.
- I have the keys of death and of Hades - death is the condition and Hades is the place of the dead. Here Jesus is saying that he has the authority, the keys, to decide who dies and who lives. Those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior have already been delivered from death and Hades by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

Jesus then commands John again to write these things down and gives John the outline to use while recording what he saw in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:19):

The things which you have seen	Vision of Christ in all His glory	Past	Rev 1
The things which are	Message to the seven churches	Present	Rev 2-3
The things which will take place after these things	Vision of things to come	Future	Rev 4-22

Jesus helped all of us by interpreting two symbols from that vision, the stars and the lampstands:

- The *seven lampstands* that Jesus was standing in the middle of are the seven churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Rev 1:20).
- The golden lamp stands were like the common portable oil lamps placed on lamp stands that were used to light rooms at night. They symbolize the churches as the lights of the world. They were golden because gold is the most precious metal and the church is God's most beautiful entity on earth. Seven is the number of completeness. Here the seven churches represent the actual churches and also symbolize the kinds of churches that exist through all of church history.
- The *seven stars are the angles of the seven churches* (Rev 1:20). The Greek word for angels is angelos which can mean the six winged figures in Isaiah 6 or human messengers as commonly used in biblical days. In Rev 2:4, 14, 20 these angels are charged with bad behavior so we can conclude that Jesus is not referring to angelic beings but rather He is referring to what we would call today the pastors of the seven churches.



The charge is clear: John was to write everything he saw and heard and send it to the seven churches through each church's pastor. This wide distribution of the book guaranteed that the revelation from Jesus Christ would not only address believers in John's own day, but it would continue to inform and encourage believers until Jesus returns.

## Exaltation of Jesus

In the first Chapter of Revelation there are eight references about Jesus. He is the:

- Faithful witness (Rev 1:5); He is the One who always speaks and represents the truth.
- Firstborn of the dead (Rev 1:5); Christ is the firstborn of all creation, He is the first to receive a resurrection body which is immortal. Of all who have ever been or ever will be resurrected, He is the premier One.
- Ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev 1:5); Refers to Christ's authority and kingship as the promised descendant of David.
- Alpha and the Omega" (Rev 1:8; 21:6); The first and the last - the One who has always been. Denotes His sovereignty.



- One “who is and who was and who is to come”  
(Rev 1:4,8) Used throughout the Bible to describe God, the I Am. indicates God’s complete transcendence over all history - past, present and future.
- Almighty” (Rev 1:8); the Eternal God.

All these descriptions confirm the deity of Christ as the Son of the Triune God: God, the Father; Jesus, the Son; and the Holy Spirit. John also gives Christ all the glory and honor - no doubt due to Christ’s unbreakable love. His love was best demonstrated by His sacrificial death on the cross when He released us from our sins by His blood.

### **When will Jesus Return**

Jesus gave John two clues about when He will return. First, John was told that *the time is near* (Rev 1:3) and then, *so it is to be* (Rev 1:7).

When John tells us that *the time is near* for Christ’s coming back, he used a Greek term *kairos* which means a season of time in contrast to time as on a calendar or clock. So the period of time or season of time he is talking about is the time of the end as Daniel also referred to in his vision from the Lord.

John is being told that the next great era of God’s redemptive history is near. It is imminent and Jesus can come at any moment. We are not waiting for some event to take place before Jesus can return; He can come whenever He chooses.

We have been living in the last days for more than two thousand years. Jesus commanded His followers to watch expectantly for His return (Luke 12:35-40). Paul, Peter, James and John, the apostles, all wrote that the day of His return is near (Rom 13:12, 1 Pet 4:7; James 5:7-9; 1 John 2:18). We are always living on the edge of eternity and as believers in Christ we should be ready for His return no matter when it occurs.

As part of the message to the seven churches, John was told, and *so it is to be*. Nothing can stop our sovereign Almighty Jesus from coming back and carrying out His will. As Christians we are sojourners in a foreign land because Satan is the “ruler of this world.” Jesus told the women who were weeping alongside the Via Dolorosa that His hour had not yet come and we are told in First Timothy that God will bring about Jesus’ return in His own time. What a day that will be!

When the time is right He will begin His campaign to regain His rightful sovereignty over the earth. The book of Revelation is the account of that campaign. It tells of His appointment by the Father to the throne, His battle against the forces of evil, His final victory, and His relationship with the redeemed.

## Let's Review What We Learned in Chapter 1:

- Jesus reveals to John that He is coming back, the things which must take place soon, and to share this message with the seven churches in Asia.
- Jesus gives John the outline for the book of Revelation - John is to write the things which he has seen, the things which are, and the things which will take place.
- Those that read, hear and heed this message will be blessed.
- The heavens are opened and the readers of John's book can see as did Stephen in Acts 7:56 and John at the Transfiguration, visions of the risen, glorified Son of God.
- His entrance will be so brilliant no one, no matter what they are doing at the time or where they are, will miss seeing Him.
- The time can be any moment; nothing else has to occur.
- Christ's exaltation is described:



## When Jesus came the first time He:      When Jesus comes the second time He:

Took the sinner's place to die	Executes judgment upon the unsaved sinner
Lamb led to slaughter	Lion enthroned to judge
Save the lost	Vengeance on those who have not professed Him as Lord and who have not obeyed His Word
Supreme messenger of love	Righteous Judge, Ruler of kings of the earth
Great humility	Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty, Living One, Ancient of Days, Alive forevermore, Awesome power and glory
Wearing a robe of shame	Wearing a robe of glory
Born in a stall and died a horrible death	Honorable return - arrives in the Shekinah glory of God.