

Revelation, Part 1 – The Revelation

The first three verses announce the revelation of Jesus Christ is the purpose for the book. The Revelation looks forward toward the consummation of all things and at the same time resolves issues that were presented in the remainder of the Bible. Almost all of the characters, symbols, events, numbers and colors are previously introduced in the Bible.

Throughout the book, the number seven represents the fullness.

- Seven churches, (1:11)
- Seven blessings, ((1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14)
- Seven lampstands, (1:13)
- Seven stars, (1:16)
- Seven letters, (2:1-3:22)
- Seven spirits, (4:5)
- Seven horns, (5:6)
- Seven eyes, (5:6)
- Seven seals, (5:1)
- Seven trumpets, (8:2)
- Seven bowls or vials, (15:7)
- Seven thunders, (8:2)
- Seven angels, (15:6)
- Seven plagues, (15:1; 21:9)
- Seven heads, (12:3, 9)
- Seven mountains, (17:9)
- Seven kings, (17:10)

The numbers four (4:6; 6:1–8; 9:14) and twelve (7:4–8; 21:12, 14; 22:2) also appear to have special significance in Revelation.

40 times John said, “and I saw.” Often He says, “I was in the Spirit.” Then he was told to write down what he saw. Some of the things he saw and wrote about are beyond our ability to understand if it were not explained. Most of the symbolic language is clearly explained within the book.

Although the book shows the end of the church, the rise and activity of the antichrist, and many end time events, it is primarily a Revelation of Jesus Christ.

It helps us understand the words of the prophecy to see that Jesus is the subject of the entire book. It is good to remind ourselves during the study that God Omnipotent reigns. The conflict between light and darkness is found in the Gospel of John and the Revelation. Included within this revelation is a disclosure of the things that shall shortly take place, or take place in the last days.

It is important to remember that the prophecy was written during a period of extreme persecution of believers.

Church fathers put the date of John’s exile on Patmos in the latter part of

Domitian's reign (81-96 A.D.). This was after the destruction of Jerusalem in September 70 A.D and after the great fire destroyed Rome (64 A.D.). It is believed that John wrote the Revelation after he fled to Ephesus.

The key verse for an accurate understanding is Revelation 1:19.

Revelation 1:19 NKJV Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

The Revelation is broken down into three distinct sections.

John is to write about:

- “The things he has seen” — the resurrected and glorified Christ.
- “The things that are” — the churches
- “The things which will take place after this” — a prophetic look into the things after the church

The central theme is “the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” (Revelation 19:6)

This message is validated by the victory that the Lamb of God has over the antichrist, the false prophet, and Satan. Jesus Christ is “Lord of lords and King of kings,” (Revelation 17:14). Almost all titles given to Jesus Christ in the Bible are mentioned at least once in the Revelation. All of those titles, with many additional ones, provide an accurate revealing or unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ's present position, continuing ministry, and ultimate victory.

Christ is pictured as:

- the glorified Son of Man (1:12–16)
- the Lion of Judah (5:5)
- the worthy Lamb (5:8–13)
- the Son who will rule all (12:5)
- the Bridegroom (19:7–9)
- the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords (19:16)
- the rightful Ruler of His earthly (20:4–6) and eternal (22:1, 3) kingdoms.

The Holy Spirit is active throughout the Revelation.

John received great visions in the power of the Spirit, (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). The Holy Spirit is seen as “the seven Spirits of God” (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

The number seven when related to God represents divine perfection.

In Revelation 4:5, the Holy Spirit is “seven lamps of fire,” illuminating, purifying and energizing ministries. The seven Spirits that are before the throne (1:4; 4:5) and the seven eyes of the Lamb (5:6) signifies the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their fulness. In the messages to the seven churches, believers are urged to hear what the Spirit says to the church. Even the prophetic visions were a result of John being “in the Spirit,” (1:10; 4:2; 21:10). The conclusion of the Book is an appeal by the Spirit, “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come...” (22:17).

The Revelation shows the divine struggle against Satan and his demons, (2:9, 10, 13, 24; 3:9).

This battle against “the accuser of our brethren” has already been won by the blood of the Lamb, (12:9-11). Satan and his followers’ doom and eternal punishment is sure, (19:20-20:3, 10). Their ultimate judgment and end will be in the lake of fire, (20:10-15).

Revelation 1:1-2 NKJV

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants— things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

The Greek word for “Revelation” (*apokalypsis*) means the “revealing or unveiling.”

Kalyptō means “to hide or conceal” and *apo-kalypsis* means “to take out of hiding or to make something be fully known or revealed.”

In Matthew 10:26 Jesus said, *“There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”*

- It refers to the discovery of the truth that is in Jesus Christ.
- It is an unveiling of Jesus Christ as He is and shall be throughout eternity.
- It is both a revelation of Jesus Christ and by Jesus Christ.

The Revelation was first given to Jesus Christ by God to show to the church (His servants) — things which must shortly take place.

These events are based on God’s time frame.

In 2 Peter 3:8 we are told *“with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”*

Often in the Gospels we are told that it is “the last days” and that we should be ready. It is important for us to receive this warning that these things “must take place shortly” for “the time is near.”

During Christ’s earthly ministry, the truth and future events were often hidden. In the Revelation, the veil is taken off of things that have been hidden, so that the church can plainly see Jesus and things which must shortly take place.

What God gave to Jesus was “sent and signified” to John by His angel.

Many of the signs and visions came to John by the angel of Christ who was a special messenger. All of the message, spiritual realities, types and symbols that was sent to John is to be signified, revealed and understood to His servants the believers.

Initially, the revelation was given to His servant John.

Revelation 1:1b-2 NKJV ... John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. The inspiration of the Revelation is so certain that John knew that this was the Word of God.

The prophecy of the Revelation is a word from the Father, through the Son, inspired by the Holy Spirit, delivered by His angel and written by John.

Revelation 1:3 NKJV

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

This is the first of seven blessings presented in the Revelation, (cf. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

The first blessing has a threefold requirement.

- Read
- Hear or understand
- Keep or obey

When John recognized that this was a special revelation from the Father, he knew that every believer needed to hear this message.

He refers to this work as, *“the words of the prophecy.”* In earlier writings, John was hesitant to use his own name. In the words of this prophecy, he openly uses his name and the recipients of the word. He was certain that the words and events were a direct message from the Father through Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

‘Blessed are those who read, hear and keep the words of this prophecy.’

The message that is presented was expected to be read, understood and kept. We should take to heart the things that are disclosed. There is a special blessing provided for those who do this. A hint of the blessing is found in the last phrase of this verse, *“the time is near.”* By reading, hearing and keeping these words from the Father, we may receive the blessing. You need to keep in mind these words: *“things which must shortly take place”* and *“the time is near.”*

Since the message is so important, we should pray...

Ephesians 1:17-19 NKJV That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power...