

# **The Book of Revelation**

## INTRODUCTION:

### FOUR APPROACHES TO REVELATION

HISTORICIST: REVELATION SURVEYS THE WHOLE OF CHURCH HISTORY

PRETERIST: FULFILLMENT IS IN THE PAST, SHORTLY AFTER THE TIME OF WRITING

FUTURIST: EVERYTHING AFTER CHAPTER THREE AWAITS FULFILLMENT IN THE FUTURE

SPIRITUAL: NO SINGLE FULFILLMENT; ONLY TRANSCENDENT PRINCIPLES AND RECURRENT THEMES

Author: Apostle John

Date: About AD 95

Location: The Island of Patmos

Audience: the seven churches of Asia

Revelation is the Greek word "*apokalupsis*" meaning "unveiling".

When Daniel finished writing his prophecy, he was instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book" (Daniel 12:4); but John was given the opposite instruction: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Rev. 22:10)

John's prophecy is primarily the revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of future events.

Revelation 1-3\_\_ Christ is seen as the exalted Priest-King ministering to the churches.

In Revelation 4-5\_\_ Christ is seen in heaven as the glorified Lamb of God, reigning on the throne.

In Revelation 6-18\_\_ Christ is the Judge of all the earth.

In Revelation 19\_\_ Christ returns to earth as the conquering King of Kings.

Revelation closes with the heavenly bridegroom ushering His bride, the church, into the glorious heavenly city.

Why did John use symbolism?

1. It will only be understood by those who know Christ personally.
2. Symbolism is not weakened by time.
3. Symbols not only convey information but also impart values and arouse emotions.
  - a. A dictator or A Beast
  - b. A world system or "Babylon the Great"

John did not send this book of prophecy to the assemblies in order to satisfy their curiosity about the future. God's people were going through intense persecution and they needed encouragement. As they heard this book, its message would give them strength and hope. But even more, its message would help them examine their own lives (and each local assembly) to determine those areas needing correction. *Warren Wiersbe*

## Revelation 1

1:1- 'must soon take place' Could mean 'quickly' once the events start.

1:3- Blessing for the reader and the hearer.

'the time is near' from God's perspective.

1:4- The salutation of ancient letters announced the author and the recipients.

'seven spirits' or 'sevenfold spirit'

Probably a reference to the Holy Spirit as described in Isaiah 11:2. He is there called the Spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. If this is the correct identification, then the greeting has moved from a focus upon the Father to a focus upon the Holy Spirit, to be followed in the next verses by a focus upon the Son. While most epistles wish the readers grace and peace from the Father and from the Son, this is the only one to include the Spirit as well.<sup>1</sup>

1:5-6 The church can take courage and comfort from this description.

1:7- His 'coming' here may not be the same as what is described in I Thessalonians 4:13-18

This event in Rev. 1:7 will climax the tribulation period described in Rev. 6 thru 19

See also Rev. 3:10-11 & I Thess. 1:10; 5:9-10

FACT: There is no mention of the church between Revelation 3:22 and 22:16

1:8- The titles given to God in this verse make it clear that he is certainly able to work out His divine purposes in human history. God is at the beginning and end of all things.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregg, S. (1997). *Revelation, four views: a parallel commentary* (p. 54). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers.

Alpha and Omega is applied both to God the Father and to Jesus His Son in Revelation.

Almighty = **παντοκράτωρ** [*pantokrator* /pan·tok·rat·ore/] n m. 10 occurrences; AV translates as "Almighty" nine times, and "omnipotent" once. 1 he who holds sway over all things. 2 the ruler of all. 3 almighty: God. (Strong's Concordance)

This is a key name for God in Revelation.

9- Patmos was John's location when he received these visions.

It is believed that he did not die there but was released.

13- "like a son of man"

Christ's garments are those of a Judge-King, one with honor and authority.

White hair symbolizes His eternality. Compare with "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7:9, 13, 22.

His eyes see all, enabling him to judge righteously.

15- "feet like bronze glowing in a furnace" also may suggest judgment since the brazen altar was the place where the fire consumed the sin offering.

"voice like the sound of rushing water" The following suggestion is twofold:

1. Christ gathers together all the "streams of revelation" and is the Father's "last word" to man.
2. He speaks with power and authority and must be heard.

16- "out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword." Represents the living word of God. See Hebrews 4:12.

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12 ESV

20- 'seven stars' = angels or messengers This may refer to the Pastor of each church.

At the very beginning of this book, Jesus presents Himself to His people in majestic glory. What the church needs today is a new awareness of Christ and His glory. We need to see him "High and lifted up" Isaiah 6:1. There is a dangerous absence of awe and worship in our assemblies today. We are boasting about standing on our own feet, instead of breaking and falling at His feet. Warren Wiersbe

