

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 01

REVEALING
JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 1:1-20

A Call for Faithfulness and Endurance

Revelation 1: 1-20 (CSB)

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.

⁴ John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

¹² Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair of his head was white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes like a fiery flame. ¹⁵ His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters. ¹⁶ He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid. I am the First and the Last, ¹⁸ and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. ¹⁹ Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation 1: 1-20 (NIV)

1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³ 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.

⁴ John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

⁷ “Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” So shall it be! Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

⁹ I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹ which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

¹² I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

¹⁹ “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation 1:1-8 (N.T. Wright's Translation)

1Revelation of Jesus the Messiah! God gave it to him to show his servants what must soon take place. He signified it by sending a message through his angel to his servant John, 2who, by reporting all he saw, bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus the Messiah. 3God's blessing on the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and on those who hear them and keep what is written in it. The time, you see, is near!

4John, to the seven churches in Asia: grace to you and peace from He Who Is and Who Was and Who Is To Come, and from the seven spirits that are before his throne, 5and from Jesus the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Glory to the one who loved us, and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and father - glory and power be to him for ever and ever. Amen.

7Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him; yes, even those who pierced him. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him. Yes! Amen.

8I am the Alpha and the Omega; says the Lord God, Who Is and Who Was and Who Is To Come, the Almighty.

Read *Revelation For Everyone* pages 1-5, Look! He is Coming!

Jot down and insights, notes, or quotes that inspired and encouraged you in this reading.

What questions or concerns do you have based on this reading?

REVELATION FOR EVERYONE:

N.T. WRIGHT

Revelation 1:1-20 (N.T. Wright's Translation)

9 I, John, your brother and your partner in the suffering, the kingdom, and the patient endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. 11 'Write down what you see in a book,' it said, 'and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.'

12 So I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. As I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the middle of the lampstands 'one like a son of man', wearing a full-length robe and with a golden belt across his chest. 14 His head and his hair were white, white like wool, white like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like exquisite brass, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 He was holding seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword was coming out of his mouth. The sight of him was like the sun when it shines with full power. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though I was dead.

He touched me with his right hand. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'I am the first and the last 18 and the living one. I was dead, and look! I am alive for ever and ever. I have the keys of death and Hades. 19 Now write what you see, both the things that already are, and also the things that are going to happen afterwards. 20 The secret meaning of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, by the way, and the seven golden lampstands, is this. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches themselves.'

Read *Revelation For Everyone* pages 6-10, *Jesus Revealed*

Jot down and insights, notes, or quotes that inspired and encouraged you in this reading.

What questions or concerns do you have based on this reading?

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Sermons on Revelation 1: 1-9

- What were some of the challenges the pastor addressed that John, the author of Revelation, was facing when he was writing this book? How was John hoping to inspire his readers to remain faithful and endure?
- What were some of the symbolic images about Jesus that the pastor talked about and how did they help have a deeper understanding of who Jesus?
- What did the pastor say was the central message in Revelation 1: 1-9, and the book as a whole? How does the message connect to the first readers and how does it connect to us?
- How did the pastor help you understand this portion of Revelation?
- What questions do you have based on the this Sundays' message?

SERMON NOTES:

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Sermons on Revelation 1: 9-20

- What were some of the challenges the pastor addressed that John, the author of Revelation, was facing when he was writing this book? How was John hoping to inspire his readers to remain faithful and endure?
- What were some of the symbolic images about Jesus that the pastor talked about and how did they help have a deeper understanding of who Jesus?
- What did the pastor say was the central message in Revelation 1: 9-20, and the book as a whole? How does the message connect to the first readers and how does it connect to us?
- How did the pastor help you understand this portion of Revelation?
- What questions do you have based on the this Sundays' message?

SERMON NOTES:

Small Group Lesson 1: Revealing Jesus

Opening Discussion:

- What was your initial reaction when you discovered we were going to study revelation? Why?
- What is your impression of Revelation before we began our study?
- Why do you think so many people find this book so daunting?
- What do you hope to learn and experience through our time in Revelation?

Read Revelation 1:1-8

Sermon 1 Discussion:

What were the three words and three questions the pastor offered to help us on our journey through this book of the Bible?

1: _____: How does this passage _____ Jesus?

2: _____: What is Jesus' _____ in this passage?

3: _____: What does Jesus want us _____ in this passage?

How did the answer these questions?

How did the pastor help you understand this portion of Revelation?

What questions do you have based on this week's sermon?

Revelation for Everyone Discussion:

Read Revelation For Everyone pages 1-5, Look! He is Coming!

What were some insights, notes, or quotes that inspired and encouraged you in this reading?

How did this reading help you better understand Revelation 1:1-8?

What questions or concerns do you have on Revelation 1:1-8 based on this reading?

APOCALYPSE/APOCALYPTIC

QUOTE: NT WRIGHT – Revelation/Apocalypse

The word revelation has come to be used as the title for the book (not “revelations” in the plural, please note). This is partly because the original word, apocalypse, wasn’t well known at the time of earlier translations into English. Now, of course, apocalypse, and its cousin apocalyptic, have become well known in English. Perhaps too well known: they have come to refer not so much to the sudden unveiling of previously hidden truth, but to major events, violent and disturbing events such as natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis) or major and horrific human actions such as genocide in Cambodia or Rwanda. But that isn’t quite the sense that revelation or apocalypse has in this book. John is picking up a way of writing well known in the Jewish world of the time. As mentioned earlier, this way of writing was designed to correspond to, and make available, the visions and “revelations” seen by holy, prayerful people who were wrestling with the question of the divine purpose.

How is our understanding of *apocalypse* different from when it was originally written?

How might that shape how we read and understand?

How might the original understanding of *apocalypse/revelation* help us understand the intent and meaning of Revelation?

QUOTE: Darrell Johnson—Apocalyptic

The fundamental conviction of apocalyptic literature is that things are not as they seem. There is more to reality than meets the unaided senses. There is more to the reality of the present moment than we can know with our eyes and ears. Apocalyptic literature seeks to open up that more. And to do so in such a way that we then see, hear, feel and react to our present circumstances. Revelation is out to undermine our confidence in the evidence of our own eyes.

Apocalyptic literature accomplishes its purpose through vivid imagery. Sometimes grotesquely vivid imagery! Why? Because truth conveyed in imagery transforms our vision more powerfully than truth conveyed in propositional language. Imagery goes beyond the intellect, through the emotion, into the imagination. That is where we live, in the imagination. Imagery has the capacity to go beyond the intellect, through the emotions, into the imagination, so that the intellect is informed and the emotions are ignited with hope.

How might the understanding the literary style of the apocalyptic genre of its time help us understand the intent and meaning through Revelation?

Read Revelation 1:1-2

Who wrote this book and why?

What does it mean that this book serves as a “testimony” or “witness” (v. 2)?

QUOTE: Tim Chester

John is writing to Christians facing the threat and seductions of life in and under the Roman Empire. We need to put ourselves in their shoes and see how revelation inspires them to remain faithful to Christ before we apply it to ourselves.

Read Revelation 1:3

Note: This book (more precisely, letter) was distributed and read to Christian congregations throughout Asia and beyond.

Why do you think John/Jesus declare the readers & listener’s blessed?

Rear Revelation 1:4-6

Who is this book all about and what do we learn about him in these opening verses? Verses 5-6 provide a list of descriptors/characteristics of Jesus. Which one resonates with you the most? Why?

QUOTE: NT Wright

Even in this short opening John manages to unveil a good deal of what he believes about God and Jesus, and about the divine plan. God is the Almighty, the beginning and the end. Other “lords” and rulers will claim similar titles, but there is only one God to whom they belong.

What other “lords” in our own day make competing claims to the Almighty status that—as John testifies here—in reality belongs to God alone?

Read Revelation 1:9-20.

Sermon 2 Discussion:

How did the pastor help you see Jesus in this passage?

How did the pastor help you understand this portion of Revelation?

What questions do you have based on this week's sermon?

Revelation for Everyone Discussion:

Read Revelation For Everyone pages 6-10, Jesus Revealed

What were some insights, notes, or quotes that inspired and encouraged you in this reading?

How did this reading help you better understand Revelation 1:9-20?

What questions or concerns do you have on Revelation 1:9-20 based on this reading?

Read Revelation 1:9.

Where is John when he writes this letter and why is he there?

Note: John was arrested and placed in exile because he refused to declare Caesar as Lord. For most people such an act was not a big deal, but for John it was huge. Honor Caesar, yes, but worship Caesar, no! For John there's only one Lord, only one who commands absolute undivided allegiance: Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead.

Why would this be important to John's original readers?

Note: Exile has given John time to pray, to reflect, and now to receive the most explosive vision of God's power and love.

Read verses 12-16

What does John see when he turns to find out who is speaking to him?

What does this apocalyptic imagery mean? Here is some insight from Darrel Johnson:

- A robe and with a golden sash. – high priest garment and a king’s garment.
- White as wool hair. – agelessness and wisdom
- Fiery flame eyes. – Pure and purifying
- Furnaced Bronze Feet – strong, firm, steady
- Cascading waters voice. - all inspiring power and elegance
- Sharp double-edged sword from his mouth. – Jesus words cut through nonsense, dividing good and evil
- Face was shining like the sun – Brilliant and exalted

Which one resonates with you the most? Why?

Quote: NT Wright

This vision of Jesus draws together the vision of two characters in one of the most famous biblical visions, that of Daniel 7. There, as the suffering of God’s people reaches its height, “the Ancient of Days” takes his seat in heaven, and “one like a son of man” (in other words, a human figure, representing God’s people and, in a measure, all the human race) is presented before him, and enthroned alongside him. Now, in John’s vision, these two pictures seem to have merged. When we are looking at Jesus, he is saying, we are looking straight through him at the Father himself.

Why is it significant for us that the one who represents humanity and the God who rules above all come together in the person of Jesus?

Read verses 17-18

What is John’s response when he sees this vision of the “one like a son of man” in the midst of the lampstands (v. 17)?

Why does Jesus emphasize that he is the “living one” who holds “the keys of death and Hades” (vv. 17-18)?

Quote: NT Wright

Seven is the number of completion/perfection, and the seven churches listed in verse 11 stand for all churches in the world, all places and all times. The seven churches need to know that Jesus himself is standing in their midst, and that the “angels” who represent and look after each of them are held in his right hand.

How might this vision of Jesus in the midst of the churches have comforted suffering believers in the first century?

How does it bring comfort to us today?

Conclusion:

How has today's lesson revealed Jesus to you in a new way?

Has it reshaped your thoughts/expectations for our study in revelation? If so, how?

In light of what we have read and studied, how can we pray for each other this week?

Close in Prayer