

"The Glorious Lamb"

CLASSNOTES

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**WE NEED THE VISION OF THE GLORIOUS, POWERFUL, MAJESTIC CHRIST
Revelation 1:1-20.**

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST COMES FROM A TRIUNE GOD WHO SENDS US A VISION OF THE GLORIOUS LAMB.

1 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST PROMISES A SPECIAL BLESSING TO US, 1:1-3

A. This Revelation was communicated to show the future of our world, 1:1-2.

1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" -- title produces special designations for this book. The Greek word for "revelation" (sg. not "revelations") is apokalupsis, from which "Apocalypse" is derived. Sometimes this book is called "The Apocalypse."

2. The book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

a. Author – 1. God thought it. 2. Christ showed it.

b. Content - "things which must shortly (*soon*) take place"

1) Book of prophecy

a) Not all the future, but the parts God wants us to know.

b) Not all prophecy, but end of prophecy

2) Focuses on certain events; mainly the future 7 year period of Tribulation

3) We can relate the book's chapters to our past, present, and future.

c. Method - 1. Angel brought it 2. John wrote it.

[Revelation to John of Jesus Christ]

d. Witness- John was an eyewitness to these events

B. We are promised a special blessing when we study and obey, 1:3.

1. We have 3 requirements for a special blessing in our studies.

*Read

*Hear (cf. 22:18-19)

*Heed (cf. 22:7) "to pay attention to," "to obey"

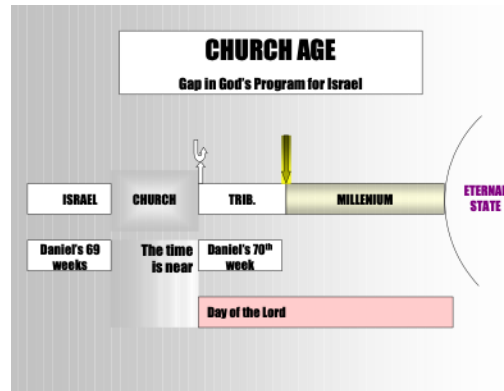
Happiness is found in paying attention to the content of this book.

2. The reason we study Revelation is because "The time is near."

We study Revelation not to decide when Jesus will come but to appreciate the glory and power of who He is! "The Glorious Lamb"

a. "the time"= period of time - The Day of the Lord - time when God will again deal directly with the nation of Israel. (cf. Daniel 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9 "time")

- b. The time is “near” = imminent. In the Bible, the Church age covers an indefinite time parenthesis.
– a



The Law of Transparency. Cf. Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child...” cf. 1 P 1:10-11.

2 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST COMES FROM A TRIUNE GOD WHO SENDS A VISION OF THE POWER & GLORY OF JESUS, 1:4-20.

A. We are introduced to the One who sends greetings to our church, 1:4-8

Our church is represented by the 7 churches of Asia, v.4a. John describes Him in 3 ways in this section:

1. He is the TRIUNE GOD who gives His grace & peace to our church, 1:4-5a.

a. From – the Father, 4b

b. From – the 7 spirits, 4c

2 views of the seven spirits:

1] Angels of high privilege

2] Holy Spirit in His fullness (based on Isaiah 11:1-2) (cf. Rev 4:5; 5:6)

c. From – Jesus Christ

3 Titles:

❖ “Faithful Witness” - Revealer (the “Word”- John 1:1, 14, 18)

❖ “Firstborn of the Dead” - Resurrected One (1st to receive immortal body)

❖ “Ruler” of kings - Ruler (character of Christ in Revelation)

2. He is the TRIUMPHANT SAVIOR who comes into our world twice, 1:5b-7.

a. We are to give Him glory for His first coming, 1:5b-6.

1) He loves us. (present), though we continue to fail.

2) He loosed us.

3) He lifted us.

b. We look forward to the promise of His second coming, 1:7.

1) This is not the Rapture (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)

2) This is the second coming to earth as found in Daniel 7:13 and Matthew 24:30

Revelation 1:7	Daniel 7:13	Matthew 24:30
BEHOLD, 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.	I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.	And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

- 3. He is the TIMELESS ONE, 1:8
 - a. “Alpha and Omega” – Sovereign over all history
 - b. “Who is, who was, and who is to come” – the Eternal One.
 - c. “The Almighty” – He has the right to judge.

B. We are given A VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST, 1:9-20.

- 1. Jn writes about the circumstances of his vision of Jesus, 1:9-11



of persecution.

Why? - For preaching the gospel.

- b. By the power of the Spirit he was put into a trance-like state, 10a.
 - 1) “in the Spirit” = controlled by the Spirit
 - God blocked out everything around John and revealed these things to John’s mind.
 - 2) “Lord’s Day” was a special Day made for John
 - 3) John heard a voice command him to write, 10b-11
 - The Recipients: “to the 7 churches”... [map above]

- 2. John turned to see who was speaking, 1:12-16
 - a. Lampstands — like one in the temple; represents 7 churches
 - b. "One like a Son of Man" — glorified Jesus Christ.
Put yourself in John's sandals! Glimpse given to John on the Mt. of Transfiguration - Mt.17:2

Revelation 1:13-16	Daniel 7:9	Daniel 10:5-6
and in the middle of the lampstands <i>I saw</i> one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet <i>were</i> like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice <i>was</i> like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.	I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took <i>His</i> seat; His vesture <i>was</i> like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne <i>was</i> ablaze with flames, Its wheels <i>were</i> a burning fire.	⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with <i>a belt of</i> pure gold of Uphaz. ⁶ His body also <i>was</i> like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

What does Jesus look like now in heaven? John was given a special view, and we need to let John's vision be our view. We need a more accurate image.

He is no longer a little baby in a feeding trough. Nor the Man John loved to spend time with. He is Majestic. Glorified. Eyes flaming. Feet glowing a bronze color. Voice thunderous sound like Niagara Falls.

- 3. What happens when someone sees Jesus as He appears now? 1:17-20.
John could not remain standing. He fall down flat in humble submission. "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man." John - the Beloved disciple!
 - a. Jesus clearly identifies His power over death & hell, 1:17-18.
He identifies Himself - Who is Jesus? Just a good man? A prophet? Worthy example? Mary's son? Jesus thundered: "*I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One.*"
 - 1) As the eternally living One, He came to be dead.

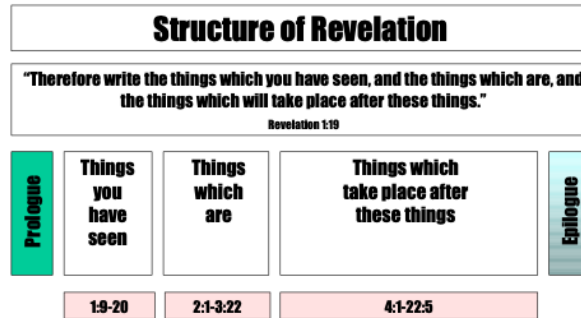
Eternal - what perspective! Source of Life.
"and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore,"
 - 2) Having conquered death, He is alive forevermore.

Added humanity & human flesh to allow Himself to be the crucified Lamb.
Victorious over death (in all forms).
 - 3) He has authority over death and hell (keys).

"and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

b. Instructs John to write the Revelation to our church, 1:19

"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."



things”

Compare

4:1 “after these

c. Interpretation, 1:20 (7 stars = “angels,” angelos → messengers)

Views of the “angels” of the 7 churches:

View #1 — Men who were leaders; pastors of each church
 But J. B. Smith says: The “Lord’s interpretation doesn’t need to be reinterpreted here.”

View #2 — Angelic beings who are God’s appointed protectors for each local church.

Why written to angels? 2-fold:
 1] to alert the angel concerning the divine assessment of the condition of each church
 2] to alert the church of individual angelic protection for each local assembly

Implications

Before we can have a significant impact for Jesus Christ in our world, we need to stand in the presence of the glorious, powerful, majestic Christ.

If we placed ourselves right in front of Him in our mind’s eyes...

- We would fall down and confess our sin. (Lk. 5:8, Peter did). We couldn't keep on grumbling and complaining about others.
- We would listen to what He says in the Bible. We wouldn't debate His words, "Go, make disciples of all the nations..."
- We would respond to His call for service (Isaiah 6) by stepping up and helping.
- We would acknowledge Him as Lord over every area of our lives (Rom. 12:1-2).

BACKGROUND FOR THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” are the first words (Rev. 1:1a) of this book, and these words also produce special designations for this book. The Greek word for “revelation” (singular, not “revelations”) is ἀποκαλυψις, *apokalupsis*, from which the word “Apocalypse” is derived. Sometimes this book is called “The Apocalypse.” Webster’s current definition of “apocalypse” is “one of the Jewish and Christian writings...marked by pseudonymity, symbolic imagery, and the expectation of an imminent cosmic cataclysm in which God destroys the ruling powers of evil and raises the righteous to life in a messianic kingdom.” In biblical genre, “apocalyptic” describes a unique type of literature (see interpretive approaches).

The book is not the Revelation of John, or even by John (see authorship discussion). Instead the book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The book is primarily designed to unveil the majestic glory and power of Jesus Christ as the Judge of all the earth -- "The Glorious Lamb."

VALUE OF STUDYING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

- Tells how God’s plan for the world will be completed- how it will end.
- Gives an eternal perspective to daily living.
- Strengthens faith in a powerful God who brings justice to the universe.
- Gives more courage to face Satan, because this book tells about his final doom!
- Promises blessings to those who read and heed.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

For more complete background study, consult the introductory comments by David Aune, *Revelation* (WBC), volume 1. Also, Merrill Tenney, Interpreting Revelation is fairly complete.

1. Date

- a. Early date—Some say the book was written during or shortly after the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68).

Revelation was written when Christians were being persecuted, apparently by Rome.

References to the temple in Revelation 11:1 might suggest that the Jerusalem temple had not yet been destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70.

Babylon seems to correspond to Rome, and the five kings of Rev. 17:9-11 could correspond to a succession of emperors, of which five were fallen: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero.

- b. Later date—Most say Revelation was written during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96).

Definite historical evidence comes from Irenaeus, Victorinus, Eusebius, and Jerome.

Domitian carried out further harsh treatment of Christians during his reign.

References to the temple in Revelation need not be the same as the temple in Jerusalem destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70

Date- Early 90’s.

2. Historical Setting

- a. **Governmental Setting**
Ethelbert Stauffer, Christ and the Caesars, maintains that Domitian eventually claimed all the attributes of God and viewed Christianity as a threat to the glory of emperor worship. According to Stauffer, it was necessary to veil the revelation of opposition to the Roman Empire in symbolic language, since Domitian had already persecuted and imprisoned many believers.
 - b. **Religious Setting**
Roman religion was idolatrous because it encouraged the religious loyalties of all its people, so that foreign deities and local cults flourished. Everyone was also encouraged to worship the emperor, and this imperial cult became very strong throughout the empire. Judaism had weakened since the dispersion and destruction of Jerusalem.
3. **Original Purposes of the Revelation**
 - To encourage believers in their Roman persecutions. (under Domitian)
 - To bring Old Testament prophetic truth to its full consummation. (cf. Tenny's chart here-p. 104)
 - To give a portrait of the glorified Christ, who judges the earth. (not the meek & mild Jesus, merely.)
 - To refute the self-acclaimed authority of Domitian. (Who is really sovereign?)
 4. **Authorship of the Revelation**
As already noted, this book is "the revelation of Jesus Christ. . .which God gave Him to show . . . to His bond-servant John" (Rev. 1:1).

Scholars disagree¹ on the identity of this "John," since he describes himself as a "prophet" (1:3; 22:9) and not an "apostle." Some views are: (1) John the apostle; (2) the elder John; (3) John Mark; (4) John the Baptist; some other John. John the Baptist was beheaded so early that this view seems unlikely.

Apostolic authorship seems to be the best view. (1) a sufficient number of early church fathers believed the writer was the apostle John (Justin Martyr, Irenaus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria); (2) though differences with John's other writings are noted, the mission of reaching the world with the gospel is common, as are some linguistic features.

5. **Destination or Recipients of the Revelation**

¹ Much of the material for this discussion comes from the commentary by Grant Osborne, *Revelation*, pages 2-6.



The intended recipients are “the seven churches that are in Asia” (Rev. 1:4), including the church at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

The location of these seven churches shows that the order of the letters in Revelation 2-3 follows the map in a clockwise direction.

BOOK OF REVELATION

HERMENEUTICAL APPROACHES TO THE

The book is composed of three genres, the apocalyptic, the prophetic, and the epistolary. Though the book starts and ends as a letter to the seven churches, the main portion of the book is prophetic revelation with apocalyptic elements common to OT prophetic literature such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, as well as others.

Apocalyptic elements include visions and dreams that present vivid symbolic images in unearthly combinations. These features cause readers to feel removed from the familiar and thrust into foreign materials, but only if the reader is unfamiliar with the patterns and symbols of Ezekiel, Daniel, or other OT prophets. Because the apostle John wrote to several churches later than any other book of the Bible, it is likely that the original recipients of this book could have had copies of the OT Scriptures and many of the NT writings. As the capstone of God’s prophetic revelation, the proper interpretive approach takes into account the prophetic foundation for this book.²

Chronological Frameworks - Approaches to the Book

1. Preterist Approach (contemporary historical)
 - a. Defined: Understands Revelation as a symbolic history of the contemporary, first-century sufferings of original recipients who, because they endure, will share in the eventual, final triumph of God over evil rulers.
 - b. David Brown, William Hendricksen, Charles M. Laymon, and William Milligan would be among those holding something similar to this view.
2. Historical Approach (continuous historical)
 - a. Defined: Interprets Revelation as a symbolic forecast of total church history culminating in the second advent.
 - b. Problem is, when this symbolic hermeneutic is consistently applied and reaches Revelation 20 it might eliminate the 1000-year literal earthly reign of Christ, and so lead to postmillennialism.

² Fee and Stuart’s book, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, insist that this approach of the “analogy of Scripture” should not be taken by modern interpreters (pages 209-210). In their otherwise excellent book, this part leads to what sounds like a post-tribulation position.

- c. Popular during the Reformation, adherents included Wycliffe, Luther, and Calvin. Others include Joseph Mede, Bengel, and Barnes.
 - d. Posttribulationists, who take the Church through the great tribulation in a continuous history of escalated persecution include Charles Hodge, Hengstenberg, J. Barton Payne, George Ladd, Robert H. Gundry, G. H. Lang, Leon Morris and Robert Mounce.
3. Idealist (timeless symbolic)
- a. Defined: Revelation represents the basic principles of eternal conflict between good and evil in every age. Most of the material, colors, numbers, etc. are symbolic.
 - b. Relates to the allegorical approach that originated in the Alexandrian School of Theology by Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
 - c. This approach influenced Jerome, Augustine, Cady H. Allen, D. T. Niles, and most recently Simon J. Kistemaker's commentary published by Baker.
4. Futuristic Approach
- a. Defined: Approaches Revelation as mostly future (chap. 4ff.) and a literal description of events during the 7-year Tribulation, the millennium, and eternal state, events that are described by frequent symbolism.
 - b. A common misconception is that this approach could not be of help to those who first received the book. However, (1) Prophecies were frequently not fully understood by the prophets (cf. Dan. 12:4; 1 Pet. 1:10-11), and extended to time periods way beyond their own (especially Daniel). (2) The book does give assurance as to the ultimate outcome, and hope is the cure for troubled, suffering people (cf. Rom. 8:18-25; 2 Pet. 3:10-13).
 - c. Proponents include A. Kuyper, John Walvoord, J.D. Pentecost, and more recently Robert L. Thomas.

Chronological Frameworks - Application to the Book

1. Chapters 2-3, The Letters to the Seven Churches
 - a. Preterist View - These letters were written to seven actual churches in Asia Minor and have no significance for any other church in church history.
 - b. Historical View - These letters, though originally sent to seven churches in Asia Minor, are intended to describe seven distinct stages in the history of the Church Age.
 - c. Idealist View - These letters, though sent to seven actual churches, actually convey deeper spiritual meaning hidden in the words used.
 - d. Futurist View - These letters were written to seven actual churches in Asia Minor and may be applied to any church.

2. Chapters 4-22, The Debated Prophetic Portion

Few interpreters of Revelation approach all of the book consistently using only one of the above interpretive methods. For example, the futurist who may be a pre-mil dispensationalist might approach chapters 2-3 from the historic viewpoint. The historicist might view chapters 2-3 as a preterist. Other combinations may be possible.

Furthermore, to approach Revelation from the historic viewpoint does not require the interpreter to deny that any portions are predictive or that some of the events may be still future. To be a preterist does not mean the interpreter believes that Revelation has no

application for the Church today.

Alan Johnson³ mentions Beasley-Murray, Bruce, Ladd, Morris, and Mounce as recent evangelical interpreters who combine the preterist and futurists schools. Alan Johnson appears to be a symbolic futurist.

This class will take the view that the apostle John wrote this epistle in the 90's A.D. to seven actual churches in Asia Minor both to help the Christians in those churches, and to unveil new prophetic truth about God's program for the end times as an encouragement to believers in any age.

Eschatological Frameworks

Most interpreters approach Revelation from one of three theological grids: the postmillennial, the amillennial, and the premillennial. All three take their names and point of departure from Revelation 20:1-8, where Christ is said to reign 1,000 years, a period which has been called the "millennium." The Greek word for "1000" is χίλιοι chilioi, from which chiliasm is derived. For further study of these three different theological positions, see J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, chapter 22 (XXII).

A. Postmillennialism

The postmillennial school interprets the millennium to be a period (may be a distinct 1000 year period) of great spiritual blessing fulfilling millennial promises accomplished through preaching the gospel to everyone. After the millennium, Jesus Christ returns. In the past 30 years, postmillennial thinking is found in dominion theology, theonomy, and Christian reconstructionism. These teachings encourage the new Israel, the Church, to control or take dominion of all secular institutions by subduing structural evil in society under the civil and moral laws of God, including the OT. Francis Schaeffer's 1981 book, *A Christian Manifesto*, provided a philosophical base for the movement. Modern proponents include Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton, and Gary North.

B. Amillennialism

Amillennial interpretation basically says that there will be no distinct 1000-year period, and that Christ's reign is being fulfilled either in the saints on earth or in heaven. Satan was bound at the first advent of Christ. After Jesus Christ returns, the eternal state begins. Adherents include Augustine and B.B. Warfield. Recent commentators include Philip E. Hughes, John Goldingay, Joyce Baldwin, Sinclair Ferguson, and Greg Beale.

C. Premillennialism

Premillennialists interpret Revelation 20:1-8 to mean a literal thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, which requires Jesus Christ to return before the millennium to establish a literal, earthly kingdom as promised. Recent commentators include John Walvoord, Alan Johnson, Stephen Miller, Leon Wood, and Robert Thomas.

Usually three other features of the premillennial viewpoint heavily influence the interpretive process:

1. Literal/grammatical/historical interpretation.

This approach takes the normal, ordinary meaning of words unless the context or comparison with other similar biblical genres give clues of figurative or symbolic meanings. This

³ Alan Johnson, "Revelation" in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank Gaebelin, editor (Zondervan).

approach follows the patterns provided by the actual, historic fulfillment of many OT prophecies in similar genres (especially Daniel, and other OT prophecies regarding the 1st advent of Jesus Christ).

2. Distinction between Israel and the Church.

This interpretive approach assumes that even though there is no distinction today between Jew and Gentile in the Church, the Body of Christ, God's Word still promises a future for the physical descendants of Israel (Romans 9—11) in fulfillment of all the promises God made to Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob (Israel) and his physical descendants.

3. Correlation of Revelation with OT prophetic portions, especially Daniel's Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27).

Structural Frameworks in the Book of the Revelation

Though the book could be outlined in different ways, the following outline is suggested, based on Revelation 1:19.

Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

<u>OUTLINE OF REVELATION</u>		
<u>THE PROLOGUE</u>		1:1-8
A.	The superscription	
B.	The salutation	
<u>THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN</u>		1:9-20
A.	Circumstances of the vision	
B.	Content of the vision	
C.	Consequences of the vision	
<u>THE THINGS WHICH ARE</u>		2:1—3:22
A.	Ephesus	
B.	Smyrna	
C.	Pergamum	
D.	Thyatira	
E.	Sardis	
F.	Philadelphia	
G.	Laodicea	
<u>THE THINGS WHICH SHALL TAKE PLACE AFTER</u>		4:1—22:5
A.	The Tribulation Period	4:1—19:21
1.	Future heavenly scenes	4:1—5:14
a)	The throne in heaven	
b)	The scroll in heaven	
2.	Future earthly scenes	6:1—19:21
a)	Seal and Trumpet Judgments	6:1—11:19
(1)	Seven seals	
(2)	Seven trumpets	
b)	Major actors in the Tribulation	12:1—14:21
(1)	The war	
(2)	The Beast and his prophet	
(3)	The announcements from heaven	
c)	Bowl Judgments	15:1—16:21
(1)	Anticipation of final judgment	

	(2)	Actualization of final judgment	
	d)	Babylon's Judgment	17:1—18:24
		(1)	Destruction of religious Babylon
		(2)	Destruction of commercial Babylon
	e)	The Second Coming of Christ	19:1-21
		(1)	Announcements
		(2)	Advent
		(3)	Armageddon
B.		The Millennial Period	20:1-15
	1.	Entering the millennium	
	2.	Ending the millennium	
C.		The Eternal State	21:1—22:5
	1.	New Jerusalem, habitation of God	
	2.	Jerusalem, habitation of the Bride	
	3.	Delights of the New Jerusalem	
		THE EPILOGUE	22:6-21