

Revelation: God Who is All

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Background

The book of Revelation is the 27th book in the New Testament and the 66th and final book of the Bible. Revelation is an example of "apocalyptic" literature and is like no other book in the New Testament. The title, from the Greek word for apocalypse, implies an unveiling of something hidden, so that it may be seen and known for what it is. The author of the book is God Himself. God, through Jesus Christ, sent an angel to the apostle John with this revelation (1:1). This revelation, which John recorded, gives a fuller explanation of Jesus' discourse on the signs of the end times and is the consummation of all revealed truth (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). John received this revelation while living on the island of Patmos, having been exiled there for preaching the gospel (1:9). Revelation was written between 81-96 AD, while the church was suffering great persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian, who "bathed his empire in the blood of Christians." John addressed his work "To the seven churches in the province of Asia:" Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (1:4; 1:11). Although these were dark days for the church with even darker ones to come, the visions and promises given by God in Revelation would give great hope and encouragement for the faithful in Christ.

The Short Story

Christ's unveiling of His ultimate judgment and triumph over evil and His eternal reward for His Redeemed.

What's the Big Idea?

Upon receiving this revelation, John was instructed by Christ to "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (1:19). This statement gives the outline for the entire book. Chapter 1 is John's record of "what he has seen" in his encounter with the glorified Christ. "What is now" is recorded in the next two chapters as Christ's seven letters challenge and/or encourage the seven churches to whom they were written. The rest of Revelation is John's vision from God of "what will take place later". John's vision of the future begins in the throne room of heaven where a Lamb, looking "as if it had been slain" breaks seven seals from a scroll (5:6). This begins a time of great judgment upon those on the earth who have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. This judgment is described by John as a series of twenty-one events beginning with the breaking of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven bowls of wrath (6:1-16:21). Christ alone is worthy to judge the earth and all that are in it (5:9). The final four chapters of Revelation reveal Christ's future and ultimate triumph over the forces of evil, once and for all healing the wounds resulting from sin, and reigning for a thousand years on earth before His re-creation of the world for His Redeemed (19-22).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

The Bible begins with God's creation and man and woman living in Paradise. Then, in Genesis 3 sin enters the world and for much of the rest of the Bible, the problems, effects, and suffering caused by the fall are detailed. Revelation provides a final answer to this problem. While much judgment occurs in Revelation, it is really a book about hope for the followers of Jesus Christ. In Revelation, God has revealed His future for His children and it is good. God re-creates the world into a place that represents His original design, placing His children once again in Paradise to live in perfect fellowship with Him forever and ever. Revelation promises a world where believers will live in the everlasting light of the glory of God (22:4), and "He [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (21:4). "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End"...He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (22:12-13, 20).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

Revelation 1:1-3 **"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."

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- When you read the book of Revelation what comes to mind? What is hard to understand?
- What does revelation mean? What is Christ trying to disclose about Himself and His activities?
- Why is the book of Revelation important to the church, especially to those suffering persecution?
- How would you define Jesus using the imagery from Revelation? What is your favorite image?
- How can we be blessed by reading the prophecies in the book of Revelation?

Practical Application

- What is the hardest thing to comprehend about the book of Revelation? What makes it difficult?
- In reading the multiple descriptions of Jesus, which one stands out to you the most? Why?
- How would you apply some of the truths in the book of Revelation in life? How about to the church?
- How would you describe Christ using modern day imagery to someone who needs hope?
- What message would you share with a friend about Jesus from the book of Revelation?

Hitting the Highpoints

- Rev 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."
- Rev 7:9 "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language..."
- Rev 20:11 "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it..."
- Rev 21:1 "Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea."

Bonus Features

"This is what I want to declare today in the midst of the amazing political upheavals of these last weeks: Jesus Christ is the ruler of all the kings and presidents and chiefs and premiers and governors and prime ministers. If George Bush says to Jesus, "How can you be the ruler over me? I have my office by the election of the people of the United States, a sovereign nation, and by virtue of a constitutional inauguration and installation," Jesus will answer, **'I have my office as ruler over you by God's election and by virtue of my resurrection from the dead, my indestructible life, and my installation at God's right hand.'** When Jesus rose from the dead, God exalted him and gave him a "name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee might bow," and that includes all the rulers and kings of the earth. Jesus is alive today presiding from heaven over the rulers of the earth. Now this is a breathtaking thought. It is something that most people today do not believe or even think about. But it is at the heart of biblical truth. Jesus Christ is alive, and reigning over all the kings of the earth, all the events of Eastern Europe and the Middle East and Central America. We need to understand what this means." *Excerpted from John Piper, "Jesus is the Rule of the Kings of the Earth"*

Personal Takeaways and Notes