

INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- This chapter introduces the risen and glorified Jesus, gives us an amazing description of Him in His glory, announces victory over death, and tells us the reason why this book is written. Jesus has a special message to the churches then, and now.
- Revelation was **written by the disciple John**, Son of Zebedee and Salome, Galilean fisherman, early disciple of John the Baptist, one of Jesus' inner circle. John also wrote Gospel of John, and 3 letters (1 John, 2 John, 3 John). Revelation written about A.D. 95, during the reign of Titus Flavius Domitian. John was exiled on the island of Patmos.
- The **full title is The Revelation of Jesus Christ**. "Revelation" is **SINGULAR** not plural, it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ (not revelations of John or revelations of end). The Revelation is "given" to Jesus by the Father, to "show His servants..." This book is **SIGN-ified** (signified, rendered into signs) (1:1) for John to record.
- **REVELATION is:** The consummation of all things; The only book promising a blessing to the reader; 404 verses containing over 800 allusions from O.T.; The climax of God's plan for man
- This study is **often avoided, and often misunderstood** due to a lack of understanding of the Old Testament. It is perhaps the most controversial book of all scripture, due to its vivid images that are sometimes difficult to interpret. Like all of scripture, this book is meant to be taken literally wherever possible. There are many forms of interpretation of this book, but any other than the literal and futurist interpretation will create all sorts of difficulties in understanding. Wherever there is a problem in interpretation, we must remember that God is His own interpreter. The Word will always interpret the Word. A thorough knowledge of the rest of scripture is required to understand this book.
- Some think this book is difficult to follow, that it has no order or logical flow. That is not at all true. The book **has a very definite order, and a distinctive flow of events**. An outline of the book could be seen as:

Chapter 1	Things which ARE...	Introduction to the Risen Christ, John's instructions, 7 Lampstands
Chs 2-3		Letters to the 7 Churches (<i>the Church Age</i>)
Chs 4 -5	Things which SHALL BE...	Throne Room of God, Church is Present, Problem Defined/Solution Presented
Chs 6-18		Tribulation Period on Earth, 3 sets of judgments, Babylon Doomed
Ch 19		Return of the King with His Saints, Armageddon, End of Human Government, Initial Judgments
Ch 20		Satan Bound, 1,000 Year Reign (Millennial Kingdom), Rebellion again, Final Judgment
Chs 21-22		Perfection Restored, The Bride of Christ, Reunion Forever

- "**shortly**" and "**soon**" in this book literally mean **SUDDENLY**. It will all happen quickly when it begins, and it will begin suddenly. It does not mean "soon" in our understanding of that word.

- There are 3 sets of judgments contained in this book, **seals, trumpets, bowls**, (7 in each, total 21, but judgments are “nested” in each other).
- **Revelation contains themes and elements from today’s headlines:** Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple, Babylon, Russia (Magog), rise of China, European Superstate, Ecumenical religion, global government, rise of the occult, and many other issues seen in today’s current events.
- *As always, **we make the following ASSUMPTION:** The Bible is the infallible (without error) Word of God and as such contains the plan for man’s redemption, and an accurate telling of the end of time, and the consummation of God’s Plan. (All scripture cited is New King James Version [NKJV])*

HELPFUL VOCABULARY FOR THE STUDY OF REVELATION

Revelation (Apocalupsis)	<i>The unveiling, uncovering—the revealing</i>
Eschatology	<i>study of end times</i>
AntiChrist	<i>One of several titles for evil ruler in end times</i>
Historical View	<i>That all of Revelation has already happened (it is history)</i>
Future View	<i>That the events of this book are in the future still</i>
Symbolic View	<i>That this book is only symbolic/figurative, not real or literal</i>
Literal View	<i>That this book is literally true</i>
Tribulation	<i>The last 7 years of earth’s history; time of trouble</i>
Great Tribulation	<i>The last 3 1/2 years of earth’s history; the worst</i>
Daniel’s 70 Weeks	<i>Prophecies in Daniel 9, 70th week is Tribulation</i>
Time of Jacob’s Trouble	<i>Another name for Tribulation; terrible time for Jews</i>
Millennial Kingdom	<i>The 1,000 year reign of Jesus (Revelation 20)</i>
Millennialism	<i>Belief in literal 1,000 year reign of Jesus</i>
Amillennialism	<i>Belief that 1000 year reign is symbolic only, not literal</i>
Rapture	<i>Time when all believers are “caught up” to Jesus (1 Thess. 4)</i>
Dispensationalism	<i>Belief that God has a different historical plan for Jews/Church</i>
Pre-Tribulation	<i>Time immediately before the Tribulation (“pre-Trib”)</i>
Mid-Tribulation	<i>At the mid-point (3 1/2 yrs) of Tribulation (“mid-Trib”)</i>
Post-Tribulation	<i>Immediately after the Tribulation</i>
Armageddon	<i>Greek name for Har Megiddo, place of last battle</i>
2nd Coming	<i>When Jesus returns as King (not rapture)</i>
Daniel	<i>OT Apocalyptic book, from which we get much info on Tribulation</i>
Zechariah	<i>OT Apocalyptic book, from which we get much info on plan for Jews</i>
Isaiah	<i>OT Apocalyptic book, from which we get much info on end times</i>

¹ *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, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.*

- Verses 1-8 are about the main character (Jesus!)
- **THE Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave to Him. It wasn't "given" to John. John is merely the instrument to record it.
- **"Servants"** in Greek is *doulos*, a bonds slave. (See Exodus 21:6, Deuteronomy 15:17. A bonds slave is one who has freely committed to serving a master, in his household, for the rest of his life. This is not about debt or indebtedness. This is about a slave who could have gone free, but chose instead to remain with and serve a beloved master. It is a very apt description of what all believers should be, and do.)
- Revelation is not a sealed book (V 22:10) It is to be understood. Compare with the book of Daniel (Daniel 12:4). This book (vision, revelation) is given "to show us."
- **"Shortly"** in Greek is *"en taxei"* meaning rapid in execution, where we get *tachometer*. Does not mean "soon" as we understand it, but rather "suddenly."
- **"Signified"** means rendered into signs (codes). Symbolic of reality, no prophecy is of private interpretation see 2 Peter 1:20.
- **"Who bore witness"** appears over 90 times in John's writings.

³ *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.*

- **"Read... Hear... Keep..."** (v 3) Only book with a special promise if you do these three things. A **blessing** for reading, hearing, keeping the words of this prophecy. That is reason alone to read it!
- In scriptural writings after the resurrection of Jesus and His return to heaven, the time of His second coming is always referenced as "near." It is just as near now as it was then. It has been preordained since before time. Our "near" and God's timing are always different.

⁴ *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

- The **number seven (7)** refers to completeness (*perfectly complete*). There are so many "sevens" in scripture it would be impossible to count them (*heptadic structure*). They are prominent throughout Revelation. It is not just in the literal word "seven" but in the structure of the sentences, the format of the book, etc. They are also throughout the entire Bible. God's Word is "perfectly complete." The Book of Revelation is the perfect completion to the entire Book.

- **Watch for Titles of Jesus:**

1. Faithful Witness (v. 5)
2. Firstborn from the Dead, "*Prototokos*" Firstborn, A title of honor (See Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:15 and 18) also means He will not be the last! (Firstfruits)
3. Ruler over the kings of the earth. (See Philippians 2:9-11, Psalm 2)
4. Him that loved us. Present tense, emphasizing His constant love.
5. Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (See Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12). Alpha spelled out (completed) and the Omega is not, just the letter (yet to be).
6. Who is, who was and who is to come (not used elsewhere in NT, only in Revelation)
7. The Almighty, equated with God the Father, They are ONE



We want to acknowledge the beautiful digital artwork by artist Ted Larson used in these lessons.
<http://home.earthlink.net/~theoson/Index.html>

- This reads like a mini-gospel, providing all the highlights of Jesus' work for us.
- "*Seven spirits*" See Isaiah 11:2 (some think this may instead be the "Angels of the Presence" who are ever before the Throne of God)

⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

- We are told **how Jesus will return**, just as the disciples were told in Acts 1, when they saw Him leave. When He returns, EVERYONE will see Him, and some won't want to.
- "*Every eye shall see Him*" personally, physically (See Daniel 7:13, Matthew 26:64, Matthew 24:30). "Pierced him" see Zechariah 12:10. Refers to His Second Coming, not the Rapture.
- "*even they who pierced Him*" – although the Romans are literally the ones who put Him to death, this is a reference to the Jews, who will see and recognize their Messiah (see Zech.12).
- **More titles**, Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, the "One who is and who was and who is to come," the Almighty. Alpha is Greek first letter of the alphabet. Omega is Greek last letter. The "aleph" is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the "tau" is the last. The aleph and the tau are also seen in Zechariah 12, so whether in the old or new testament, **Jesus is the first and the last, in any language!**

⁹ *I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* ¹⁰ *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,...*

- John on the island of **Patmos** (imprisoned for preaching the gospel) In the **Spirit on the Lord's Day** (*Sunday, the day of His Resurrection. Some think it is the Sabbath. It doesn't really matter!*). He was most likely praising, worshipping, even praying in the Spirit when the vision was given to him. We live in two realms, spiritual and physical. When we are "in THE Spirit" we are in fellowship with God directly, by the power of His Spirit.
- John emphasizes that He is a fellow brother to all members of the Body of Christ. **This letter is not written to unbelievers, but to the believers.** Believers would have (should have!) an understanding of the existing scriptures (most at that time) which is necessary to understand this book.
- **“Companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ”** John is a fellow brother in Jesus, persecuted and waiting for redemption (patience); exiled from A.D. 86 to 96 on Patmos, a Roman penal colony. Approximately 15 miles from Ephesus. Patmos is an island about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. John is thought to be about 90 years old during the time when Revelation was written.

...and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

- It is not difficult to identify the source of the voice. The **only one who qualifies with this title is Jesus.**
- John is told to write what he sees in this vision, and send it to the **seven churches in Asia.**
- **“The seven churches which are in Asia”** (*Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, in the region we call Turkey*) **Why these 7?** 63 years after Pentecost over 100 churches existed. Why not Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Colossae, Philippi, Galatia, etc.?
 1. actual churches with real needs and concerns.
 2. “hear... Churches” all seven letters apply to all seven churches.
 3. personal: “he who has an ear” It applies to all of us personally.
 4. **Prophetic: In their order they lay out the entire history of the church.** (*Other sections of the Bible also have the same relationship*) If they were in any other order, this would not work. More on this later.



ROCK OF AGES

THE ROCK OF AGES
LOGO: Greek runs from left to right. The "A" in the logo represents the first letter of the Greek alphabet, the "alpha." The O is the last letter, "omega." Hebrew runs from right to left. In the top right position is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the "aleph." In the bottom left corner is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the "tau." Jesus said "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." That same beginning and end is referenced in the Old Testament as the "Aleph and Tau." Whether for Hebrews or Greeks, Jews or Gentiles, Jesus the Messiah is indeed the beginning and the end, the first and the last, of everything.



¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

- John sees the One speaking, standing in the middle of **seven lampstands** (lampstands are the seven churches, v. 20, Jesus' presence with the churches).
- **Lampstands** (not candlesticks) is "*luchina*" in Greek. Lightbearers (Exodus 25:31-40). "I am..." (John 8:12; 9:5), "YOU are..." (Matthew 5:14, Philippians 2:15-16) Every individual and every local church is the bearer of God's light (Daniel 7:9-14). This scene should remind us of the tabernacle and the menorah (the beautiful picture of us being complete in Jesus (John 15, "I am the vine, you are the branches..."). Notice these Lampstands are on earth in this chapter, but appear in heaven in chapter 4.
- "**Son of Man**" 85 X in gospels, 83 by Jesus Himself. (*His favorite title for Himself, See Daniel 7*)
- John describes Jesus' **amazing appearance**: garment down to the feet, golden band around His chest, head and hair white like wool/snow, eyes like a flame of fire, feet like brass (as refined in a furnace), voice like "many waters", 7 stars in right hand, two-edged sword out of His mouth, face like the sun (the glorified Jesus! brass = judgment, eyes seem angry and fierce, very loud voice, 7 stars are 7 "angels of the 7 churches")
- **Description of Glorified Jesus contains 7 elements, critical to the letters to the Churches:**
 1. Hair, head: wool, snow (See Daniel 7:9, 7:13, 7:22) implies purity, glowing brightness
 2. Eyes: flame of fire (See Hebrew 1:13), implies judgment, all seeing
 3. Feet, purified bronze. Brass refers to judgment (See Numbers 21:9, John 3:14-15)
 4. Voice as many waters. (See Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2, 3:12, Daniel 10:6, Psalm 33:6) authority
 5. Right hand He held seven stars (angels of the churches, see V1:20)
 6. Mouth; two-edged sword. The Word of God (Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, Isaiah 49:2). The sword judges unbelievers (John 12:48). Rod of His mouth (See Isaiah 11:4, Revelation 2:16, 19:19-21)
 7. Countenance of sun (Idiom of the O.T., Malachi, seen by some disciples at transfiguration)

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- John collapses at the sight, but Jesus tells him not to be afraid. Consider also that John *knew* Jesus well on earth, but as one in human form. Here John sees Jesus glorified. No one can stand!



- Jesus says **"I am..."** - *"..the First and the Last. He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death."* "I AM" is also the name of God (see Exodus 3:14). John is speaking to God Himself here. Face-to-face, the risen glorified Messiah.
- **"Do not be afraid..." Four reasons not to fear:**
 1. I Am the first and the last (deity, eternity)
 2. I Am He that lives, and was dead
 3. I am alive for evermore (Right now and forever)
 4. I hold the keys of death and Hades. (Authority and power. Proven by the empty tomb.)
- **"Write the things..."** V. 19 = Outline of entire book:

Section 1	Chapter 1	" <u>which you have seen</u> " (the glorified Jesus)
Section 2	Chapters 2&3	" <u>the things which are</u> " (the 7 churches)
Section 3	Chapters 4-22	" <u>the things which will take place after this</u> " (<i>meta tauta</i>) [the Tribulation, Armageddon, Millennial Kingdom, Final Judgment, Eternal State]

²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

- Verse 20 explains the mystery of the seven Lampstands (the churches, "light bearers") and the seven stars (angels [messengers] of the churches). "Right hand" - right hand symbol of favor.
- **"Angel"** in Greek is literally *messenger*. These angels here may be human messengers (*such as pastors, the "shepherds" of the flocks*) or heavenly messengers that are assigned to the churches for protection and oversight.

