

Lesson 1 Overview and Revelation 1

Start Living Like He's Coming Today

Day 1 **The Promise of Blessing and History**

The Book of Revelation means the book of the unveiling or “Apocalypse (Greek Apocalypsis).” We’ve heard this word for the “unveiling” many times in our culture. Movies have been made about the Apocalypse and how the writers of these movies think this time yet-to-come in the future will unfold. There are some really wild stories out there for us to ponder and there are some very active imaginations, too. I googled “apocalypse movies,” and here are a few among many titles: X-men Apocalypse, Ninja Apocalypse, Zombie Apocalypse, and Apocalypse Nerds. Although the word “apocalypsis” or “revelation” has become synonymous in our culture with the end of the world, originally, the word “revelation” referred to the disclosure of a mystery.

You may have heard of the Apocrypha. The Apocryphal books are placed in the middle of the Catholic Bible. My Grandmother was a convert to Catholicism and I have the family Bible in my library at home. Most of the Apocryphal books are apocalyptic literature. Many of these apocalyptic writings followed a pattern:¹

- They claimed to be a revelation given through an angel to some important person in the past, like Moses
- They made a distinction between the kingdom of this world and a kingdom not of this world, a heavenly kingdom
- They were filled with scary beings and creatures and symbolic numbers, dreams, visions, revelations and vague prophecies
- They alluded to many Old Testament images and references
- Most of the Apocryphal books were written during the 400-year period of time when God was silent to the Hebrew people, during the time of the Maccabees.

So, why were these books not included in the canon of Scripture? There are many reasons, but for our purposes, there are two reasons why the book of Revelation is included and the Apocryphal books are not:

1. John lets us know who was writing down the words of the book of Revelation. Being able to validate who wrote the book of the Bible was extremely important to the process of canonization.
2. The book of Revelation was not written through the authority of an angel only. The source of the words is the LORD Jesus Christ Himself in Revelation. Therefore it is authoritative.

¹ Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook, Classic Edition* (Zondervan Publishers, 2000), pp. 896-897.

The book of Enoch is not one of the Apocryphal books, but it is apocalyptic literature. I found one book reference that said this particular book was considered Holy Writ during the first century of Christianity.² This book speaks to the existence of the Nephilim.

The book of Revelation belongs to apocalyptic literature, but it is also prophetic. The book of Revelation explains the conversation Jesus had with His disciples concerning the things to come in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. It also references prophecies both directly and indirectly found in the Old Testament, especially those found in Daniel, Ezekiel and Zechariah. If you have the time and you are interested, go back and read and contrast/compare the Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13 passages.

Why is the Apocalypse, known to us as the Book of Revelation called the “unveiling?” What is the unveiling? Is it the time of the end revealed or is it the unveiling of a person? I believe it is the unveiling of the person of Jesus Christ because Revelation 1:1 says this is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” However, the unveiling of the person of Jesus Christ is not just for Who He will be in the future, but Who He has always been, and Who He will always be, which includes Who He is right now. Everything we learn about Jesus Christ in this book is Who He is right now in the present. Just like God the Father, this member of the Holy Trinity, is immutable or in other words, He remains the same. He does not change.

There is a promise in this book, right up front in chapter 1, what is this promise? It is recorded for us in Revelation 1:3.

What do we have to do in order to receive this blessing? There are three parts to obtaining this blessing. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why would we want to pursue this blessing? See Rev. 1:3.

The Apostle John wrote this book. It was placed at the very end of the New Testament and also the very end of the entire Bible. This is the same John who is credited as writing the Gospel of John, and the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John. We find out about where John is when he receives this communication from God in Revelation 1:9. Where is he? And why is he there?

² John Klein, Adam Spears, Michael Christopher, *Lost in Translation*, Volume 1 (Covenant Research Institute, 2014), pp. 75-98.

The book says that John is the one who was to write this down. There are some out there who will try to get you off of what is important here by telling you that John was illiterate. Therefore, the writing of the book had to have been by a scribe. We've already seen how important the validation of authorship is to the canonization of Scripture.

John was exiled to the Island of Patmos (see map in the Appendix) off the coast of present day Turkey, in the Aegean Sea. Actually Patmos was not a deserted desert island, but a buzzing city, a Roman colony with homes, shops, temples, and an army outpost. John was free to move around, but as long as the Roman emperor Domitian was in power, he could not leave the island.³ There are other authors who believe that Patmos was a penal colony and there was no one there to help John write in such "eloquent Greek," as opposed to "sloppy Greek" that was used in earlier writings of John.

Most likely, the dating for the penning of the Book of Revelation was around A.D. 95-96. Titus, the son of the Roman emperor, Vespasian, besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and on the 9th of Ab (5th month of the Jewish sacred calendar), Rome destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and not one Temple stone was left on another as Jesus had prophesied. The rest of Jerusalem was burned. The Jews either died (over 1 million in five months) or they were deported and once again dispersed among the nations. Only a few Jews escaped to Masada (the Essenes), but were later conquered by the Roman governor Flavius Silva between A.D. 72 and A.D.74. After Titus' father died, Titus became emperor of Rome for two years and then met his death at the hand of his brother Domitian. Domitian then took the throne and demanded that every one worship him as a god. During his reign, Domitian was a ruthless tyrant ordering mass executions of those who would not worship him or imposing harsh punishments on any who would not obey him.⁴ The church had moved out of Israel and into the Gentile world before the destruction of Jerusalem and so, some of the churches founded beforehand survived. Before his exile to the Island of Patmos and into his nineties, John had been the pastor of the Ephesian Church, one of the churches in Asia Minor (Turkey). Domitian saw John as dangerous because he preached to his flock to stand firm and not to compromise. He told his flock, the LORD God was the only One worthy of worship. Of course this did not go over well with Domitian since he wanted to be worshiped as a god. And so, during the time of Domitian's rule, from A.D. 81 through A.D. 96, he aggressively persecuted the Church both physically and psychologically. Later in our study of Revelation 2 and 3, we will see seven of the Churches planted that had survived in the area of Asia Minor, one of them being Ephesus, the church which John pastored. After the death of Domitian in A.D. 96, John was probably allowed to go back to Ephesus.

I would like here to share part of a letter I received from Grant and Jennifer Haynes, missionaries with Global Frontier Missions, on June 28, 2016:
"Thanks for all of your prayers for our 10/40 window trip as a family. The first leg in

³ Michael Youssef, *End Times and the Secret of the Mahdi*, (Worthy Publishing, 2016), p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp.18,19.

Turkey went really well. We were able to understand the Muslim world better as we prayer walked several neighborhoods in Istanbul (population of 14 million and over 99% Muslim) . . . It was Ramadan while we were there, so the calls to prayer and signs everywhere were a constant reminder to ask the Father to reveal Himself to all of those that are seeking during this time, that they might see Christ as more than a prophet and trust in Him for their salvation. Join us in praying for this part of the world . . . Local ministries estimate only about 6800 believers in the entire country of 75 million people and only 147 congregations including small house fellowships, so there is very little witness in this land despite its rich history over the years. The indigenous leaders expressed a huge need for more laborers of all types and they know of many villages, towns, and cities where no one is reaching out with the Gospel. While there have recently been vast movements of Muslims coming to Christ and more converts from Islam to Christianity in the past 60 years than the previous 1400 years, Turkey has remained very hard ground. The indigenous believers asked for prayers for perseverance as this is really difficult soil and can be very discouraging at times.”

This letter is talking about the same area of land where the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 were located. I want you to understand, ahead of our studying, that this land is now 99% Muslim. History to the future, most of these seven churches of Revelation did not heed the Lord’s warning and He did take away their lampstands. These churches are now overrun by the Islamic world. There is a lot of history in this area of the world for which we will not have time to look at, but you must understand that these churches are no longer viable. Satan has a stronghold on this area of the world. We must pray for them.

It is so very odd, that the penning of this study and the receiving of this letter from Grant and Jennifer comes at the same time as the terrorist attack on the Ataturk Airport in Istanbul in which the death toll has now risen to 41 – including at least 10 foreigners and 3 dual nationals. More than 230 were injured. In addition to this suicide bombing, the United Kingdom, this week, has pulled out of the European Union. The British have never changed their currency even though the rest of the EEU has. The UK is being overrun with Muslims and the political seat of Great Britain has given them permission to run their Muslim communities under Sharia Law. We have got to be praying for these people in Turkey, in Europe, and in England. My heart breaks for those living in darkness.

Most Biblical scholars believe John is the author of this Book of the Revelation. John was one of the sons of Zebedee. Remember, James and John, the sons of Thunder, the sons of Zebedee (Boanerges-Mark 3:17). In the Gospel of John, John refers to himself as “the one whom Jesus loved.” As a boy, John thought of Jesus as just his cousin, but after being called to follow Him, John became one of the twelve Apostles. When Jesus was on the cross and saw His mother and “the one whom Jesus loved,” He told John to be a son to his mother and He told Mary to be a mother to John. John was in Ephesus between 85 and 95 A.D., before being exiled to the Isle of Patmos. According to tradition, Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived with John in his home in Ephesus. The belief is that Mary was around 14 years old when she was given notice of the Christ child

growing in her womb. If John was in his eighties when he first pastored the church in Ephesus, was Mary still alive well into her nineties? How long did she live? We don't know, but as long as she lived, she pondered and remembered those things hidden in her heart concerning the Christ child she bore.

Because John walked in faith, and was secure in Christ's love for him, he remained faithful and steadfast even in heavy persecution. Tradition says that John was boiled in oil before being sent to the Isle of Patmos. He was the last of the twelve apostles to be alive on this earth. All the rest of them had been martyred for their faith. Peter and Andrew had been crucified. Thomas had gone to India and had died at the end of a spear. James, the son of Alphaeus, had been stoned and clubbed to death in Syria. Philip was executed in Africa and Paul was beheaded in Rome.⁵ Soon after this book was written down and dispersed to the church, it was seen as part of Holy Writ.⁶

The Book of Revelation is the continuation of the climax of the Acts of the Apostles by the Holy Spirit. This period of time spans from Acts (30 years of the Church) to Revelation detailing Jesus' second coming (after 2000 plus years of Church History). I mentioned in the introduction the differences between Genesis 1-2, in which we learn about Creation, and the rest of the Scripture beyond Genesis 2, which is vast and is about Mankind's Redemption. I do believe we can get side-tracked with Creation and we don't see the Bible for which most of it is concerned, that being the Redemption of Man and his struggle against the evil one called Lucifer, titled "satan." God wins in the end. We see this by the time we reach Revelation 22. He redeems Mankind through the only means possible, the blood sacrifice of His Son. This redemption of Mankind has been expensive to God; it cost Him His Son. In the end God will meter out justice to satan and his fallen angels and also to the men/women of this earth who refuse Him access to their hearts. But also, at this same time, He will welcome all those who would be redeemed because of His Son's work on the cross, for they have partaken of His salvation. In the end, those who know Him, will be His Bride, and He will be their Bridegroom (Jew and Gentile as One).

According to Revelation, Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Revelation 1:5-6 also tells us of the work that Christ has already done to redeem us. What are these three aspects of His work upon the cross?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

⁵ Ibid, p. 17.

⁶ Beth Moore, *Here and Now, There and Then DVD Study Guide* (Living Proof Ministries, 2009), p. 5.

There are many, many prophecies in the Tanakh, the Old Testament, for which we will find fulfillment, in our study of this book. As we move into chapters 2 and 3, we will look at the prophetic seven churches as not only prophetic of the future Church, but as history looking backwards. Were these seven churches actual churches with the actual problems mentioned? Are these seven churches representative of all Church history from the time of Acts to the present? And could it be that these seven churches are representative of the present Church collectively worldwide? The answer is “yes” to all of these.

Day 2 **The Communication and Structure for the Book of Revelation - that which John saw**

Who are the parties involved in this communication in Revelation 1:1? What is the order of the parties as this communication comes from God the Father to the Apostle John?

There are many people who will not study the book of Revelation because they feel it is too hard to discern. But, we are given the outline of this book in Revelation 1:19. The outline comes to us through the three things John was to write. List these three things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Most commentaries will list the three things John was to write down and match them up with the following chapters:

1. John was to write the things that he saw – these are in chapter 1
2. John was then to write the things that were – these are in chapters 2 and 3, the seven letters to the seven churches
3. And then John was to write down the things that came “after these things.” – these are chapters 4 and 5 and on through chapter 22, the final chapter in Revelation. We are clearly told beginning in chapter 4:1, “After these things,”

Read Revelation 1:12. What word used in this verse gives us a clue as to where we are on the timeline given us in Revelation 1:19?

What did John see from this verse to the beginning of Revelation 2:1? List them below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How did John describe the one like a son of man who was in the middle of the lampstands?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

How many “likes” do you see in the description of the one like a son of man who was in the middle of the lampstands?

“A metaphor is a word or phrase (noun) that is used to make a comparison between two people, things, animals, or places.

“A simile is a figure of speech (a noun) involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid” using “like or as”⁷

There are symbols used in this description of Christ also. What symbols do you see?

1. For what does the color, white, symbolize?
2. For what does bronze symbolize?
3. For what does the number seven symbolize?
4. For what does a two-edged sword symbolize?
5. For what does the sun symbolize?

Read Revelation 2. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are the letters John is to write to the seven churches. These are “the things which are” referencing back to Revelation 1:19.

Day 3 Structure for the Book of Revelation – the things that are

Now read chapters 2 and 3 and write down the order of each of the churches below and to which angel of which church, John is writing. The order will become significant to us when we look at the meanings behind the seven churches.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

⁷ Internet, Simile Definition.

To whom was John writing in Chapter 1? See Revelation 1:4.

Keep this strongly in your mind all through the book, John was writing this down for the Church (the seven churches are representative of the whole Body of Believers here). We are going to find a lot of “sevens” in this book. Seven is the number of completeness and sometimes (but, not always) the number of perfection. These seven churches are the first mention of seven we have in the Book of Revelation. There are more verses in Revelation 1 that speak of seven. Write down to what each seven is referring.

1. Rev 1: 4

2. Rev 1:11

3. Rev 1:12

4. Rev 1:16

5. Rev 1:20

I would like to introduce you here to the Complete Jewish Bible that has been redacted from the Greek back to the Hebrew and then translated for us into the English. You can find an entire copy of this work online for free. In this redaction, the Hebrew word used for “church” is *kehilot* and means “called out ones” or “congregation.” Pay attention, this is important: This same word is the word used for the congregation of Israel in the Old Testament, *kehilot*. Doesn’t that put a different spin on your understanding? The Complete Jewish Bible uses the words, “*Messianic congregations,*” for “the seven churches.” The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) reads this way, “‘To the angel of the *“Messianic Community”* in Ephesus, write: ‘Here is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven gold *menorahs*:’” Do you see another word in this verse that has been translated differently than what is in our standard Bibles? What is that word?

So, getting back to the five other references to sevens in Revelation 1, how many lamps collectively are on each of the seven menorahs?

Good guess! Yes, there are seven lamps on each of the seven menorahs or lamp stands. Seven times seven is 49. There are 49 lamps represented in the seven menorahs to the seven Messianic Communities. Later in this study, we are going to look at the “Shemash” that is the center tube to the center lamp of the menorah. This tube is hollow and all the other tubes to the other six lamps are hollow, as well. Each hollow tube is connected to this center tube. So, what I want you to take from this paragraph is this: each one of the tubes and their lamps are supplied oil from the center tube, or the Shemash. This word, “shemash” in the Hebrew is the word for “sun.” The sun was made on day four of seven days of creation. The “shemash” holds the fourth place on the menorah. This “shemash” also represents the Messiah or the “Meshiach,” the Christ.

Christ said, “I AM the Light of the World “(Gospel of John 8:12). I John speaks to us that He (God) is Light and in Him is no darkness.

Day 4 **Structure of the Book of Revelation - the things that will occur after these things**

Now read Revelation 4:1. What words are used at the beginning of Chapter 4 which gives us a clue as to where we are on the timeline given us in Revelation 1:19?

Chapters 4 and 5 start out with “after these things” (all the things that went before these two chapters, namely chapters 1, 2, and 3). Are you seeing the pattern of the book given us in Rev 1:19? Chapters 4 and 5 are the **scene in heaven** prior to the unleashing of God’s wrath on the earth and the inhabitants of the earth. Please read these two chapters before you go any further. Bask yourself in the light of His Glory. Do you want to know what heaven is like? This is what heaven is like.

Chapter 5 reveals Who alone is worthy to **open** the Book – the Scroll – and **break** its seals...the Lamb who was slain.

In chapter 6, we see the beginning of the wrath of God in the seven seal judgments. Please read chapters 6 and 7 and take note below what happens to the earth and the earth dwellers with the opening of each of the six seals.

1. The Lamb broke the first seal: Rev 6:1-2
2. The Lamb broke the second seal: Rev 6:3-4
3. The Lamb broke the third seal: Rev 6:5-6
4. The Lamb broke the fourth seal: Rev 6:7-8
5. The Lamb broke the fifth seal: Rev 6:9-11
6. The Lamb broke the sixth seal: Rev 6:12-7:17
7. The Lamb broke the seventh seal: Rev 8:1-6

In chapter 8, we see the sounding of the next seven judgments called the trumpet judgments. Remember that these judgments of God are a continuation of the wrath of God and these judgments are made upon the earth and the earth dwellers and the fallen angels. Please read chapters 8 through 14 and take note below what happens to the earth and the earth dwellers and what is going on during this time with the sounding of each of the seven trumpets. Make it simple. I am not looking for serious detail here.

1. The first angel sounds the first trumpet Rev 8:7
2. The second angel sounds the second trumpet: Rev 8:8-9
3. The third angel sounds the third trumpet: Rev 8:10-11
4. The fourth angel sounds the fourth trumpet: Rev 8:12
5. The fifth angel sounds (1st woe): Rev 9:1-12
6. The sixth angel sounds (2nd woe): Rev 9:13-11:14
7. The seventh angel sounds (3rd woe): Rev 11:15 – 14:20

In chapter 15, we see the beginning for the final seven judgments of God's wrath upon the earth, the earth dwellers, and the fallen angels. With the pouring out of these last seven judgments (plagues), God's wrath is finished. These are the seven gold bowl judgments full of the wrath of God; this pouring out of the seven gold bowls is kind of like the finale of the 4th of July celebration fireworks – they come rapidly one right after the other. Or I like to think of these last seven judgments of God's wrath like popcorn popping once it gets going. POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! POP!

1. First angel poured out first bowl on the earth: Rev 16:1-2
2. Second angel poured out second bowl on the earth: Rev 16:3
3. Third angel poured out third bowl on the earth: Rev 16:4-7
4. Fourth angel poured out forth bowl on the sun: Rev 16:8-9
5. Fifth angel poured out on throne of beast: Rev 16:10-11
6. Sixth angel poured out his bowl on the River Euphrates: Rev 16:12-16
7. Seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air on the earth– Rev 16:17 – Rev 18:24

Day 5 **Structure of Revelation - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ as Conquering King**

In summary of all we learned on day 4, Jesus Christ is the only One who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seven seals, which release the first seven judgments of God upon the earth and those remaining on the earth. There is no mention of the Church on the earth in the Book of Revelation after the seven letters to the seven churches, until chapter 19. So after Revelation 3, it can be and is assumed that the Church is no longer on the face of the earth. Many believe that the Church is raptured (caught up unto heaven) before the onset of these judgments releasing the wrath of God. There are

passages of Scripture that seem to reveal that the Believers will not suffer the wrath of God. In I Thessalonians 5:9, Paul says this: “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We will look at more of these references later in the study. However, since the presence of the Holy Spirit indwells the Believer in the Church Age, if the Believers are raptured out of this world, then it follows that the presence of the Holy Spirit must go out of this world with them at the same time. Without the Holy Spirit’s dampening effect on sin of which He has had on this earth while indwelling Believers, sin will take its course towards fullness and “all hell will break loose,” when the Holy Spirit is taken out of this world. Those left on this earth will soon begin to experience the consequences of God’s wrath upon them for their sin. This wrath of God on the earth dwellers begins with the breaking of the first seal by the Lord Jesus Christ. At the breaking of the seventh seal, the next seven judgments of God are released upon planet earth and its inhabitants. These are called the seven trumpet judgments. Again, with the blowing of the seventh trumpet, the last seven bowl judgments are poured out and then God’s wrath is finished in chapter 16.

Now in chapter 19, we see Jesus returns to earth in His Second Coming. He comes this second time as a conquering king and after the battle against satan and those of whom he has gathered, is won, Jesus will set up His Millennial Kingdom on this earth and reign for 1000 years. Christ will sit on the Throne of David his father (in the Jewish sense). This is a literal political throne. For those who do not believe that there will be a literal Millennial Kingdom, there is no way that Jesus can fulfill the prophecies that tell us that He will sit on His father David’s throne. After this time, Satan will be released from the abyss he has been in for the past 1000 years and he will gather yet another army against the Lord. The Battle is over rapidly and they are judged (Great White Throne) according to their deeds and they are thrown into the Lake of Fire forever. Then after the culmination of all old earthly things, coming down out of heaven to the earth, is the New Jerusalem, the city representing Heaven. The dwelling place of God will come to earth and He will dwell with Man again but it will be forever this time. The redemption of Man is Complete and we have come full circle back to the Garden of Eden, where God and Mankind can be in unhindered relationship with each other. The marriage supper of the Lamb and the Church, His bride, has come.

Please read Revelation 19.

Entering into Revelation 19, we once again have a scene in heaven. What is that scene like?

What is the marriage supper of the Lamb? And who is the Bride and who is the groom?
Revelation 19:1-10

Who comes riding on a white horse? What is His destination and what is the purpose of His ride? Who does He take with Him for the battle (1st battle)? Revelation 19:11-21

What happens to those gathered against the Lord in this battle? Revelation 19:19-21

Who is thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone at the culmination of this battle? Revelation 19:19-21

Please read Revelation 20.

Describe the judgment of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead or on their hand: Revelation 20:4
What is their destination?

What happens to satan in chapter 20:3?

Then what happens to satan in chapter 20:7?

What happens to satan and also those gathered by satan for this Last Battle at the end of the Millennium (2nd battle with Jesus in the Book of Revelation) in chapter 20:7-10?
How are the dead, the great and the small judged at the White Throne Judgment according to Revelation 20:11?

What is their destination?

Please read Revelation 21

What is the setting of Revelation 21?

What is coming to the new earth from the new heaven?

What does this city, the New Jerusalem, represent?

What has been completed by this time?

What is in this city?

Please read Revelation 22

Refer back to the Genesis 2:8-9, Genesis 3:22-24. The LORD God planted two trees in this Garden, one was the Tree of Life and the other was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. At the end of Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve sin and after God drives them out of the Garden, He places cherubim at the east entrance to the Garden to guard Man from entering the Garden and having access to eating from the Tree of Life. Why?

In Revelation 22, we finally and once again, see the Tree of Life. Describe this tree? See Revelation 22:1-2. Can we eat of the Tree of Life at this time? Why?

Think of all you have learned this week and get excited because we are going to have a whirlwind tour of the end times in which you and I (if you are in Christ) will be watching most of this story when it unfolds, from the portico of heaven. If we only could get a grasp on how much the Bridegroom loves us, and His eagerness to hear His Father's voice, telling Him to go and fetch His Bride (we the Messianic Community) for the time has come, then we could hardly contain the excitement that this would generate in our lives.