

Revelation 1 – Jesus Christ

By Holly Effiom

Rev 1:1-3

To whom did God give the revelation of Jesus Christ?

For what purpose did God give the revelation?

From whom did John receive this revelation?

What was John supposed to do with this revelation?

To whom was John supposed to convey the revelation? Why?

What will happen to those who read, hear, and keep those things expressed in this revelation?

What is it to read? External

What is it to hear? Internal

What is it to keep? Action

Why was this word being imparted via John at this time?

LESSON: This visit was not all a whim to God, or an “accident” that on this particular day when John just happened to be exiled on the Isle of Patmos that Jesus decided, out of the blue, to visit. God acts with purpose and intent, and in His own time. Just because we don’t understand it does not make it any less true. It wasn’t an accident that the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in the 1940’s. Yes, they are ancient, but their existence shows the consistency in the word of God that has been passed down to us to this very day.

John, in conveying this message, is explaining that the time is at hand, and this is the reason for this message, at this particular time.

VV4-5a – The Greeting

To whom is John addressing his message?

Why are these seven churches singled out for this letter? Were there not churches in people’s homes?

What does this tell us about the early churches? What was happening?

What does this tell us about God as it relates to His churches?

What do we know about these churches?

From whom is this message to the churches coming?

Who is the One “...which is, which was, and which is to come...”?

What are the 7 spirits that reside before God’s throne? Isa 11:2

Is this greeting ALSO from Jesus Christ?

LESSON: This section of just the first chapter of Revelation imparts so much information about doctrine of the Church.

- A. Notice that this greeting is from God in His totality – from Himself, from His Holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ. Prior to this point, the only other place where we hear mention of God in His totality in the New Testament is in Matt 28:19. The Holy Spirit is being “personified” in this section; also, notice that the 4 beasts, and the myriad other creatures that we know reside in the throne of God are not being included in the greeting.
- B. We’ve read the Old Testament and have come to an understanding of God – Who was, is, and is to come. We’ve read the New Testament and have come to an understanding of Jesus Christ – the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. But where do we learn about and come to an understanding of God’s Holy Spirit? Isaiah gives us a picture of the Holy Spirit and aspects of His character in Isa 11:1-10.

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This section of Isaiah describes the advent of the final earthly King who will be a “...rod out of the stem of Jesse... a Branch shall grow out his roots...” Jesse is the name of King David’s father. Hence that final human King will be a descendant of David. The defining character of that last King, as described in this scripture, will be that God’s own Spirit will rest upon Him – Jesus Christ.

- The spirit of the LORD
- The spirit of wisdom
- The spirit of understanding
- The spirit of counsel
- The spirit of might
- The spirit of knowledge
- The spirit of fear of the LORD

We learn that God’s Holy Spirit is manifested in wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge, and a fear (veneration or healthy respect) of the Lord. These are the 7 Spirits of the Lord. So, when you see an example of great godly wisdom on display, know that the Lord Himself is in your midst. When you see an example of great godly faith on display, know that the Lord Himself is in your midst; such that, the fruit (or children) produced from this Spirit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal 5:22) – are witnesses to and of the existence of God Himself.

Notice the Holy Spirit wasn’t spoken of very much in the Old Testament, but He was there in wisdom, understanding, counsel and might, knowledge, and a fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit came to the fore in the New Testament, when Almighty God was re-introduced to the children of Israel – and hence the world – as a Father, their heavenly Father. This was the *wisdom* of Jesus Christ.

C. How is Jesus described by John in these verses?

1. The faithful witness – to what is He witness?

Isaiah 55:4 tells about how Jesus was given as a witness to the nations, and by Him Israel is glorified (Isa 60). Israel does not see this now, but they will.

2. The first begotten of the dead – how is Jesus the first begotten of the dead? Matt 28:1-10

Which righteous One has before appointed himself to suffer and die, and then raise himself from the dead? What human has ever done this? What god has ever done this? None.

3. The prince of the kings of the earth – what does it mean, in this context, to be a prince? Ex: Dan 10:12-13, for the concept of principality.

Today, a prince is often understood to be the son of a king, in earthly terms; however, when looking from the context of Daniel 10, a prince is one who is a ruler over a domain or principality or realm, which can include one or multiple earthly kingdoms.

In Dan 10, we understand that Cyrus is the king of Persia at the time (V1); however, when this particular “angel” is dispatched to give Daniel understanding, “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” holds him up – to keep him from doing what God has dispatched him to do. This angel was held up 3 weeks, but then Michael, “one of the chief princes” (therefore, one of many), the prince over the kingdom of Israel (V21, 12:1), came and assisted him.

The greeting of grace and peace on the 7 seven churches shows us God in His totality commends His grace and peace to His church – God is for us. If you didn’t understand this before, know it now! In just this section, John makes us understand that the care of the church is uppermost in the heart of God, and whatever is done is for the good of the church. How do we know this? We have the stories of God’s

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interactions with the children of Israel to serve as a guide, especially His personal interest displayed in Daniel.

V5b-6 – The Church’s Response to the Greeting

How does John respond to this greeting from God?

1. He acknowledges his understanding of who his God is: “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”
2. He explains why he worships his God: “And had made us kings and priest unto God and His Father;”
3. He submits himself to his God: “to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

LESSON: Praise and worship is not an activity devoid of intellectual application. John 4:23.

Thought processes are engaged when you seek to worship God, as He wishes us to worship, in spirit and in truth. John models for us in his words Who it is we praise and worship, and Why we praise and worship Him, and gives his response to God, in the form of complete submission. This is the mindset we all should have when we approach God in praise and worship. Amen!

VV7-8 – The Message

What is the message John is delivering in summary?

Who will see the return of Jesus? Will it only those who truly believe in Him?

What is it to wail? Is it associated with good or bad crying? Zech 12:10-14

Who will be wailing? Why?

What should the Church’s attitude be?

What does Amen mean?

Why does John say, “Even so, Amen”?

What are Jesus’ quoted words? Why?

In what capacity is He speaking? In the gospels, did Jesus refer to Himself as the Alpha and Omega?

How did He refer to Himself?

In what capacity does John describe Him?

Who else was described as “which is, and which was, and which is to come,” the Almighty? Isa 9:6

LESSON: Jesus is coming back, with the “clouds of heaven” according to Matt 24:30. When Jesus first came, He acted in the capacity of Son of man and Son of God, and His behavior was that of a son, Servant to his Father and mother; however, in these verses, we are told clearly that Jesus will be acting in His capacity as God Almighty, the Alpha and Omega. If anyone tells you that Jesus is not God, bring them to this scripture right here, in which Jesus testifies to the fact that He is the Alpha and Omega.

When the eyes of all who fight so hard against Jesus and His redeemed are opened, there will be a lot of crying, and downright wailing, because Jesus *is* the Alpha and Omega, and He *will* be doing the judging, not as the Son of man nor of God, but as God Almighty.

“But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.” Ps 5:11-12 Amen!

So, rejoice, my brothers and sisters! Our Savior is He who sits on the throne and knows of our trials and tribulations in this life.

“The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.” Ps 58:10 Amen!

Where do you stand: among the righteous, or the wicked? Your answer will determine how you receive the words of The Revelation.

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VV9-11 – The Vision

- What is John telling us about himself?
- From where was John writing?
- Why was he 'visiting' the Isle of Patmos?
- What was John doing when he heard Jesus? What is "...in the Spirit..."?
- What was Jesus's message to John?
- Why did Jesus keep repeating He was the Alpha and Omega?
- Where did the church begin?
- When did the church begin?
- Where were the 7 churches located?
- How many years later would this be from the beginning of the church?

LESSON: According to the Gregorian calendar, the birth of Jesus would be the year 0. Jesus lived 33-1/2 years and during that time, assume the final 3.5 years, Jesus chose his disciples, one of them being John. From what I can understand, John was the youngest among them, let's say 20 years old; and now here in Revelation, he is an old man on the Isle of Patmos, imprisoned for his faith. The timing would possibly/probably be the second half of the first century AD for this writing.

So, the church began at Pentecost (within 50 days of Jesus' resurrection), with a few people in a house upon whom the Holy Spirit rested, and now we are discussing 7 organized churches in Asia – not Jerusalem – alone, not to mention the house churches that were in operation, within a 60 year period of time! Three thousand were added on that day of Pentecost, alone!

Many question to truth of Jesus – whether He existed or not – however, they cannot question the veracity of what Jesus' existence has done for the world... and in such a short period of time! We are still here. And any grace that the world has witnessed has been because Christians are in the world. Hallelujah!!!

VV12-17

- What did John see when he turned to see who was speaking?
- Where else is a golden candlestick or lampstand mentioned? Lev 37:17-24; 40:4.
- Who was walking amidst the 7 lampstands? How do you know?
- What does the term "...like the son of man..." describe?
- What was He wearing?
- What did he look like?
 - What did His hair feel like? What color was it?
 - What did John see when he looked at His eyes?
 - What was He wearing?
 - What did His feet look like? What was burnt brass look like?
 - How did He sound?
 - What was He holding in His right hand?
 - What was in His mouth? What does a "...2-edged sword..." mean?
 - What was His personality like? How did he carry Himself?
- What happened to John as soon as he saw Him?
- Who else had this reaction upon looking at someone who had been in God's presence? Lev 10:1-2; Isa 6:5-8; Eze 1:28; 3:23; Dan 8:17-18; 10:15-19.

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What happened to Nadab and Abihu when they were in the presence of God? What happened to Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel in the same circumstance? Why the different outcomes?

LESSON: Nadab and Abihu were the sons of Aaron who didn't come right into the holy of holies. A fire from the Lord burned them up. What was the lesson from that study?

So now, we look at Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel – God came to them and they collapsed, but didn't die. What was the difference? Firstly, God came to them, and the reaction of the flesh of these humans was to understand the depth of its corruption – corruption *cannot* physically stand in the presence of a holy God. Secondly, one in the position of power extended power to the flesh of these prophets, to strengthen and purify them, so that they could stand before, they could interact with, God. *This* is what Jesus did for us! Thirdly, these prophets were faithfully serving in their place of calling when God visited them.

Take a lesson: God will indeed visit you. Make sure you are under the blood of Jesus so that you will have the strength of the Holy Spirit to stand at His visitation. And finally, be faithfully serving in the place God has called you to, and you will not die. Matt 24:45-51

VV17-18

What was Jesus' response to John falling on his face, at His feet?

Why did John faint at Jesus' presence?

Why didn't John die in Jesus' presence?

What power is Jesus giving John through His words?

What power is Jesus giving to you through His words?

Why will you not die?

VV19

Why has Jesus appeared to John?

What does He want John to do?

What does He want John to write about?

Does this mean that John is a visionary?

Why John, and not one of the heads of the churches in Asia? There were apparently church leaders at the time, why would God choose a *prisoner* to impart this message?

Why would God want to use you?

LESSON: God chooses whom He will for any particular job. Our job may not make it into the biblical canon, but God has chosen us to do it, nonetheless. And, what is the job that He's called us to do?

He's called Holly to work at the City of Hesperia, and be a light for Jesus Christ there. He's called me to serve at the Victorville First Assembly of God church, and to be a light for Jesus Christ there. He's called me to be married to Athanasius Effiom, and be a light for Jesus Christ there; He's called me to be a daughter and sister in the Chisholm family, and be a light for Jesus Christ there; and, the list goes on.

God has called me to many different jobs; and what is similar in each and every one is that I am to be a light for Jesus Christ.

What about you? What jobs has God called you to do? Have you performed them all well? Did you even know Jesus at the time? Did you know He was expecting you to be a light for Jesus Christ at that time? Do you know it now?

V20

Who are the 7 stars? What is the function of the 7 stars?

What is it to be "...angel of the seven churches..."? Are they just members at that specific church?

Why does Jesus call out these 7 angels specifically, and not just all the members in the church?

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What is Jesus doing with the 7 stars?

What do the 7 candlesticks or lampstands represent?

Where do we first read about a candlestick or lampstand and the number 7? Why is this significant?

What is Jesus doing with the candlesticks? What does this mean?

What is a mystery?

Does Jesus want us to understand these mysteries? How do you know?

LESSON: What do we know about angels?

I've heard it argued that God was speaking to the angels that were present at the creation of man, when He said, "Let us make man in Our image..." Not being present at that time, I wouldn't dare to guess at such a thing. My first direct understanding of the angels occurs in Genesis 6:1-4, in which these angels are called "sons of God", and are specifically distinguished from man in the scripture. I learned several things about the angels from this one section of scripture:

1. A different order of being, beside man, existed in the universe and they were called "sons of God";
2. This order of being can influence the lives of man – exemplified by what was done in the garden of Eden;
3. This order of being can be *influenced* by man – exemplified by their coveting the daughters of men;
4. This decision by this order to leave their own estate and *invade* man's was an act of violence – exemplified in the terminology used, in which man had no say in this interaction between men and angels, and were powerless to ward off the invasion;
5. This order of being must be physically *similar* to man, in that they are able to have sexual intercourse with man and produce children;
6. The children resulting from these unions were the giants and mighty men of renown of man's mythologies.

It is in Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-8 that we learn that these sons of God have responsibilities for which they give account – God has given them a *job* to do:

1. These sons of God meet regularly with God; and
2. Satan is accounted one of them (even *after* the Garden of Eden business!);
3. Satan's area of accountability or realm is the earth;
4. At these meetings, God expects an account from the sons of God of where they've been and what they've been doing;
5. At these meetings, the sons of God would also report on the good things happening in their realm and the good people;
6. Satan accused the good person in his realm;
7. Satan can only upset man's life by God's permission – ultimately, Job's distress was God moving against him;
8. Satan is not permitted to kill any man – though he works diligently to get us to kill one another. Satan violates this prohibition in Rev 11:7.

It is in Daniel 10-11:1 that we learn that angels have ranks, and their "realms" can include nations or family groups:

1. An angel's plans can be interrupted;
2. The interruption of an angel's plan has an effect on the natural;
3. Corruption cannot stand in the presence of a holy God, nor even an angel that had been in the presence of a holy God;
4. Angels that have responsibility over a kingdom or nation are not the king, but rather "princes" of that kingdom (at least in the book of Daniel);

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5. The angel Michael is one of several “chief princes”;
6. Angels can have conflicts with one another – they are not all singing from the same hymn book;
7. The conflict between the angels affect man through their kings;
8. The angel sent to Daniel was in contention with the prince of Persia and would soon be fighting the prince of Greece;
9. The angel Michael is the prince of Daniel’s people – the children of Israel;
10. The angel sent to give Daniel knowledge was the prince of the Medes. This is interesting in that the kings of the Medes and Persians had joined forces to conquer and rule Babylon; and here, it appears that the princes of the Medes and Persians are at war with one another.
11. The *job* of the prince was to stand to confirm and strengthen the king.

NOTE: An **important** thing this scripture teaches is that words are *powerful*! Daniel’s words, once presented correctly, moved God to respond by sending this angel; and the angel spoke strength into Daniel by merely saying “...be strong, yea, be strong...”

Why is understanding the role of angels important to this study?

Jesus tells John specifically to write about what he has seen, how things are, and what is going to happen from that point forward; and to write about the mystery of the seven stars and seven candlesticks – which is no longer a mystery. The seven stars are seven angels whose job it is to stand and fight for and confirm the leadership of the candlesticks, the churches of Jesus Christ. Is it possible that these angels got distracted? And, what affect would this have on the church?

Jesus Christ, our King, our Judge gave a parable about a king *preparing* for war (Luke 14:31-33). He was making the point that no king contemplating war doesn’t sit down, analyze, and prepare a battle plan and gather resources, and this must be our attitude in approaching our service and affiliation with the church of Jesus Christ.

The rubber is going to hit the road, are you ready? The Parable of Unleavened Bread taught us that you will eat the bread of affliction – Jesus had to, so, we will surely have to – but freedom... and so much more is assured at the end of this journey.

In several places in scripture, God stresses that He is doing a new thing, and He does just that through Jesus. Initially, he communicated through individuals – men of God. Then, to communicate to a wider audience, He used His nation Israel to reach the various nations. Through Jesus, God has reached out to the whole of heaven and earth; and the means by which He’s chosen to communicate, in this context, is the church of Jesus Christ. So, when Jesus is sending a message to the “church”, is the message directed only to the candlestick? Who is the church?

As we look at the messages to the seven churches, look for yourself (the church) and aspects of your own character – good and bad – in what is presented. I’m speaking to both men and angels: Our King is going into battle, and He does not want *us* to fall.