The Revelation of Jesus Christ
To John the Apostle
Introduction

Author: The Apostle John or John the Apostle

To whom it was written to: The seven churches in Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Pergamos, Sardis, Laodicea)

Date Written: probably A.D. 95-96

From the Rocky Island
John had been exiled to a Rocky Island in the Mediterranean Sea, the Isle of Patmos

Setting:
Most scholars believe that the seven churches of Asia to whom John was writing to were experiencing the persecution that took place under the Emperor Domitian.

It seems that the Roman authorities had exiled John to this Island Patmos

John, who had been an eyewitness of the incarnate Christ, had a vision of the glorified Christ. God also revealed to him what would take place in the future—judgement and the ultimate triumph of God over evil.

Purpose: John had three purposes for writing Revelation (to reveal the full identity of Christ and to give warning and hope to the believers)

1. The immediate purpose: to allow Jesus Christ to proclaim, “Behold, I come quickly”. The seven churches of Asia and their world needed a word of encouragement, of counsel, and of warning. (Rev, 2:16, 3:11, 22:7,12,20)

2. The historical purpose: to allow Jesus Christ to proclaim to His followers and to the world of every generation, “Behold, I come quickly: God knows that every generation needs a word of encouragement, of counsel, and of warning. (Rev 2:16, 3:11, 22:7,12,20)

3. The godly purpose: to give the church and the world “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”. This revelation is both the unveiling of the person of Jesus Christ as the central figure of history and the message of His heart. He is both the content and the unveiler of the revelation. What is the revelation of Jesus Christ? The revelation concerns “things which must shortly come to pass”. It concerns the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who alone is worthy to open and oversee... (Rev. 1:1)
   - the book of destiny.
   - The book of the future of the world.
   - The book of God’s redemptive purpose.

The words the godly purpose are chosen to describe this last point for two reasons.
   a. The picture painted by Revelation is that God takes an active part in the Revelation. God has some things to say about the future—somethings to unveil, to uncover, to show to the church and to the world. It is His own godly purpose to unveil these events. By unveiling them, He is sending forth a word of encouragement to the world. But He is also sending forth a word of counsel and warning. Man must heed the message of the great book of Revelation as well as be encouraged by it.
b. The true title of Revelation is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” not “The Revelation of John.” God’s own purpose is to focus attention upon the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and His ultimate triumph over the world and its ungodliness and evil. God’s purpose is to show the great redemption that He is preparing for all those who truly believe and follow His Son. God’s purpose is to show man that he can be saved from the terrible things that are coming upon the earth. God wants man to know that he can be saved while there is still time for him to repeat. It is God’s purpose to lead people to repentance and salvation; to lead them to the glorious inheritance of the great redemption that is to be given to all true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rev 1:1)

INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Over the centuries, four main approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation have developed. Each approach has had capable supporters, but none has proved itself the only way to read this book. However, the most basic application question for each approach can be summarized by asking yourself, Will this help me become a better follower of Jesus Christ today?

Approach: Preterist View
Description: John is writing to encourage Christians in his own day who are experiencing persecution from the Roman Empire.
Challenge: To gain the same kind of encouragement John’s first readers gained from the vivid images of God’s sovereignty
Caution: Do not forget that most biblical prophecy has both an immediate and a future application.

Approach: Futurist View
Description: Except for the first three chapters, John is describing events that will occur at the end of history.
Challenge: To see in contemporary events many of the characteristics John describes and realize that the end could come at any time
Caution: Do not assume that we have figured out the future, since Jesus said that no one will know the day of his return before it happens.

Approach: Historicist View
Description: The book of Revelation is a presentation of history from John’s day until the second coming of Christ and beyond.
Challenge: To note the consistency of human evil throughout history and recognize that names may change but the rebellion against God has not
Caution: Be careful before identifying current events or leaders as fulfilling aspects of the book of Revelation.

Approach: Idealist View
Description: The book of Revelation is a symbolic representation of the continual struggle of good and evil. It does not refer to any particular historical events. It is applicable at any point in history.
Challenge: To gain insight into the past, to prepare for the future, and to live obediently and confidently in the present
Caution: Do not avoid this book because it is difficult. Try to understand Revelation within its broader literary context.
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation is a complex book, and it has baffled interpreters for centuries. We can avoid a great deal of confusion by understanding the literary structure of this book. This approach will allow us to understand the individual scenes within the overall structure of Revelation and keep us from getting unnecessarily bogged down in the details of each vision. John gives hints throughout the book to indicate a change of subject or a flashback to an earlier scene.

In Revelation 1, John relates the circumstances that led to the writing of this book. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus gives special messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Suddenly, John is caught up into heaven, where he sees a vision of God Almighty on his throne. All of Christ’s followers and the heavenly angels are worshiping God (Revelation 4). John watches as God gives a scroll with seven seals to the worthy Lamb, Jesus Christ (Revelation 5). The Lamb begins to open the seals one by one. As each seal is opened, a new vision appears.

As the first four seals are opened, riders appear on horses of different colors, and war, famine, disease, and death are in their paths (6:1-8). As the fifth seal is opened, John sees those in heaven who have been martyred for their faith in Christ (6:9-11). A set of contrasting images appears at the opening of the sixth seal. On one side, there is a great earthquake, stars fall from the sky, and the sky rolls up like a scroll (6:12-17). On the other side, multitudes are before the throne, worshiping and praising God and the Lamb (7:1-17).

Finally, the seventh seal is opened (8:1-5), unveiling a series of God’s judgments announced by seven angels with seven trumpets. The first four angels bring hail and fire mixed with blood, a mountain of fire, a falling star, and a darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (8:6-13). The fifth trumpet announces the coming of locusts with the power to sting (9:1-12). The sixth trumpet heralds the coming of an army of warriors on horses (9:13-21). In Revelation 10, John is given a small scroll to eat. Following this, he is commanded to measure the Temple of God (11:1-2). He sees two witnesses, who proclaim God’s judgment on the earth for three and a half years (11:3-14).

Finally, the seventh trumpet sounds, calling the rival forces of good and evil to the final battle. On one side is Satan with his forces; on the other side stands Jesus Christ with his forces (11:15–13:18). In the midst of this call to battle, John sees three angels announcing God’s final judgment (14:6–13). Two angels begin to reap this harvest of judgment on the earth (14:14-20). Following on the heels of these two angels are seven more angels, who pour out God’s judgment on the earth from seven bowls (Revelation 15–16). One of these angels from the group of seven reveals to John a vision of a great prostitute called Babylon (symbolizing the Roman Empire), riding a scarlet beast (Revelation 17). After the defeat of Babylon (Revelation 18), a great multitude in heaven shouts praise to God and Jesus appears in victory (Revelation 19).

The final three chapters of the book of Revelation catalog the events that finalize Christ’s victory over the enemy: Satan’s 1,000-year imprisonment (20:1-10), God’s final judgment (20:11-15), and the creation of a new earth and a new Jerusalem (21:1–22:6). An angel then gives John final instructions concerning the visions he has seen and what to do once he has written them all down (22:7-11).

Revelation concludes with the promise of Christ’s soon return, an offer to drink of the water of life that flows through the great street of the new Jerusalem, and a warning to those who read the book (22:12-21). May we pray with John, “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!” (22:20).

The Bible ends with a message of warning and hope for men and women of every generation: Christ is victorious, and all evil will be done away with. As you read the book of Revelation, marvel at God’s
grace in the salvation of his people and his power over the evil forces of Satan, and remember the hope of this victory to come.
Chapter 1

I. The Great Revelation to God’s Servants (Rev. 1:1-8)

A. The Great Revelation

1. The Revelation was given by Christ Himself

2. The Revelation concerns things that must shortly take place

3. The Revelation was given to John

   a. It was given by an angel

   b. It was accurately reported by John

4. The Revelation blesses the man who reads, hears, and obeys the message

B. The Great Announcement to the Churches

1. Announcement 1: Grace and peace are yours

a. From God – the Eternal
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____________________________________________________________________

b. From the Holy Spirit – the Servant
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2. Announcement 2: Jesus Christ is the great Saviour, the great Redeemer
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a. The faithful witness
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b. The first to arise from the devil
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c. The prince of the kings of the earth
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d. He has redeemed us
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e. He has exalted us
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3. Announcement 3: Behold Christ comes
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a. He is to be seen by all
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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
b. He is to be seen by those who killed him They shall wail because of Him

4. Announcement 4: Christ is the Almighty God

a. The Alpha and Omega

b. The Almighty God

Vision One, (Rev. 1:9-3:22)

II. The Messages Of The Glorified Christ To The Seven Churches (Rev. 1:9-3:22)

A. The Son of Man, the Glorified Christ (Rev. 1:9-20)

1. Background: The setting—Patmos

a. John was a brother and companion to the believers

i. In trials

ii. In the kingdom
iii. In the perseverance

b. John received the Word on the island of Patmos

c. John was in the spirit on the Lord’s Day

2. His great, trumpeting voice

a. His claims: I am Alpha and Omega

b. His instructions: Write to the churches

3. His presence in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks or the churches

4. His awesome and frightening appearance

a. With a long robe

b. With a golden breast-plate wrapped around His chest
c. With hair like white wool, as white as snow


d. With eyes as a flame of fire


e. With feet as fine as brass


f. With a voice as many waters


g. With seven stars in His right hand


h. With a sword in His mouth


i. With his countenance shining as the sun


5. His reassuring presence and care


a. John’s terrified reaction


b. Jesus’ calm assurance


c. Jesus’ identification

   i. He is God—the First and Last

   ii. He is the resurrected Lord

   iii. He is the Judge

6. His Clear Instructions

7. His interpretation of the vision

   a. The seven stars: Are seven pastors

   b. The seven candlesticks: are seven churches