

Book of Revelation

Synopsis



Introduction

Book No	66
Name	Revelation
Written By	John
Testament	New
Category	Prophecy
Date Written	Approx. 95 A.D
Place Written	Patmos Island
Audience	7 churches of Asia
Purpose	To reveal the full identity of Christ and to give warning and hope to believers
History Covered	NA
Chapters	22
Verses	404
Key Verse	Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (1:3)
Key People	❖ John ❖ JESUS
Key Places	❖ Asia Minor ❖ Patmos Island

Purpose of the Book

At God's appointed time, the risen and ascended Lord Jesus will burst onto the world scene. Then everyone will know that Jesus is Lord of the universe! Those who love him will rejoice, greeting their Savior with hearts overflowing into songs of praise. But his enemies will be filled with fear. Allied with Satan, the enemies of Christ will marshal their legions against Christ and his armies. But who can withstand God's wrath? Christ will win the battle and reign victorious forever! Jesus, the humble suffering servant, is also the powerful, conquering King and Judge.

Revelation is a book of hope. John, the beloved apostle and eyewitness of Jesus, proclaimed that the victorious Lord would surely return to vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked. But Revelation is also a book of warning. Things were not as they should have been in the churches, so Christ called the members to commit themselves to live in righteousness.

Although Jesus gave this revelation of himself to John nearly 2,000 years ago, it still stands as a comfort and challenge to God's people today. We can take heart as we understand John's vision of hope: Christ will return to rescue his people and settle accounts with all who defy him.

John begins this book by explaining how he received this revelation from God (1:1-20). He then records specific messages from Jesus to the seven churches in Asia (2:1-3:22). Suddenly, the scene shifts as a mosaic of dramatic and majestic images bursts into view before John's eyes. This series of visions portrays the future rise of evil, culminating in the Antichrist (4:1-18:24). Then follows John's recounting of the triumph of the King of kings, the wedding of the Lamb, the final judgment, and the coming of the new Jerusalem (19:1-22:5). Revelation concludes with the promise of Christ's soon return (22:6-21), and John breathes a prayer that has been echoed by Christians through the centuries: "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20).

God has created the orders of community, that is, marriage and the family, economic activity, government and the state (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2). Satan, unable to create anything, tempts others to distort and misuse what God has created. Christians must discern whether a government is functioning *under* divine authority or *as* a divine authority. When the latter is the case, Christians must pray, courageously endure, and patiently accept the consequences of obeying the God whose image and

seal they bear (see Mark 12:16, 17; Acts 4:19). They must do so in the confidence that after their victorious sufferings they will reign with Him.

Behind the appearances of the pomp and power of the world, there is the reality of the absolute sovereignty of the Lord God who is the Lamb, which ensures the ultimate doom of sin and evil. God is utilizing all the forces of evil, all the consequences of sin, even the suffering of His saints, to accomplish His own purposes. Believers undergoing persecution need to know that their sufferings are not meaningless, and ultimately they will be vindicated. The mainspring of Christian hope and courage is the certainty that the Enemy has been defeated and is doomed, and that followers of the Lamb are not fighting a losing cause. He has already overcome, and therefore they can and will be overcomers!

As you read the book of Revelation, marvel with John at the wondrous panorama of God's revealed plan. Listen as Christ warns the churches, and root out any sin that blocks your relationship with him. Be full of hope, knowing that God is in control, Christ's victory is assured, and all who trust him will be saved.

Overview

- ❖ 66th book of the BIBLE, 27th in the New Testament and 1 of the 1 prophecy books
- ❖ The author is the apostle John.
- ❖ Revelation is from a Greek word meaning "to uncover, to unveil."
- ❖ The island of Patmos was:
 - Located in the Aegean Sea.
 - Located 24 miles west of Asia Minor.
 - 10 miles long.
 - 6 miles wide.
- ❖ It is believed that John was 90 years old when he was exiled to the island of Patmos.
- ❖ At the time of the revelation, the church was being greatly persecuted by the Romans.
- ❖ For several decades Christianity had remained unnoticed by the Roman government because they had regarded it as a part of the Jewish religion.
- ❖ When it was determined that Christianity was not a part of the Jewish religion, it became an illegal religion.
- ❖ The great message of the Revelation is that Satan and the world cannot win, and that Christ and His church cannot lose.

- ❖ The key to Revelation is found in Revelation 1:1 - “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly take place ...”
- ❖ Those to whom the revelation letter was written would understand the message convey by using the largely symbolic language. Should the letter be intercepted, the Romans would not.
- ❖ The Seven Churches of Asia:
 - Letter to the church at Ephesus. 2:1-7
 - Letter to the church at Smyrna. 2:8-11
 - Letter to the church at Pergamum. 2:17-18
 - Letter to the church at Thyatira. 2:18-29
 - Letter to the church at Sardis. 3:1-6
 - Letter to the church at Philadelphia. 3:7-13
 - Letter to the church at Laodicea. 3:14-22
- ❖ Revelation contains several sets of sevens:
 - The Seven Churches of Asia. 1:9 - 3:22
 - The Seven Seals. 4:1 - 8:1
 - The Seven Trumpets. 8:6 - 11:19
 - The Seven Bows of Wrath. 15:1 - 19:6
- ❖ Strong external evidence seems to indicate the Book of revelation may have been written during the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96.
- ❖ Domitian was the one who “bathed his empire in the blood of Christians.”
- ❖ While worship of deceased emperors had been practiced for years, Domitian was the first emperor to demand that he be worshipped while he was still alive.
- ❖ Out of 404 verses in the Book of Revelation, there are some 278 allusions to the Old Testament.

Hebrew Names of GOD used in Revelation

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|--------------|-------------------|
| ❖ EL-SHADDAI | ❖ JEHOVAH-SABAOTH |
| ❖ DESPOTES | ❖ ALMIGHTY |
| ❖ LOGOS | |

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Nearly every title employed elsewhere in the New Testament to describe the divine-human nature and the redemptive work of Jesus is mentioned at least once in Revelation, which, together with numerous additional titles, provides us with our only multidimensional unveiling of the present position, continuing ministry, and ultimate victory of the exalted Christ.

Although Jesus' earthly ministry is telescoped between His Incarnation and Ascension in 12:5, Revelation asserts that the Son of God, as the Lamb, has completely finished His redemptive work (1:5, 6). By His blood sinners have been forgiven, cleansed (5:6, 9; 7:14; 12:11), liberated (1:5), and made kings and priests (1:6; 5:10). All ensuing manifestations of His applied victory are based in His finished work on the Cross; hence, Satan has been defeated (12:7–12) and bound (20:1–3). Jesus, raised from the dead, is enthroned as absolute Sovereign over all creation (1:5; 2:27). He is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (17:14; 19:16), and is entitled to the same ascriptions of adoration as God the Creator (5:12–14).

The only One who is “worthy” to execute the eternal purpose of God is “the Lion of Judah,” who is not a political Messiah but a sacrificed Lamb (5:5, 6). “The Lamb” is His primary title, utilized twenty-eight times in Revelation. As the One who has conquered, He has the rightful authority and the power to control all the forces of evil and their consequences for His purposes of judgment and salvation (6:1–7:17). The Lamb is on the throne (4:1–5:14; 22:3).

The Lamb, as “*One* like the Son of Man,” is always in the midst of His people (1:9–3:22; 14:1), whose names are recorded in His Book of Life (3:5; 21:27). He knows them intimately, and with immeasurable holy love, He watches over, protects, disciplines, and challenges them. They share fully in His present and future victory (17:14; 19:11–16; 21:1–22:5), as well as in His present and future “marriage supper” (19:7–9; 21:2). He dwells *in* them (1:13), and they dwell *in* Him (21:22).

As “*One* like the Son of Man,” He also is the Lord of the final harvest (14:14–20). He pours out His wrath in judgment upon Satan (20:10), his allies (19:20; 20:14), and the spiritually “dead” (20:12, 15)—all those who have chosen to “dwell on the earth” (3:10). The Lamb is the God who is coming (1:7, 8; 11:17; 22:7, 20) to consummate His eternal plan, to complete the creation of the new community of His people in “a new heaven

and a new earth” (21:1) and to restore the blessings of the Paradise of God (22:2–5). The Lamb is the goal of all history (22:13).

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

The description of the Holy Spirit as “the seven Spirits of God” (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) is distinct in the New Testament. The number seven is a symbolic, qualitative number conveying the idea of completeness and, when related to God, the idea of perfection. The Holy Spirit is thus denoted in terms of the perfection of His dynamic, manifold activity. The “seven lamps of fire” (4:5) suggest His illuminating, purifying, and energizing ministries. That the seven Spirits are before the throne (1:4; 4:5) and simultaneously are the seven eyes of the Lamb (5:6) signifies the essential triunity of God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a mutual indwelling of the Persons without dissolving the distinctions of essential being and function.

Each of the messages to the seven churches is from the exalted Lord, yet the individual members are urged to hear “what the Spirit says” (chs. 2; 3). The Spirit only says what the Lord Jesus says.

The Spirit is thus the Spirit of prophecy. Every genuine prophecy is inspired by the Holy Spirit and bears witness to Jesus (19:10). The prophetic visions are communicated to John only when he is “in the Spirit” (1:10; 4:2; 21:10). The content of these visions is nothing less than “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1).

All genuine prophecy demands a response. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ (22:17). Everyone either hears or refuses to hear this appeal. The Spirit is working continuously in and through the church to invite those who remain outside the City of God to enter. Only by the empowering of the Spirit is the bride enabled to witness and “patiently endure.” The Spirit thus penetrates the present experience of those who hear with foretastes of the kingdom’s future fulfillment.

Mega Themes of Revelation

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

God is sovereign. He is greater than any power in the universe. God is not to be compared with any leader, government, or religion. He controls history for the purpose of uniting true believers in loving fellowship with him.

Though Satan's power may temporarily increase, we are not to be led astray. God is all-powerful. He is in control. He will bring his true family safely into eternal life. Because he cares for us, we can trust him with our very life.

CHRIST'S RETURN

Christ came to earth as a "Lamb," the symbol of his perfect sacrifice for our sin. He will return as the triumphant "Lion," the rightful ruler and conqueror. He will defeat Satan, settle accounts with all those who reject him, and bring his faithful people into eternity.

Assurance of Christ's return gives suffering Christians the strength to endure. We can look forward to his return as king and judge. Since no one knows the time when he will appear, we must be ready at all times by keeping our faith strong.

GOD'S FAITHFUL PEOPLE

John wrote to encourage the church to resist the demands to worship the Roman emperor. He warns all God's faithful people to be devoted only to Christ. Revelation identifies who the faithful people are and what they should be doing until Christ returns.

You can take your place in the ranks of God's faithful people by believing in Christ. Victory is sure for those who resist temptation and make loyalty to Christ their top priority.

JUDGMENT

One day God's anger toward sin will be fully and completely unleashed. Satan will be defeated with all of his agents. False religion will be destroyed. God will reward the faithful with eternal life, but all who refuse to believe in him will face eternal punishment.

Evil and injustice will not prevail forever. God's final judgment will put an end to these. We need to be certain of our commitment to Jesus if we want to escape this great final judgment. No one who rejects Christ will escape God's punishment.

HOPE

One day God will create a new heaven and a new earth. All believers will live with him forever in perfect peace and security. Those who have already died will be raised to life. These promises for the future bring us hope.

Our great hope is that what Christ promises will come true. When we have confidence in our final destination, we can follow Christ with unwavering dedication no matter what we must face. We can be encouraged by hoping in Christ's return.

Life Lessons in Revelation

Truth	Lesson
<p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Believers are constantly to strengthen the things of God that have become established in their lives. Being ready to repent for any failure, to make right any sin, will cause believers to refine their walk in the Spirit. Outward works do not always indicate a right condition of heart, but a right condition of heart produces good works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Do not be lulled to sleep because of a good reputation. Keep pressing into Jesus. Make sure you practice the teachings you have received. Obey God's word to you.
<p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>Jesus calls us to absolute devotion. Be zealous for the Lord. Devotion willingly submits to Jesus' discipline because it recognizes His love in it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Give your love for Jesus first place in your life. ❖ Commit yourself both emotionally and intellectually to Him. ❖ Avoid luke warmness; stir up your zeal for the Lord. ❖ Repent quickly whenever the Spirit convicts you of sin.
<p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>Jesus calls His people to be fully separated from the world's value system and to be totally committed to Him.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Do not value worldly success. Do not trust worldly wealth. Repent wherever you have done these things. Recognize that worldly assets have no spiritual or heavenly value!

<p>They are to find the spiritual power source in their lives in Christ, not in occult practices. The believer is to gauge success by the measuring rod of God, rather than by the world's social and financial standard. When the Christian understands God's view from the eternal, the present comes into correct perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Return to a spiritual value system wherever you have departed. ❖ Do not adopt the world's way of thinking or its standards of behavior.
<p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>Faith is established in the knowledge of God, trusting Him for understanding and wisdom in the face of persecution.</p> <p>Faith's commitment to overcome, based on the shed blood of Jesus, does not fear even death.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Trust God for understanding when you read Rev. 2:10, 11 Be faithful to Jesus when confronted with persecution and death. ❖ Never renounce faith in Jesus. ❖ Understand that the Lord calls His people to faithfulness and patient endurance. Never give up!
<p>Keys to Wise Living</p> <p>The wise believer takes the time to listen with his spiritual hearing to what the Spirit is saying to the church. This is as needed today as it was in the first century. One who hears and follows the voice of the Holy Spirit does not need to fear the deception that leads to apostasy. Rather, he will walk where Jesus requires and will grow in the things of the Spirit of God, which produce healthy, vibrant, Spirit-filled</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop your spiritual ear. Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church. When forced to choose, obey God, not people! ❖ Understand that one may be rich in the Spirit but poor in the world's eyes. Be faithful and receive the crown of life.

churches capable of preaching the gospel to all the world.	
Guidelines to Gaining Victory Spiritual victory is something we enter into. Jesus Christ has already won the victory through His death, burial, and resurrection.	❖ Conduct spiritual warfare on the basis of Jesus' shed blood and through the declaration that He died for your sins and rose again for your justification. Love the Lord more than life itself.

Praise Points in Revelation

- ❖ Being the Eternal One, the Alpha and the Omega (1:8)
- ❖ Disciplining everyone he loves (3:19)
- ❖ Shedding his blood to purchase people of every race and nation (5:9)
- ❖ Leading his sheep to springs of life-giving water (7:17)
- ❖ Rewarding his servants, prophets, and saints (11:18)
- ❖ Meting out true and just punishments (16:7)
- ❖ Inviting his children to the wedding feast of the Lamb (19:9)
- ❖ Destroying the power of the Devil (20:10)
- ❖ Dwelling with his people forever (21:3-4)
- ❖ Promising to heal the nations and remove the curse (22:2-3)
- ❖ Providing the free gift of life-giving water (22:17).

Worship Insights in Revelation

In worship we tell God's story in word and deed, in prayer and song. The New Testament's last book, the Revelation to John, shows that God's story culminates in ever more intense and glorious worship. The promise God gave to his people of old comes to full realization: "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people" (21:3). As God defeats his enemies and renews the covenant with his creation, the sorrow that began with humanity's disobedience in Eden gives way to eternal adoration. Indeed, the words spoken by the saints and martyrs in John's narrative are almost exclusively songs of praise, exalting God's character and his great deeds.

In the plan of the Revelation, the community worshiping in the Lord's presence, called the bride, is contrasted with the rebellious community, epitomized by the city called

Babylon and represented by a prostitute. Those faithful to the Lord's covenant acknowledge his Messiah, and those who have rejected Jesus persecute his followers. As to the identity of the unfaithful city, both Jerusalem and Rome have been suggested, for the followers of Jesus suffered martyrdom at the hands of both the Roman government and the Judean religious authorities. Thus, the Revelation is also a warning about false worship: sacrifices that disregard the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, and praise for earthly figures who claim divine authority (13:1-18). After all such worship has been judged, the Lord's presence dwells in his true church, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (21:2). Into this true worship of God, the Spirit-filled church now invites all who desire life: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'" (22:17).

The book of Revelation abounds with vivid symbolism, much of which is difficult to interpret across the gap of many centuries. But we do not have to resolve the meaning of John's striking imagery to appreciate the importance of this book for Christian worship. The Revelation is a powerful worship drama; the judgments unfolding on the earth are set in the context of awesome ceremonies conducted in God's very presence.

These ceremonies ascribe honor and glory to the Lord God and to his Christ, the triumphant Lamb upon the throne. They draw upon Old Testament themes to invoke the majestic presence of the Holy One. They involve the vast multitude of the faithful, gathered from all languages and nations. The leaders of this worship represent the leaders of the true Israel, God's covenant people of both the Old and New Testaments.

It is possible that the ceremonies of the book of Revelation reflect developing worship practices of the New Testament church, especially the Paschal or Easter liturgy. What is certain is that the worship of the Revelation has influenced the shape and content of historic Christian worship, from the ancient liturgies of the Eastern church to the hymnody and Scripture songs of contemporary Protestantism. Wherever Christian worship focuses objectively upon the majesty and might of the living God and the victorious Christ instead of upon subjective feelings and personal needs, it reflects the worship drama of the Revelation to John.

- ❖ Often we are more receptive to hearing God speak to us during worship (1:10).
- ❖ God's discipline leads to life, but indifference leads to ruin (3:19).
- ❖ Worship is the natural response to God's holy presence (4:8-11).
- ❖ Millions will praise Christ, the Lamb, for what he has done for us (5:9-14).

- ❖ Those who come out of the Tribulation will respond to deliverance in worship (7:14-15).
- ❖ Prayer is the incense that rises before the throne of God (8:4).
- ❖ The focus of heavenly worship will be the Lamb, Jesus Christ (14:1-4).
- ❖ Heavenly worship continues the celebration started on earth (15:3-4).
- ❖ God will judge evil to relieve the suffering of his people (18:20).
- ❖ The essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus (19:10).

An Outline of Revelation

I. The Vision: [Rev_1:1-20](#)

- A. The Radical Breakthrough: [Rev_1:1-3](#)
- B. Portrait of the King: [Rev_1:4-8](#)
- C. Lord of the Seven Lampstands: [Rev_1:9-20](#)

II. Seven Letters to Seven Churches: [Rev. 2:1-3:22](#)

- A. The First Love: [Rev_2:1-7](#)
- B. The Church Under the Sign of Death: [Rev_2:8-11](#)
- C. The Tempted Church: [Rev_2:12-17](#)
- D. In the Marketplace: [Rev_2:18-29](#)
- E. Like a Thief: [Rev_3:1-6](#)
- F. The Open Door: [Rev_3:7-13](#)
- G. The Best Promise: [Rev_3:14-22](#)

III. The First Chorale: [Rev_4:1-11](#)

- A. The Throne of God: [Rev_4:1-7](#)
- B. The Chorale to God the Creator: [Rev_4:8-11](#)

IV. The Second Chorale: [Rev_5:1-14](#)

- A. A Great Scroll: [Rev_5:1-8](#)
- B. The New Song: [Rev_5:9-14](#)

V. The Great Symphony: [Rev. 6:1-22:5](#)

- A. Movement I: The Great Boundary: [Rev. 6:1-11:19](#)
- B. Movement II: The Cosmic Battle: [Rev. 12:1-16:21](#)
- C. Movement III: The Triumph of God: [Rev. 17:1-20:15](#)
- D. Movement IV: A New Heaven and a New Earth: [Rev. 21:1-22:5](#)

VI. Epilogue: [Rev_22:6-21](#)**A. Holy Colony: [Rev_22:6-11](#)****B. Come, Lord Jesus: [Rev_22:12-16](#)****C. All Who are Thirsty: [Rev_22:17-21](#)**