

## 2 – WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN (REVELATION 1:1-20)

### Review:

#### A. The key verse (1:19)

- The key to understanding the book is found in Revelation 1:19

#### B. A basic outline

1. What You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. What is Now (Chapters 2-3)
3. What will take place later (Chapters 4-22)

#### C. A Basic Mindset

1. Don't be dogmatic about your interpretations.
2. Biblical prophecy only gives us a partial picture.

The Jews of Jesus' day did not completely understand the prophecies of the Messiah. It was only after His death and resurrection did the prophecies make sense.

### I. Prologue (1:1-3)

#### A. The Purpose of the Book (1:1a)

##### 1. The Subject

- The purpose is to reveal to believers the things that must take place.
- The word "shortly" means that which occurs suddenly.
- The word "shortly" is not speaking to that which will occur immediately.

##### 2. The Source

- The source of this revelation is God the Father.

Scripture: Mark 13:32

##### 3. The transmission

- Jesus Christ communicated the revelation through an angel.

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## B. The Recipient Described (1:1b-2)

### 1. The recipient (1:1b)

- The Revelation was revealed to the Apostle John.

#### **Historical Note:** John, the Apostle

John was the son of Zebedee and the brother of James, the apostle. His mother was Salome (compare Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40), who was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Jesus and John would have been cousins. John's family lived Galilee, probably Bethsaida. John was a fisherman with his father and brother (see Mark 1:19-20). It is believed that John's family was not poor since they had hired servants. Salome ministered to Jesus from her own funds (Mark 15:40; Luke 8:3). John knew the High Priest well enough to gain access to the court where Jesus was tried. John is first introduced as a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35). He refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (see John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Jesus called John and his brother James, the sons of Thunder (see Mark 3:18). At Jesus crucifixion, he was instructed by Jesus to care for his mother (see John 19:25-27). After Mary's death, John left Jerusalem for Ephesus where he served as the overseer of the churches in Asia Minor. John was plunged into boiling oil and suffering nothing from it. He was banished by the Roman authorities to the Greek island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. John was the only apostle not to die a martyr's death. He lived to an old age, dying at Ephesus sometime after AD 98. He is the author of five books in the New Testament: the Gospel of John, First John, Second John, Third John and the Book of the Revelation.

### 2. The character of the recipient (1:2)

- John was a faithful witness to all that he saw and heard.

## C. The Blessing (1:3)

### 1. The one who reads and hears

- The one who takes to heart the revelation will be blessed.

### 2. The one who keeps those things

- The one who responds in obedience will be blessed.

## II. Salutation (1:4-8)

### A. The Author (1:4a)

- The human author is the apostle John.

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### B. The recipients of the Revelation (1:4a)

- The Revelation was given to the seven churches of Asia Minor.

#### **Historical Note:** Asia

Asia was a Roman Province located in western Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The provincial capital was Ephesus.

### C. The Greeting (1:4b-8)

#### 1. The Blessing Bestowed (1:4b)

- John wishes the readers peace and grace.

#### 2. The source of the blessing (1:4c-8)

##### a. The Eternal Father (1:4c)

- The blessing is from the God who is eternal.

##### b. The Holy Spirit (1:4d)

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- The Seven Spirits refers to the Holy Spirit.

**Biblical Note:** The Seven Spirits of God  
The Seven Spirits of God is the Holy Spirit. The prophet Isaiah provides a seven-fold description of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2. Isaiah describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of power, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the LORD.  
See: Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6

c. Jesus Christ (1:5-6)

(1) The faithful witness (1:5)

- Jesus is the Prophet.

(2) The firstborn from the dead (1:5)

- Jesus is the resurrected one.

(3) Ruler over kings (1:5)

- Jesus is sovereign over the affairs of men.

(4) Redeemer (1:5)

- Jesus' sacrifice has given us salvation because of His love.

(5) Made us kings and priests (1:6)

- Jesus has made us royalty.

(6) Benediction (1:6)

- John praises the Lord for Christ and His work.

3. The proclamation (1:7-8)

a. The second coming (1:7)

- John proclaims that Christ will return.
- The world will mourn His coming.

b. Jesus Christ's self-revelation (1:8)

- Jesus reveals Himself as Eternal God.

**Biblical Note:** The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End

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The two-fold title proclaims that Jesus Christ as the eternal One. The in the Greek language "the Alpha and the Omega" were the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The title "the Beginning and the End" expresses the same truth in the Jesus Christ has always existed.

See: Revelation 1:11; 21:6; 22:13

## III. The Patmos Vision of Christ Glorified (1:9-18)

### A. John identifies Himself again (1:9)

#### 1. Brother and Companion in Tribulation

- John identified himself as sharing in their trials.

#### 2. Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ

- John also identified himself as sharing in their hope.

#### 3. His Location

- John tells them that he is on Patmos because of the gospel.

#### **Historical Note:** Patmos

Patmos was a tiny island off the coast of Asia Minor. It is only 17 km long and 10 km wide. Because the island is volcanic in origin, it is rocky and almost treeless. It was one of the most isolated places that the Romans banished their exiles. Emperor Domitian exiled the apostle John to this lonely place from Ephesus in A.D. 95. John resided on the island for 18 months.

### B. John's state (1:10a)

- John saw the vision on the Lord's Day while in the Spirit.

#### **Biblical Note:** The Lord's Day

The Lord's Day is Sunday, the principal day of corporate worship. It was observed by early Christians as the weekly memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is said in the Gospels to have been witnessed alive from the dead early on the first day of the week.

#### **Theological Note:** In the Spirit

The phrase "In the Spirit" describes a special experience in the Spirit. John was probably in a state of ecstasy: the outer world being shut out and the inner and higher life or spirit being fully controlled by God's Spirit, John was able to enter the invisible, spiritual realm.

See: Ezekiel 37:1; 2 Corinthians 12:2; Revelation 4:2; 17:3; 21:10

### C. The vision of Christ Glorified (1:10b-18)

#### 1. The voice like a trumpet (1:10b-11)

- John heard a voice like a Trumpet.

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- The voice proclaimed the identity of Christ.

**Biblical Note:** The First and the Last

The title "the First and the Last" portrays Jesus Christ as the eternal one. Jesus Christ has always existed and will always exist. It is a title of deity.

See: Revelation 1:11,17; 2:8; 22:13

- The voice commanded John to write what he sees.
2. Seven golden lampstands (1:12)
    - John saw the one who spoke among seven golden lampstands.
  3. The one in the midst of the lampstands (1:13-16)
    - John sees the exalted Christ.

**Biblical Note:** The Son of Man

The title "Son of Man" occurs many times in the New Testament referring to Jesus Christ. The title is used 82 times in the Gospels to refer to Jesus. Jesus used the title to reflect that he is the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the Messiah (see Daniel 7:13). The title also emphasized his union or identification with mankind.

See: Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8,32,40; 13:37,41; 16:13,27,28; 17:9,12,22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18,28; 24:27,30,37,39,44; 25:13,31; 26:2,24,45,64; Mark 2:10,28; 8:31,38; 9:9,12,31; 10:33,45; 13:26; 14:21,41,62; Luke 5:24; 6:5; 7:34; 9:22,26,44,56,58; 11:30; 12:8,10,40; 17:22,24,26,30; 18:8,31; 19:10; 21:36; 22:22,48,69; 24:7; John 1:51; 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 12:23,34; 13:31; Acts 7:56; Revelation 1:13; 14:14.

**Biblical Note:** Eyes like a Flame of Fire

The description "eyes like a flame of fire" reflects that Jesus sees all and symbolizes his piercing judgment of sin.

See: Revelation 2:18

**Biblical Note:** Feet Like Fine Brass

The description "feet were like fine brass" reflects that the judgment of Jesus in purity and holiness.

**Biblical Note:** In His Right Hand

The phrase "right hand" signifies strength. It symbolizes authority and power. To hold something in one's right hand is to symbolize that the holder has authority and power over what is being held. To sit at one's right hand was to have a place of prominence.

See: Matthew 20:21,23; 22:44; 26:64; Mark 10:40; 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:25,33,34; 5:31; 7:55,56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22, Revelation 1:16,17,20; 2:1; 5:1,7

**Biblical Note:** Sharp Two-edged Sword

The description of a "sharp two-edged sword" coming out of his mouth symbolizes the power

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and force of the Word of God. Jesus' judgments are as sharp as swords.  
See: Isaiah 49:2; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 2:12,16; 19:15,21

## 4. John's response (1:17a)

- John responds by falling on the ground as dead.

## 5. The response of Christ (1:17b-18)

### a. The affirmation (1:17b)

- Christ tells John not to be afraid.

### b. Christ identifies Himself (1:17c-18)

#### (1) First and Last (1:17c)

- Christ describes Himself as eternal.

#### (2) He who Lives, Was Dead, and Now is alive (1:18a)

- Christ describes Himself as resurrected.

#### (3) Has the keys of Hades and Death (1:18b)

- Christ describes Himself as having authority over death and Hell.

### **Bible Note:** Have the Keys

The word "keys" symbolizes that a person has authority and complete control over a certain item.

See: Isaiah 22:22; Matthew 16:19; Revelation 3:7

### **Biblical Note:** Hades (Hell)

The word "Hades" is the Greek word for the realm of the dead. It refers to Hell or a place of torment. It is the New Testament word for the Hebrew word "Sheol" that is used in the Old Testament describing the place of the dead. It is not the final punishment of the wicked.

See: Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14.

## IV. The Command to Write (1:19-20)

### A. The command to write the Revelation (1:19)

- Christ tells John to write the Revelation.
- This is the key verse for understanding the Book of the Revelation.



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## B. The Seven Lampstands and Seven Stars explained (1:20)

### 1. The Seven Lampstands

- The Seven Lampstands are the seven churches.

### 2. The Seven Stars

- The Seven Stars are the seven pastors of the seven churches.

**Biblical Note:** Angel

The word "angel" means messenger. In the Book of Revelation it is used in two ways: (1) the word "angel" refers to an angelic being or messenger, and (2) the word "angel" refers to a human messenger. In Revelation 2 and 3, the word angel refers to a human messenger. Specifically, the messengers are likely the pastors of the churches.