

REVELATION

(Revelation 1:4-8)

A lesson on the Eternal Trinity

NOTE: Books to walk you through Revelation Study: “40 Days through Revelation” Ron Rhodes
“Revelation: Hope in the Darkness” – Scotty Smith and “Revealing Revelation” Amir Tsarfarti

*We established last week that God intends that we read, listen to, & follow/obey = **Blessings**! R.1:3

4 major views of interpretation of Revelation in Church History:

- (1) *Preterist*. The prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled in the **1st century**. <70AD. (Latin *praeter* means “before.”)
- (2) *Historical* or Continuous/*Presentist*. The prophecies of Revelation are being fulfilled now, during the period between Jesus’ resurrection & His second coming. Past & modern history reflected in the symbols/narrative of Rev.
- (3) *Idealist/Poetic*. The book of Revelation does not refer to history at all but is a **timeless allegory** of the conflict between good and evil.
- (4) *Futurist*. The book of Revelation is an explicit forecast of a **future** yet to unfold, symbols of real events/realities

Why is Revelation such an important Book to study, believe, and obey?

In the Book of Revelation we see . . .

1. The revelation of **Jesus Christ**. **Vs. 1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God** (the Father) **gave to Him** (Jesus) **to show** (reveal to) **His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place**. The word **Revelation** (*Apocalypso*) means **unveiling**/disclosure/revealing/illuminating
In this last book of the Bible, we see Jesus *finally* unveiled. **In His first advent**, He came veiled in human flesh; weakness, humility, gentleness, as a poor servant who died on a criminal’s cross. **NOW**, in Revelation, we see the God of creation, Jesus Christ, transfigured on full display as Creator, Incarnate Son of God, Redeemer, the Risen Lord, Coming Judge, & Eternal King of Kings.
2. The hope of **salvation** ultimately realized through the gospel. **Jesus wins**. *In Him, we win*.
3. The fulfillment of the **Church**: The Purpose of the Church; the Promise & Function of Ch. in et.
4. The fulfillment of the promises to God’s Covenant People, **Israel**: (Presence, Blessings, Land)
5. The ultimate **return** of Jesus Christ to *this* earth to judge and bring retribution & restoration.
6. The divine judgment of the **wicked** on the earth (temporally) and then for eternity in **Hell**.
7. The divine judgment of **Satan**, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and their **angels/demons**.
8. The restoration of all things on **earth**: the Millennium; a re-edenification/renewal = temporal.
9. The consummation of this present earth and the **creation** of a new heaven/earth & new Jer.

READ Revelation 1:4-8

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and ^[a]communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and ^[b]keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is [present; immanence], and who was [coeternal], and who is to come [to return again], and from the ^[c]seven spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— ⁶ and He made us *into* a kingdom, priests to ^[d]His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the

tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. [¶]So it is to be. Amen. ⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who [¶]is to come, the Almighty.”

What does this passage reveal about the nature of God? -That He, God, is a **Trinity**! This **scene** (from heaven to earth) is outside of time and space: **in the eternal present**! = God is revealing the subject of the Revelation, namely who is the Trinity and Jesus Christ within the Trinity? The Revelation **OF** Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus *in relation to* the Trinity? (*Ontos & Ergos*)

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Ephesus; Smyrna; Pergamum; Thyatira; Sardis; Philadelphia; & Laodicea. John has been given this Prophecy (future events) and is writing them **specifically** to these 7 flagship churches in 1st Cent. – & **Generally**, to the CHURCH (*all churches*) **CHURCH**=Pay attention; this is important; this affects YOU; Listen, understand, & apply truths/pr

What do we glean from these next four verses to the Church?

1. God is a **Trinity** (God expresses His Nature/*Being in relationship*: God is 3 **persons** (*diversity*), YET is One God (*Unity*); [**Trinity=Tri-unity**=three-in-oneness]; Co-eternal; Co-equal, yet distinct and self-differentiated. Unified in essence/subst. & diverse in role/function; yet 1 GOD!

Grace to you and peace *from Him* GOD, the **FATHER**: **who is** [**present**; immanence], **-and who was** [coeternal], **and who is to come** [to return again] =**God's ETERNITY**/immutability (**unchanging**; sovereign; and all-powerful. Unchanging intimates Perfection! WORTHY of ALL ...AND 'Grace & peace' *from the seven spirits who are before His throne*, -here we get our first symbolic phrase in a **book full of symbols**. -****NOT** Allegory (any symbol can mean anything); **Apoc. Lit.** =Symbols represent something real/actual & historical. [Sign and the thing signified] -Symbols/signs have meaning and purpose (though the meaning could be hidden, revealed later, partially fulfilled, and perhaps dual meanings).

-(**learn all flags?**) A flag is a **symbol** of a nation; representative; purports meaning & purpose. A flag is real in itself, but represents something much more powerful/substantive than just a flag.

-In Revelation, it is a book of "**signs**" (Revelation 1:1 lit. *Jesus signified the vision* to John); =Symbols of Numbers; figures; objects; colors; locations) However, many common symbols include numbers like seven (perfection/completeness), four (the earth), and twelve (God's people); figures such as the Lamb (Jesus), the Dragon (Satan), and various beasts; and objects like white robes (purity), incense (prayers), and trumpets (judgment).

2. **Seven Spirits** (must refer to the Holy Spirit because of it's placement between the Father's description and the Son's description). = It is part of the Trinitarian portrayal/explanation.

***Seven is understood as the number representing perfection/completeness, fullness, fulfillment.** =The *Seven Spirits* -**the seven-fold completion of God's divine perfection**, (*the living, hovering, all-powerful presence & omni-present Holy Spirit of God before the Father's eternal throne in heaven*), which is the Spirit's mobility in completeness & comprehensiveness (lacking nothing with all power, knowledge, capacity, & flexibility for use to accomplish the Father's will) -Rev. 4:5 "**and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God.**"

-Rev. 5:6 a description of the Trinity- upon Jesus, revealed symbolically as a revived Lamb who had been slain/slaughtered –“**having seven horns** (perfect power) **and seven eyes** (perfect vision, foresight, and foreknowledge) **which are the seven spirits of God sent out to all the earth.**"

*We see the Trinity in/around the throne of Heaven -tightly connected, described uniquely different, with distinct roles/function in the eternal space of heaven and earth.

3. Note the three-fold descr. of **Jesus**: (**TRUTH**; Preeminent=first above all; **KING** & Sovereign)
5 **AND** 'Grace & peace' *from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness [martyr], the firstborn of the dead*
[**Preeminence/primacy over ALL**: resurrected from death -firstborn=**first** to be sinless human,
killed, & raised to life from death *ON BEHALF* of ALL humanity/2nd Adam]; **and the ruler of the**
kings of the earth [Jesus is now the King eternal over all universe, Kingdoms, thrones, &
dominions above, below, & on the earth].Now to the heart of the **gospel**:

****To Him who loves us and released [freed] us from our sins by His blood—**[in Christ, and *ONLY*
because of Christ, we have been **redeemed/purchased back** from sin/depravity TO become *His*]
=Forgiven (absolved=cleansed and exonerated from our crime)=BIG deal because **we are guilty!**

-We are guilty (sinful; rebellious; spiritually corrupt & now sp. dead). We stand guilty before a
holy God -BUT God, in His great love, sent Jesus to become sin, take our punish., & Justify US
IN CHRIST, we are no longer guilty, sinful, judged, condemned, or outside. *IN Christ*, we are **NOW**
regenerated, atoned for, forgiven, redeemed, & justified forever.-**R U In Christ? Outside/still guilty**

6 **and He made us** [Believers/Church] **into a kingdom** [we are each one of us a part of God's
kingly dominion now/forever-we are under His Kingship/Lordship], **priests to His God and**
Father [we each now have access to God, the Father because of Jesus AND *we represent* God to
others through our witness, **representing** to, **interceding for** & **leading** people **to** God's love to
be saved]—**to Him/Jesus be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

-This is the work of the Trinity in the Past and Now present; here John turns to the **future**:

7 **Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him**, [Jesus' imminent, visible,
bodily, worldwide return, His Second coming will be seen/experienced by all this world simultan]

-even those who pierced Him; [Jews will see & understand that Jesus was/is their Promised
Messiah and was like a lamb slain -rejected and killed, slaughtered by them in their ignora & fear]
-Zech. 12:10 "**They** (Jews of Jer.) **will look on Me whom they pierced & will mourn over Him**"

-and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. [everyone will immediately know who is
this God, this Jesus, all-powerful, King of Kings – the lamb slain, who took our due punishment];
-Christ's visible return will immediately cause **dread/fear** upon the lost who rejected Him.

So it is to be. Amen. [This IS happening; His return is promised; it is sure; it is certain; be ready!]

Jesus self-declares: 8 "**I am the Alpha and the Omega**," says the Lord God, "**who is and who was**
and who is to come [who is coming/returning], **the Almighty.**" -Heb. 13:8 "**Jesus Christ is the**
same yesterday and today and forever" -Jesus IS the **ETERNAL** sovereign, all-powerful,
unchanging God of the universe -the **beginning** of all creation AND the Judge/King of how this
universe He created will eventually **end** = (He is worthy of ALL devotion, honor, and worship of
our lives; He is highly exalted over ALL)!!

The point of this Revelation, in essence, is to declare that the Bible teaches a clear,
physical, and historical (FUTURE) re-appearing or Second Coming of Jesus Christ as Savior
and Messiah over the whole World

-Acts 1:11 "**and the angels said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This**
Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way as you have
watched Him go into heaven." Jesus ascended From the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem & will return to
Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4)

NOTE: Even though there are many interpretations of Revelation, = 1 undeniable fact ALL agree:

***The imminent, physical (bodily) return of Christ is a *non-negotiable* core Christian doctrine that Evangelical Christianity has held for centuries and still holds to be true** (Dan. 7:13; Zech. 14:4; Mt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7; 14:14). The imminent, visible and physical return of Christ is as crucial a teaching as the virgin birth or the resurrection; in truth, they are all tied together through the life and ministry of Jesus the Messiah, based on hundreds of prophecies throughout all of Scripture.

That Jesus is coming back is a promise and a biblical warrant for Christ's kingdom to be established on this earth (John 14:3). Jesus is coming again to *this* earth. To accept and hold to this biblical reality is in part what defines you as a Christian, since you are believing what Jesus says about Himself and what the Bible claims as fact:

To be a **Christian**, is to *believe* that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah (John 1:36-42), **1.** born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:34-35); **2.** totally without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26); **3.** God in human flesh (John 1:1, 14; 20:28); **4.** died on the cross for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9); was buried (John 19:40-42); **5.** rose again from the dead on the third day (John 2:19); and **6.** ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, where He now intercedes for those who believe in Him. (Mark 16:19; Acts 7:56; 1 Timothy 2:5); **AND 7.** that JESUS will return physically (bodily) and imminently to the earth; He will return with His saints and all His holy angels to the earth at the end of the tribulation, and set up His kingdom on earth for a thousand years, ruling and reigning forever and ever then and in eternity in the New Heaven and Earth (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 19:13).

APPLICATION

- God is described & portrayed in eternity as a Trinity -we need to worship God as such
- We have Salvation ONLY because of Jesus' incarnation & resurrection. He is worthy of our life's full devotion and worship.
- The one thing all Believers should be able to agree on concerning the interpretation of Revelation is that Jesus IS coming back again (His Second Coming is promised/assured) **Ready?**

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. Verse 1 says this is "the revelation of Jesus Christ." In what ways does this passage reveal who Jesus is—not just what He does? How does that shape how we approach the rest of the book? What is Revelation ALL about??
2. John highlights that this revelation was given so that God's servants would know "what must soon take place" (v.1). How should the promise of Christ's return influence our daily decisions and priorities?
3. Verse 3 promises a blessing to those who *read, hear, and keep* the words of this prophecy. Why do you think John connects blessing with obedience, not just knowledge? What does that look like for us today?
4. John greets the churches with grace and peace "from Him who is and who was and who is to come" (v.4). How does this threefold description of God give us security and hope in uncertain times?

5. In verses 5–6, John praises Jesus as the faithful witness, firstborn from the dead, ruler of kings, the One who loves us, freed us from our sins, and made us a kingdom and priests. Which of these descriptions stands out most to you, and why?
6. Verse 7 declares that every eye will see Jesus when He comes, even those who pierced Him. How does the certainty of His return shape the way we view suffering, injustice, or opposition in our world today?
7. God identifies Himself in verse 8 as the Alpha and the Omega, the One who is, who was, and who is to come—the Almighty. How does this declaration of God’s absolute sovereignty give us confidence as we face the unknowns of life?