

# Revelation ch. 1

Before we begin, keep in mind that all scriptures have 3 applications:

Historical:	The verse was uttered & written at a specific point in time for a specific purpose.
Doctrinal:	Every verse is aimed at a specific person for a specific reason at a specific time for a specific reason in order to teach a specific truth
Spiritual:	All scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, etc.

Some verses are primarily historical in nature. They are intended to impart information. But, at the same time, these verses also can carry a doctrinal & an inspirational message. By the same token, a verse may have a specific doctrinal message for a specific group of people & yet contain unbelievable spiritual insights for all believers in all ages. So we have the following, Ch. 1-3:

the	Historical:	The passages are directed to 7 local, visible, physical churches located in Asia during time that John was held captive on the Isle of Patmos.
	Doctrinal:	The passages fall into the period of time known as the Tribulation (7 year period of Judgement just prior the the Lord coming back in glory).
	Spiritual:	The passages reflect the history of the Church for the past 1900 years. The passages can also be individualized for each person. Have you “left your first love?” Is Jesus standing at the door of your heart, knocking, asking to come in? Etc.

The bulk of the book (ch. 4-22) is not to be taught as DOCTRINE for the church age in which we live. But we can gain great spiritual insight & guidelines to live our daily lives. Finally, this will not be an exhaustive or very deep study of the book. We will allude to some deeper aspects that are referred to but will not take a lot of time chasing rabbits. The book divides this age into 3 parts:

Church Age:	from the resurrection of Christ to the Rapture of the saints.
Tribulation:	from the Rapture of the saints to the Second Advent (1st part of the 2nd Coming).
Millennium:	from the 2nd Advent to the Great White Throne (Jesus reigns for a 1000 years).

vs. 1-3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; & he sent & signified it by his angel unto his servant John:  
Who bare record of the word of God, & of the testimony of Jesus Christ, & of all things that he saw.  
Blessed is he that readeth, & they that hear the words of this prophesy, & keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Be careful of the little preposition “of”. Jesus is the object of the passages. It is a revelation about Him. Keep in mind, “the fear of the Lord” is not God fearing you! The book is the Revelation of John about Jesus Christ.

Notice the term the “testimony of Jesus Christ”. This is extremely important. The thing that separates the Bible from the fairy tales is it’s ability to tell the future. This just so happens to be the trademark of Jesus, see 19:10. This separates the men from the boys! Check out Isa. 42:23-26 for a little more insight.

As we have mentioned before, this is the only book in the bible that gives an implicit blessing for reading it!

vs. 4-6 *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, & peace, from him which is, & which was, & which is to come; & from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;  
And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, & the first begotten of the dead, & the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, & washed us from our sins in his own blood,  
And hath made us kings & priests unto God & his Father; to him be glory & dominion for ever & ever. Amen.*

The first thing to notice is the number “seven”. It is the number of perfection or completeness. The study of numerology (biblical, not the psychic network membo jumbo) is a fascinating study which is beyond our scope in these lessons. When you have time, take a concordance (Strongs), go thru the bible & check out numbers like seven, three, eight, thirteen, etc. It can be a ball! There are seven churches here, seven spirits, seven stars, seven candlesticks. In Rev. 22 the phrase “this book” is found seven times. There are seven angels here, seven vials, seven trumpets, seven seals & seven personages. God deals in multiples of 7. Gentiles work with the number 10.

We have the recurring appellation of ‘him which is (priest), which was (prophet), & which is to come (king). Again, this is none other than Jesus himself. Take a peek at Isa. 11:1-2 for some insight on these Spirits. Currently, Jesus is our High Priest (sorry, no earthly priests or fathers allowed, Mt. 23:9, And call no man your father upon the earth...) in this church age, Heb. 3:1. Do not make the Lord ‘shed His blood now (Heb. 7:27). He shed it all on the cross as a Prophet! Again, He WAS a prophet, He IS a priest & SHALL BE a king! Get these straight & a lot of the bible will open like a ripe fruit for you.

As the ‘first begotten of the dead’, Jesus is the first one to die, raise from the dead & NEVER DIE AGAIN! A lot of people have died & been resurrected in the past, but all of them died again: Moses, Elijah, Lazarus, widow of Nains son, etc. The neat thing is the word “first” begotten. He was the first. But, if we, as born again christians, are alive at the Rapture, we too, get to join that exclusive club! We will never die! Pretty neat, huh?

The text tells us that we have been washed in “his blood”. Not the waters of baptism. 1 Pet. 1:18-19, *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver & gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as the lamb without blemish & without spot.*

God has made us priests in this age, but in the age to come we will be kings & reign with him!

*vs. 7-8 Behold, he cometh with clouds; & every eye shall see him, & they also which pierced him: & all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha & Omega, the beginning & the ending, saith the Lord, which is, & which was, & which is to come, the Almighty.*

The passage is not referring to the Rapture (catching away of the church), but, rather, the Advent. The event that we know as the ‘2nd Coming’ has 2 parts to it. The first part is the Rapture (see 1 Cor. 15:50-53. This is a secret, catching our of the body of Christ. It happens in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye & no one shall ‘see’ it. After an approx. 7 year period the Advent takes place. This is that. The whole world will see Him coming. If we make the distinction between the Rapture & the Advent, then a whole bunch more scriptures fall into place. Take the time to sort them out. We will go into this in more detail later.

Pete Ruckman has said, “the only thing men learn from history is that men never learn from history”. So true. The first time Jesus came to earth Rome was in power, not Russia. The 2nd time He comes Rome will be in power, not Russia (pretty remarkable about the Soviet Union, wasn’t it? Kinda makes sense now though, doesn’t it?) The 1st time the Jew was in the homeland. Up intill 1948 there were a bunch of skeptics, weren’t there? Once again the hand of God stepped into the arena of man & influenced human events! The 1st time He appeared privately to friends & loved ones. So too, the 2nd time (Rapture). The 1st time He appeared publicly to His enemies, ditto the 2nd time (every eye shall see him). Before His 1st coming there was approx. 400 years of biblical silence, with no revelation. Do you know how long it’s been since the King James Bible was translated? Almost 400 years! Do you know what men learn from history? Nothing!!

The Alpha & Omega. First & the Last. And everything in between. Jesus is all in all. There is none beside Him. He stands alone with no peers or associates! These are the 1st & last letters in the Greek alphabet. Our word ‘alphabet’ comes from the 1st 2 letters of the Greek, Alpha & Beta. Once again we have the threefold designation of Jesus in the past, present & future. Do you think this might be just a tad important to the Author of the Book that we get this fact thru our thick heads? I do.

vs. 9-10 *I John, who also am your brother, & companion in tribulation (not great tribulation), & in the kingdom & patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, & for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, & heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*

The 'tribulation' that John is referring to here is the persecutions suffered under the hand of Rome. The 'great tribulation' is still future from our perspective & is the events described in Rev. 4-19.

The term 'in the Spirit' refers to the spiritual condition John was in that can range from a trance to a coma. The Holy Spirit takes control over him, supernaturally moves him 1900 years into the future & shows him the things that shall be. And here comes that great voice!

vs. 11- Jesus Christ announces Himself to John again. He lists His credentials & tells John to write the things that he is about to see in a book.

vs. 12-16 John turns to the voice & sees seven golden candlesticks. See vs. 20 to see how the bible interprets itself! Turns out that the candlesticks are, in fact, churches! Jesus is standing in the midst of the 7 churches. The vision that John has is enough to knock his socks off. Here stands the glorified King of Kings & Lord of Lords. This is not the 'lowly Galileean'. This Lord of the Universe is not about to 'turn the other cheek'. You will not find Him crying at the tomb of Lazarus now. No. This is the one of whom the bible says, 'In the beginning God created the world'.

His eyes are no longer like a doves, but are as a flame of fire. This is so different a person from the dead, crucified Savior that John walked with for over 3 years that he didn't even recognize him! He falls at His feet as dead. This Christ has nothing in common with the 'Big Fisherman', Charlton Heston or the 'Robe'. This glorified, risen Christ has eyes that will burn down to the bottom of your very soul.. He is no longer the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'. He is the 'Lion of the Tribe of Judah'!!!

The reference to the 'stars' in vs. 16 is explained in vs. 20 (they are angels). The reference to the 'sun' is in & of itself a great study in types. The sun is a type of Jesus & goes hand in hand with Ps. 19 about the 'heavens declaring the glory of God'. See, Mal. 4:2 This will be another study in the future.

And of course the 'sword' is a reference to 'the word of God', see, Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17; Rev. 19:15.

vs. 17-20 Well, after John gets an eyeful of his old preaching buddy, Jesus, he just about has a heart attack when he gets a gander of Him now. He falls down as if he were dead! And once again we get that same old refrain about the threefold nature of His Work (that liveth, was dead & am alive forevermore). Hey, do you think someone might think we are a bit thick? This must be the umpteenth time that we have been told about the 3-fold aspect of Jesus work! Let's make sure we get it!!!

If I am going to put all my eggs in one basket for the eternal destiny of my soul, you better believe I am going to give them to the one 'who holds the keys of hell & of death'. Talk about a win, win situation! Who better to trust with my soul? I don't ever have to worry about 'death' or even 'hell'. Why? Because my Lord & Savior has conquered them both!!! Past tense!!! Jn. 10:9; Jn. 10:27-30; Rom. 8:35-39; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 6:17; & Eph. 2:1-7 to mention just a few.

We end the ch. with the 3-fold outline that Jesus gives for the book. The things which thou hast seen (past tense), things which are (present tense) & things which shall come to pass (future). Here's that three-fold stuff again, hmm.

The last verse ties up a couple of loose ends. We learn that sometimes 'stars' can be angels (more of this later in the book) & that candlesticks can be 'churches'. This is one of the reasons we are admonished to "study" the book, (2 Tim. 2:15), so the Holy Spirit can let the Book explain itself. If we are so limited in our exposure to the Book in all it's facets, then we are by definition, limited in how much of this Book He can open for us!

Good luck & may God bless you in the reading & study of His Word!