

## Future Lessons for Today's Living – The Book of Revelation

### Deductive Introduction

#### Revelation 1:1–8

Revelation has long been regarded as the most mysterious and confusing book of the Bible. This is ironic, since the very title Revelation means “something disclosed, divulged, or laid open to view.”<sup>i</sup> The truth is, while many things remain unclear, God has indeed revealed many secrets to us in this precious book of the Bible. And more importantly, He has revealed Himself to us. Amidst all the details and particulars of end-times events, the foremost theme of this book is Jesus Christ, as you will see in your studies to come.

Read verses 1–8 of the first chapter of Revelation.

Verse 1 gives us the progression of this revelation. It was given by God to His Son, Jesus Christ, whom it is about. God gave it to Him so that He could show His servants what will take place shortly. He did this by sending an angel to John, who then wrote it down for us.

This is the same John who was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Even among the twelve, there was a more intimate circle; on more than one occasion in the Gospels we read about Jesus separating Peter, James, and John to Himself. John referred to himself in his Gospel as “the one whom Jesus loved” and we read of him in the upper room reclined against Jesus as an intimate and personal friend. If anyone could discern the voice, the appearance, and the character of Jesus, it was John. It is therefore significant that John is the one who bears witness to us of all that he saw in this revelation.

In verse 3 we read that those who read or hear the words of this book and keep the words therein are blessed by God. This is another indication that Christ wants to reveal Himself to us and wants us to know about the things which will take place in the end times. As Christians, we do not follow a God who shuts us out and keeps us in the dark. We are His children, and He enjoys drawing us in to the light so that we may learn and understand and know His thoughts, His will, and His secrets.

Keep in mind that as you study Revelation this year, this special blessing applies to you—provided you “keep [or obey] those things which are written in it.”

Also, in verse 3, we read that the time is near. Verse 1 said that these things will shortly take place. Opponents of God's Word and disbelievers of Revelation would draw our

attention to these words and ask us, “Is two thousand years a near, or a short, time?” And if we were to view the issue from their own godless perspective, our answer must be “No.” But if we truly believe in an eternal God—a God to whom a thousand years is as a day, and day is as a thousand years—we know that the span of time from John’s writings until present is but a breath. For us, a better translation of the word near is “imminent.” The end is pending and ready; the time is at hand.

In verse 4, we see to whom this letter containing the revelation of Christ is addressed: to the seven churches in Asia. Those seven churches were Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.



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In verses 4 and 5 we see the three persons of the Trinity— God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son, Jesus Christ. His eternal nature is emphasized— something you will see several times throughout this book. He is the one who was (past), is (present), and is to come (future). The Holy Spirit is called “seven Spirits” and we will look at what this means in Chapter 4.

Verse 5 gives us three titles for Jesus Christ:

The faithful witness

The firstborn of the dead

The ruler over the kings of the earth

These are just the first of many names and titles you will hear as you study this book. (You may want to start a list, either individually or as a group, that you will update throughout the year.)

John then lists three things that Jesus has done for us, as Christians:

He has loved us. And He is not ashamed to tell us He loves us. In John 15:9, Jesus said, "As my Father loved me I also have loved you; abide in My love."

He has washed us from our sins in His own blood. It is an amazing thing that being washed in scarlet blood can make us white as snow, but that is what happens, according to 1 John 1:7 and Revelation 7:14. Of course this language is figurative and simply means that Christ's death is the only way to truly erase our spiritual dirtiness.

He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. Peter says that we, as followers of Christ, are a royal priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (see 1 Peter 2:5-9).

When we contemplate these things, our response can only be that which John wrote: "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen"!

Verse 7 promises Christ's return with the clouds. We will examine His second coming in detail as we study the later chapters of Revelation. For now, John highlights that for many, the event will be an unpleasant one, because they have rejected and opposed the Almighty. But for those of us who have embraced Christ as savior, we can join with John and say, "Even so. Amen"!

There are three more titles for Christ in verse 8 that you can add to that new list of yours:

The Alpha and Omega

The Beginning and End

The Almighty

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. We would say He is the "A to Z." Using these letters there is no knowledge that cannot be communicated. In the same way, Jesus is the full and entire Word of God.

Questions To Contemplate:

1. What are you hoping to learn, gain, or accomplish in your study of Revelation and your fellowship as a group?

2. Consider the six titles of Jesus mentioned above (look for the bullet points). Which of these titles makes the most impression on your mind? Why?
3. If you have read or studied Revelation in the past, think about something that the Lord revealed to you in that reading/study.
4. Verse 3 promises a blessing to those who read, hear, and keep the words contained in this book. What do you think this blessing is?

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<sup>i</sup> Revelation. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/revelation> (accessed: June 12, 2010).  
Reveal. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/reveal> (accessed: June 12, 2010).

<sup>ii</sup> Map obtained from <http://www.esvstudybible.org/sb/images/1200/map-66-01.jpg> on 8/21/09. Copyright unknown. Use of this image does not constitute an endorsement of <http://www.esvstudybible.org>, nor are the opinions and teachings therein necessarily shared by the author or Harvest Christian Fellowship.

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