

## Chapter 1

## I. Brief outline of the Book:

- A. **Introduction.** Chapter 1
- B. **Church Age.** From resurrection of Jesus until the Rapture of the Church (Jn.20:22). **Note:** Some believe from outpouring of Holy Ghost (Acts 2) until the Rapture of the Church. (Chs. 2,3)
- C. **Seven years of trouble** (Tribulation; 70th Week of Daniel - Dan.9:27), with the last three and one-half years to be a period of Great Tribulation. (Chs. 4-19:4)
- D. **The Millennial Reign of Christ** (1000 years of peace) on earth. (Chapter 20)
- E. **New Heavens and New Earth** - Eternal State. (Chs. 21,22)

## II. Title of the Book (v.1)

**Note:** Rather than being entitled '**The Revelation of St. John The Divine**', it seems a more appropriate title would be '**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**'. The Book is a revelation of Jesus Christ, given by God.

- A. Revelation means unveiling, and is derived from Latin 're' ('back') plus 'velum' (veil). To pull back the veil, to reveal, to expose to view. **Not to be a mystery.**
- B. Apocalypse (Gr.): Something revealed, disclosed, manifested.
- C. Apocrypha. The opposite of Apocalypse, meaning that which is concealed, not set forth, not authentic. **Note:** It consists of 15 Books (outlined below) and appeared on the scene in the interim of 400 years between the time of the Old Testament and New Testament.
  - I & II Esdras
  - Tobit
  - Judith
  - Wisdom of Solomon
  - Ecclesiasticus
  - Baruch
  - Epistle to Jeremiah
  - Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Young Men
  - Susanna
  - Bel and the Dragon
  - Prayer of Mansseh
  - I & II Maccabees

**Note:** The Catholic Church (Counsel of Trent - 1546) declared 11 of these books as canonized, and they appear in the modern Catholic Bible. Too, neither Jesus nor the N.T. Writers referred to any of these writings. The early Church fathers regarded them as uninspired, as they do not appear in the Ancient Hebrew manuscripts.

The '**major theme of the Bible**' is the 'Lord Jesus Christ', telling what He has done, is doing, and is going to do. The Book of Revelation gives emphasis as to what He is 'going to do'. It's a revelation of Jesus Christ, revealed and revealing.

- a. Show. Denotes 'word pictures', or 'symbols'.
- b. Signified. These symbols, or pictures, are symbolic of reality. They have a meaning.
- c. Things. Real facts. Not just something of someone's imagination.
- d. Must. An absolute certainty. An urgent necessity.
- e. Shortly. As God records time. How much closer now than then!
- f. Come to pass. Has a note of finality. Will fully and entirely come to pass.

**III. Method of Revelation.** (v.2)

- A. Given by God, sent by Christ, signified by an angel, recorded by John, and communicated by him to the churches.
- B. John 'saw'. This is undoubtedly John the Apostle, The Beloved. He was an eyewitness to the visions.

**Note:** Christ wants us, as believers and servants, to know what the future has in store.

**IV. Beatitude of Revelation.** (v.3)

- A. A blessing to 'he that readeth'.
- B. A blessing to 'they that hear'.
- C. A blessing to those who 'keep (obey) those things written therein'.

**Note:** There are 7 beatitudes in Revelation: (1) 1:3, (2) 14:13, (3) 16:15, (4) 19:9, (5) 20:6, (6) 22:7, and (7) 22:14.

- D. For the time is at hand. Once again emphasizing the nearness of this taking place.

**V. Salutation (Greetings) to the seven churches which are in Asia.** (vs.4,5)

- A. Grace. From 'charis'. A Greek form of greeting.
- B. Peace. From 'shalom'. Hebrew form of greeting.

**Note:** There were many more than 7 churches in Asia Minor (now a part of western Turkey), but 7 is the 'number of completion'.

- These 7 churches are representative of the totality of the church of that day. Too, they are representative of the 7 stages of the 'church age'.
- Unlike today, 'numbers' carried a religious meaning in John's day.
- Seven is the number for 'completeness'. Therefore, it is representative of the entire (whole) church.
- Three is the number of the numerical signature of God.
- Four is the number of the numerical signature of nature, creation, and humanity.
- Seven is the signature of the totality, or completeness.

**Notice some 'sevens' of the Bible:**

- The Bible begins with a week of 7 days and ends with a Book of 7s having to do with the final destiny of creation.
- The 'Sabbath' was the 7th day.
- Naaman dipped in Jordan 7 times.
- Jericho fell after 7 priests with 7 trumpets for 7 days marched around the walls (with many others) and blew their trumpets on the 7th time around the city on the 7th day.
- Joseph's dream had 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine.
- King Nebuchadnezzar was insane 7 years.
- There are 7 petitions in the Lord's prayer, 7 parables in Matthew 13, and 7 loaves fed the multitude.
- Jesus spoke 7 times while on the cross.
- A leopard-like beast with 7 heads.
- A scarlet-colored beast with 7 heads.
- 7 mountains.

**The 'Salutation' is from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (vs.4,5)**

- A. 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come'. God the Father. Emphasizes the eternity and unchangeableness of Jehovah God.
- B. 'Seven Spirits which are before his throne'. The Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, in the complete fulness of His office and power. As mentioned, 7 is the number of complete fulness and perfection. And as the 7 churches represent the complete church, so the 'seven Spirits of God' denote the completeness of the gracious Administration of the Holy Ghost. He is the 'One sent' (Jn.14:26). He goes forth from the throne.
- C. 'And from Jesus Christ'. There can be neither 'grace' nor 'peace' for anyone except through Jesus Christ, the anointed Savior.

**VI. Names of Christ**

- A. 'Faithful Witness'. 'Word of God'. 'The Word of Life'.
- B. 'First begotten of the dead'. He was the first to be raised from the dead with a glorified body never to die again (1 Cor. 15:20,23).
- C. 'The Prince (ruler) of the kings of the earth'. This will be the ultimate position of Christ during His Millennial Reign (Phil 2:9-11). (King of Kings and Lord of Lords.) **Note:** The kingdom, which Satan once offered and Christ refused (Matt. 4:8-10), Christ will yet have. But it will be at His time and in His way - not from Satan
  - a. 'Unto Him that loved us'. Not only did He love us (past), He loves us now (present).
  - b. 'Washed us from our sins in his own blood'. Loosed us. Freed us. Forgave us.
  - c. 'Hath made us kings and priests'. A 'Kingdom of priests'. Every believer in Christ Jesus is authorized to perform the spiritual function of the priesthood. 'These signs shall follow them that believe' (Mk. 16:17,18).
  - d. 'To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen'. (v.6)

**VII. 'Behold, he cometh'. (v. 7)**

- A. Christ did not return to His Father in heaven to stay there! He went back for the sake of mankind (Jn. 16:7). But He is coming again!
- B. His Second Coming will be in two stages: first, He will come in the clouds to 'rapture the church' (the blood-washed saints) before the beginning of the 7-year tribulation; and secondly, at end of tribulation He will return to earth, as recorded in Rev.19. **Note:** This verse speaks of His return to earth at end of tribulation - not the 'Rapture'.
- C. John was present, some 60 years earlier, when Christ ascended into heaven from the Mt. of Olives. He heard the angels say, 'Ye men of Galilee, this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven' (Acts 1:11).
- D. 'With clouds' - in majesty and glory. He is the One 'who maketh the clouds his chariots: who walketh upon the wings of the wind' (Ps.104:3). **Note:** On 7 different occasions, the Bible tells us that He will return 'in', or 'with', clouds.
- E. 'Every eye shall see him'. Only the righteous will see Him when He appears in the clouds to rapture His saints. But when He returns to earth at end of tribulation, every eye shall see him.
- F. 'And they also which pierced him'. Not only the Roman soldiers, and Judas (the betrayer), but all who have wronged, or persecuted, or insulted, or wounded the Lamb of God in any way. **Note:** Those who reject Christ are literally crucifying Him afresh.
- G. 'And all the kindreds (tribes) of the earth'. This is a 'special word' for the Jews. 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn' (Zech.12:10).

**VIII. 'I am Alpha and Omega'. (v.8)**

- A. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the 'A' and 'Z'. 'The beginning and the ending'. All things had their beginning in Him. 'Without him was not anything made that was made' (Jn.1:3). Too, in Him all things will have their consummation.
- B. 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come'. This same title was used to describe God the Father (v.4), but it belongs equally to the Son. He is the 'I AM'.
- C. 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever' (Heb.13:8).
- D. 'The Almighty'. No higher name can be given. Regardless of what some have said concerning the deity of Jesus, He is still the 'Almighty'.

**IX. 'I John' (v.9).** At the time of this vision, John was the only Apostle of the original twelve yet alive.

- A. 'Brother and companion in tribulation'. John suffered for the cause of Christ just as Paul had said would happen. 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (II Tim.3:12).
  - The 'tribulation' mentioned here is not referring to the end-time tribulation, but to the persecution that had already befallen believers in John's day.
- B. 'And in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ'. Refers to state of the kingdom in John's day. By being born-again, we too are placed in the kingdom (Jn.3:3).
- C. 'Was in the isle that is called Patmos' (during persecution by Domitian). It's believed that John was on Patmos (a rugged, rocky, volcanic island in the Aegean Sea, some 10 miles long and 6 miles wide) for some 18 to 24 months.
- D. The question is asked: Why was John on the Isle of Patmos? He was sent there as punishment for preaching the Gospel of Christ. But God had him there 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ'.

**X. 'In the Spirit on the Lord's day' (v.10)**

- A. The first day of the week is surely recognized as the 'Lord's Day', but it is nowhere called that in Scripture. Too, no Christian writer for the next 100 years after Christ's death and resurrection called it the 'Lord's Day'. For Christians, every day is the 'Lord's Day'. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it' (Ps.118:24). Since the Lord has made every day, they are each 'His day'.
- B. John was taken in a vision by the Holy Spirit into 'the day of the Lord', which speaks of 'the day of God's judgment'.
- C. 'Heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet'.
  - a. God prepared Moses to receive the Law by the blowing of a trumpet, exceeding loud (Exo.19:16).
  - b. Here, with a voice as of a trumpet, God prepares John to receive the Revelation messages to the 7 churches.
  - c. At the 'rapture', the Lord himself shall descend - 'with the trump of God' (I Thess.4:16).

**XI. 'What thou seest, write in a book' (v.11)** God not only commanded the book to be written, but He tells and shows John what to write.

- A. To be sent to the 7 churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. In reality the letters are for the entire Church (Christian body) of all times and places.
- B. 'Seven golden candlesticks' (lamp stands). (v.12) The Psalmist speaks of God's word as a 'lamp to his feet and a light unto his path' (Ps.119:105). The churches are the lamp stands. Their function is to expel the darkness. 'Ye are the light of the world' (Matt.5:14).

**XII. 'In the midst of the 7 candlesticks (churches) one likened unto the Son of man' (v.13).**

- A. Before Jesus left the world to return to His Father, He said to His disciples, 'Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt.28:20). But the promise is not only to the disciples or ministers, it is 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst' (Matt.18:20).
- B. This 'Son of man' is none other than Jesus. John sees a celestial being, but like a human being.
- C. Christ's apparel.
  - a. In a priestly robe - as priest. (Garment down to his feet.)
  - b. In royal dress - a king. (Golden girdle)
  - c. In judicial attire - a judge. (Hair white like wool) (In His description, we have all three dignities in one. He is among the churches to judge. ('Judgment must begin at the house of God'). ('And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear'?- I Pet.4:17,.18).

**XIII. His hair was white like wool (v.14). 'The Ancient of Days' (Dan.7:8).**

- A. Eyes were as a flame of fire.
  - a. All-seeing.
  - b. The same eyes that looked at Simon Peter after Peter's denial.
  - c. The same eyes that watched the people give their monies in the Temple treasury.
  - d. 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him' (II Chron.16:9). Amen!
- B. Feet like unto fine brass (v.15). Continues the thought of judgment. Sin was judged at the brazen (brass) altar.
- C. Voice as the sound of many waters.
  - a. The voice that spoke the universe into existence.
  - b. The voice that will call His own from the grave at the 'rapture'.
  - c. He speaks all languages, of all peoples, of all ages.

**XIV. Seven Stars (v.16). The angels, or pastors, of the 7 churches (v.20).**

- Christ walks amongst the churches, but holds the stars (pastors) in His right hand.
- Stars represent authority (Dan.12:3). Apostates are called 'wandering stars' (Jude 13).
- Some believe that God has assigned an angel to look after each church. (I don't agree.)

**'Out of his mouth - a sharp two-edged sword'.**

- A. Speaks of His Word (Heb.4:12).
- B. God judges by His Word. Jesus said, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day' (Jn.12:48).

**'His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength'.**

- A. Paul saw that great light on the Damascus Road.
- B. The churches are lamps, or lamp stands.
- C. The ministers (pastors) are stars.
- D. But Christ is the Sun. The Holy City will have 'no need of the sun - for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof' (Rev.21:23).

**XV. 'I fell at his feet' (v.17). John, the one who had laid his head upon Jesus' bosom. He had seen Jesus after His being raised from the dead. Now, when beholding Christ in His glory, John becomes as one dead. **Note:** If John, being righteous, fell as one dead in the Lord's presence, how will the 'unrighteous' stand?**

**'Fear not'** (v.18). John had heard these words from Christ before: (1) In a message to the disciples (Lu.12:32), and (2) in a storm on the Galilee (Matt.14:27). Now he hears the same words from the glorified Christ some 60-65 years after the Lord's death and resurrection.

A. Four reasons to 'Fear not':

- a. 'I am the first and the last' - speaks of His deity. He is the first because there were none before Him; and He is the last, since there will be none to follow.
- b. He is the living One, He who had been dead. Speaks of His death and resurrection.
- c. 'Behold, I am alive for evermore'. Speaks of his present state.
- d. 'And have the keys of hell (Hades) and of death'. 'Keys' speak of authority and power. Jesus has power over death and the grave because of His own death and resurrection (Jn.5:21-29).

**XVI. Divisions of the Book** (v.19)

- A. Things thou hast seen (Past). Back to Calvary and Pentecost.
- B. Things which are (Present). The Age of a rapidly weakening church.
- C. Things which shall be hereafter (Future). Rapture, Tribulation, Millennial Reign of Christ, and Eternity.

**Note:** Division of the Book by classes. I Cor.10:32 - Jews, Gentiles, Church

- A. Chapters 1-3. Church on earth.
- B. Chapters 4,5. Church with God in heaven - after rapture (Chs.4,5).
- C. Chapters 6-19. Deals primarily with Israel; last oppression by Gentiles.
- D. Chapters 20-22. All three classes included. Jews reigning over Gentiles, and Church reigning with Christ over all.

**XVII. A Mystery no longer** (v.20). (Self-explanatory)