

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Chapter 1

April 13, 2016

The book of Revelation tells of matters past, present, and future revealed by Jesus Christ via angels to the apostle John. John, the author of the gospel and three epistles bearing his name, is granted visions of momentous events on Earth and in heaven.

Revelation describes God's plan for the end of human history. This intentional ending is a strange concept to an unbelieving world which sees history stumbling out of a murky past, wandering aimlessly through the present, and eventually falling helplessly to some natural or man-made catastrophe.

Scripture, however, links the human story to God's divine will. God created man to have communion with Him and dominion over the Earth. Adam and Eve, through their deliberate sin, thwarted that plan. This failure, to the amazement of the angels, only furthered God's glory as it disclosed God's overarching intent and unfathomable love for His creation:

- "... *through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the **eternal purpose** that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Eph. 3:10-11).

- "*Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession.*" (Titus 2:13-14)

- "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*" (2 Peter 3:9)

We see that God from eternity past meant to redeem a people for Himself through the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, and is patiently waiting until all may come to Him.

But He will not wait forever. In Genesis 6:3 God declared that he would reach His limit of pleading with man in 120 years. The result was Noah's flood, survived by only eight people. The day is coming when no more souls will enter into salvation and the history book will close.

But when? Mark 13:32 tell us "*But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*" Many preachers have claimed to know the date of the end but have been proven wrong.

But there is indeed a time predicted by the prophetic clock in Daniel 9:24: "*Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.*"

Each "week" is seven years. There were seven weeks, or 49 years, from Daniel's vision to the rebuilding of the temple under Cyrus, then another 62 weeks, or 434 years until the Lord Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

But then a strange thing happened. The clock stopped at 69 weeks. It has remained stopped ever since – for 2000 years now – as God accomplishes his eternal purpose through the church, a mystery hidden from the Old Testament prophets. In the book of Revelation, as we will see, the clock restarts and the last week of seven years runs its course.

As you read Revelation note how each item is crossed off the checklist given to Daniel (and his people, the Jews):

- finish the transgression
- put an end to sin
- atone for iniquity
- bring in everlasting righteousness
- seal both vision and prophet
- anoint a most holy place

Then think how the same goals are accomplished for the believing Gentile, each having a type of fulfillment during the Lord's first ministry on earth and complete fulfillment in the narrative given to John in Revelation.

I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning

and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

and I will accomplish all my purpose'
(Isa. 46:9-10)

Notes on Chapter 1

1:1 “The revelation of Jesus Christ” may mean something revealed *by* Jesus, and/or the revealing *of* Jesus himself at His return. The remainder of the verse inclines toward the first meaning. The Greek word for revelation is apocalypse.

1:3 We are blessed in this Bible study – those who read aloud and those who listen! But here's a question to ponder in the coming weeks: What are we to keep, or take to heart, from this book, and how? What is written to *me*?

1:4 Both God the Father and Jesus the Son are mentioned in this verse.

1:4 There is only one Spirit. The seven spirits here speaks of completeness or perfection.

1:7 Although not everyone yet acknowledges Jesus (Heb. 2:7), all *will* see and marvel (and wail) at His coming and kneel in subjection (Phil. 2:10, Rev. 5:13).

1:8 Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so this is like saying the Lord is everything from A to Z, beginning to end.

1:9 John, brother of James and son of Zebedee, wrote this book. It has many similarities in style and substance to his gospel and three epistles. Because of his testimony for Jesus he was exiled by the Roman authorities to the small island of Patmos off the southwest coast of Asia Minor (now Turkey). Revelation was written around A.D. 95 when John was an old man.

1:10 “The Lord's day” probably refers to Sunday, the first day of week, but is not used this way elsewhere in the New Testament.

1:11 The seven churches are all located in modern day Turkey. Most are now empty ruins. John had special care for these churches and ended his days at Ephesus.

1:12 The lampstands refer to the testimony of the churches (Matt. 5:15, Phil. 2:15).

1:13-16 John, along with James and Peter, had been given a glimpse of the Lord's divine being at the transfiguration. Here John sees His glory fully revealed. The long robe suggests judicial garb: Jesus now appears as judge. The double edged sword is the Word of God as in Heb. 4:12.

1:18 Death is the grave, the destination of the physical body. Hades refers to the disembodied soul. They are reunited in the resurrection of the believer.

1:20 The word “angel” is the same as the word for messenger. The angels here may be heavenly beings who are particularly associated with individual churches, or simply the human couriers who will convey the messages.