

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation: 1:7-16 | Session 3 | Notes

We are studying the book of The Revelation from a literal perspective. Our goal is to try and follow sound principles of interpretation and not make up things. One generally accepted rule to follow when studying any passage in the Bible, not only Revelation, is called, *The Golden Rule of Interpretation*. It states;

*"...Take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic (self-evident) and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."*¹

We also want to avoid interpreting the Bible based on what we have already been taught. We may have received correct teaching and we may find confirmation of that teaching in what we discover, but approaching each chapter, verse, and word with a fresh unbiased perspective will help alleviate some of the confusion we may have from so much incorrect teaching that undoubtedly, we have all had at some time.

In our study through Revelation, we are making various assumptions from the outset (An assumption is a hypothesis, something that can be tested, and if found to be incorrect, can be changed). A primary assumption we are making from the outset of the study is that the **Body of Christ** (the church today that we are a part of in the dispensation of grace) is not found in The Revelation, nor is the author John speaking to *us* or about *us*.

Our assumption is that John is writing to Jews, in particular seven Jewish assemblies who will read this book to gain hope during *The Day of the Lord*². Another assumption is that since the number seven is the number of spiritual *perfection*, these seven assemblies are representative of all of Israel living in *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*³.

The Announcement of His Coming.

Verse 7—

John writes the word **behold** 25 times in his book (Greek: *idou*. Also translated "lo" five times). It is an attention grabber that means "Look!" and is directed here to the seven assemblies (vs. 4). John presents the seven churches with an exclamatory warning to *look* at what's coming: **Behold, he cometh with clouds**. This is an Old Testament reference to Messiah coming in glory.⁴ Daniel saw a vision of the Son of man *coming in the clouds* (Daniel 7:13,14). Jesus foretells of His coming in the clouds with great power and great glory in Matthew 24:30 (see

¹ Dr. David L. Cooper, the late founder and director of the Biblical Research Society.¹

² See last session on The Day of the Lord and The Time of Jacob's Trouble = The Tribulation.

³ *ibid*.

⁴ This is not the rapture of the church. In the rapture believers are snatched away or, *caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Things that are similar are not the same.

Hope Now Bible Church
Pastor Roger Feenstra
July 10, 2022

also Matthew 26:64, and Mark 14:62). Everyone, **every eye shall see him⁵, and they also which pierced him**, that is the *house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem* (Zechariah 12:10) **and all the Godly kindreds of the earth** (In context here, the Land, not the whole earth), literally those *of the twelve tribes⁶* of Israel.

This foreshadowing of the appearing of Messiah varies greatly from His first coming when the *angel of the Lord said to the shepherds Behold (idou, "Look!"), I bring you good tidings of great joy!* In the second coming those who "look" will **wail** or grieve or, literally beat their breasts **because of Him**, and they will **wail** with great repentance—something that was necessary in order for the Messiah to return. In the book of Acts when Peter preached about the future Kingdom to the Jews in Jerusalem, they too were *pricked in their heart* at what they had done to their Messiah. They cried out to Peter, *"What shall we do!"* Peter replied, *"Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins."* (Acts 2:37,38).

At the rapture of the Body of Christ it will be much different. The rapture will be a time of comfort, knowing we will always be with the Lord; as Paul wrote, **comfort one another with these words** (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

The Alpha and Omega Described.

Verse 8—

The Lord speaks for the first time in Revelation and John records it, **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending**. This is a Hebrew expression meaning *the whole of anything from the beginning to the end*. The phrase **Alpha and Omega** (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) is used in Scripture for both the Father and the Son.

The use of numbers throughout Scripture have specific meanings;⁷ for example, 7 is the number of perfect completion, 8 is the number of a new beginning, and 9 is the number of judgment. The **Lord...Almighty** is used 9 times in Revelation. **Almighty** is translated from the Greek word *pantokrator* and means *having dominion over all*. The King and the Judge **which is, and which was, and which is to come⁸** is coming and all the oppressors of Israel in the Times of the Gentiles will be judged and destroyed.

John, the Companion in Tribulation.

Verse 9—

John identifies himself to the seven assemblies, **I John, who also am your brother**, that is he is a fellow Jew, **and a companion in tribulation**, he could mean general tribulation, suffering and

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The first time this Greek word is used in the N.T. is in Matthew 19:28, "judging the twelve tribes (*phule*) of Israel. Always means Jews of the Land.

⁷ The most notable book dealing with this topic is Number in Scripture. It covers how God's word is designed to involve numbers and their spiritual significance. E.W. Bullinger

⁸ A paraphrase of the name of God as revealed in Exodus 3:14; I Am That I Am. This probably refers to God's self-existence.

trials, but he could be referring to the future Tribulation he is about to describe. Since all of this book is prophecy (1:3), I lean toward the latter. John is also their **companion in the kingdom**, God's Kingdom. **Patience of Jesus Christ**, that is His return which will occur in His timing.

Was in the isle that is called Patmos we would say "on" the island which is located southwest of Ephesus on the Aegean Sea. **For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.** It is this phrase that has created an entire backstory on John. Was he *banished*, as tradition states, to the island for preaching the word of God? The passage does not say, and it could be taken one of two ways. 1) He was on the island for preaching the word of God, and for preaching the testimony of Jesus and was thus being persecuted for his faith. This is the way most interpret his statement.

It could also be 2) John was on the island on account of the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ that he **bare record of**. In other words, John was on the island to receive this prophecy of *the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all the things he saw*. God placed him on the island **for** that reason to receive the prophecy. This is what God has often done; He sent Abraham to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1); he sent Moses to Egypt (Ex. 3:10); He sent Saul/Paul to Arabia (Gal. 1:17,18). Why should He not send John to Patmos?

Either way, and I am not sure it changes anything, John is on Patmos to receive The Revelation.

The Seven Assemblies Named.

Verse 10—

I was in the Spirit. Literally *I was in spirit*. In the Greek there is no "the", John was **in spirit**. That is, by the power of the spirit. This could be that John was transported spiritually to see the Revelation about to unfold, and if so it shouldn't come as surprise; the prophet Ezekiel also saw *visions of God* for his prophecy (Ezekiel 1:1; 8:3; 40:2) and like John, Ezekiel recorded what he saw **On the Lord's Day**. Not Sunday as is so often supposed. In the New Testament, Sunday is never called *The Lord's Day*. It is always, *The first day of the week*. Over the years, the idea that this is referring to Sunday was made up. There is no evidence of the *first day of the week* ever being called *the Lord's day*. We saw in our last session an extensive list of Old Testament and New Testament names for the Tribulation. This is one of them; John was in spirit, on the Day of the Lord. He is seeing and recording *That Day* (the Tribulation and the subsequent return of Jesus Christ) as we will see clearly throughout our study.

And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. It was not a trumpet, but a voice with the strength of a trumpet. A trumpet sounds forth an alarm, even a call to battle, or war. The

prophet Joel wrote: "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: For the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.*" The LORD proclaimed by the prophet Amos (3:6), "*Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the*

Hope Now Bible Church
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people not be afraid?” The prophet Zephaniah describes the Lord’s Day with the trumpet call “*The day of the trumpet and alarm.*” (Zephaniah 1:14-16). The apostle Paul describes the trumpet sound as *preparing one for battle* (1 Corinthians 14:8).

Verse 11—

The *trumpet voice* speaks, **Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.** (See verse 8). Modern translations omit this phrase. The reason is due to the difference between the two primary Greek texts used in translating the New Testament; i.e., the *Textus Receptus* vs. the *Critical Text*. I always default to the Textus Receptus and believe modern translations are from a corrupted text, not a better one.

Notice Jesus expands what He means by saying, **the first and the last.**⁹ This is a title God used specifically in connection with Israel: Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:10. The **first and the last** seems to be in reference to the Son the Redeemer: Rev. 1:11; 2:8; probably Isaiah 48:11-12.

What thou seest, write in a book, John is to write *all that he sees* in one book, not several. **Send it unto the seven churches (ekklesia) which are in Asia,** a list of the seven assemblies follows. What are we to make of these seven assemblies? My friend, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum (an excellent Jewish Bible scholar) considers these seven assemblies to be representative of various periods of time, beginning with the apostolic age (The assembly of Ephesus) up to what he calls, “The Church of the Apostasy” which he says, began in “the early 1900’s and continues to the present day.”¹⁰

But, why should we take these seven churches as symbolic? If we do so, then we would have to take all other locations mentioned in the book symbolically too—like Patmos, and later Babylon. Our approach to Revelation is to take everything in its *literal* meaning unless shown otherwise. I don’t see any *otherwise* when it comes to these assemblies. I would rather take them to be actual assemblies that existed in John’s Day who would read them and keep them in mind, and who would also preserve them for a time in the future, i.e., The Lord’s Day, after the Body of Christ has been raptured when they will need the instruction and receive a blessing for reading and hearing the book. Just as we have Paul’s Epistles (letters) today to help us live the Christian life, so too, in the Tribulation, Jewish readers will have this letter from John with epistles addressed to the seven churches and representative of all Israel, to instruct them during the Great Tribulation. I think this approach keeps our interpretation consistent throughout the book (see notes on session 1).

The Son of Man Revealed.

Verse 12-15—

⁹ Also, in Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13. See also Rev. 21:6

¹⁰ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*. Rev. ed. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003. Print.

I turned to see the voice (Since you can't see a voice. Literally, "I turned to see him, the Alpha and Omega"). When he turned...**I saw seven golden candlesticks**. The use of candlesticks is very

Jewish. John saw real candlesticks, and while they will be symbolic of something which we will see in verse 20, they are also real in heaven. Candlesticks are associated with the Jewish Tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build in the desert. Everything in the Tabernacle: each implement, tool, vessel, lampstand, altar...everything in the Tabernacle was a pattern by God and a "shadow of heavenly things" (Exodus 25:8,9; Hebrews 8:5). Here, the seven **candlesticks** point us to the lampstand in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:31ff). In the Tabernacle there was One candlestick (at the construction of the Tabernacle, Israel was one), in Revelation there are seven (although Israel is called a nation they are not completely in the Land promised to Abraham, and still scattered, and will be until the Day of the Lord and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ).

In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man. "Son" is capitalized showing the translator's thinking that it is referring to Christ, but the word is the typical word for "son", namely a human being. However, in context, we are going to get a description of this Son of Man who seems anything but a typical human son of man. We will discover this is the risen Christ in glory (vs. 18).

The purpose of this book as set forth in the name itself is to reveal who is Jesus Christ. John now sees a vision of Christ in all of His glory.¹¹

He was **clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps (chest) with a golden girdle (belt). Head and hair white like wool, as white as snow. Eyes as a flame of fire; feet like fine brass...His voice as the sound of many waters.**

Verse 16—

The Son of man **had in his right hand seven stars** (identified in verse 20). **Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword**. What is the reason for the sword? To bring an end to the wickedness of the earth! (Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:15,21). He is coming back to Judge.

The appearance of His face, **His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength...** (an indication of His glory)

Seeing this vision, John **fell at His feet as dead...**

And that is where we will leave John until next week.

¹¹ In our book of Daniel study, we will see this almost identical description of the Son of Man in a vision of Daniel. We will compare the two when we reach that juncture in Daniel 10.