

REVELATION

The Triumph of Jesus

The late British prime minister Winston Churchill once described the former Soviet Union as “*a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.*” Many Christians view the book of Revelation in much the same way, and, as a result, they avoid any serious study of this last book of the Bible. That is unfortunate because this book of the Bible is jam-packed with important theological truth.

Revelation reveals God the Father in all His glory and majesty and these truths about Him are imminently important. However, the book of Revelation is preeminently about Jesus.

Revelation 1:1... *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John.*

This inspired book reveals much about the Lord Jesus through the titles He is given throughout the book. These include...

- “the faithful witness” (1:5)
- “the firstborn of the dead” (1:5)
- “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (1:5)
- “the Alpha and the Omega” (1:8; 21:6)
- “the first and the last” (1:17)
- “the living One” (1:18)
- “the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand” (2:1)
- “the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands” (2:1)
- “the One who has the sharp two-edged sword” (2:12)
- “the Son of God” (2:18)
- “the One who has eyes like a flame of fire” (2:18)
- “the One who has feet like burnished bronze” (2:18)
- “the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars” (3:1)
- “the One who is holy, who is true” (3:7)
- “the One who has the key of David” (3:7)
- “the One who opens and no one will shut” (3:7)

- “the One who shuts and no one opens” (3:7)
- “the Amen, the faithful and true Witness” (3:14)
- “the Beginning of the creation of God” (3:14)
- “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah” (5:5)
- “the Root of David” (5:5)
- “The Lamb of God” (5:6; 6:1; 7:9–10; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7; 21:9; 22:1)
- “the Lord, holy and true” (6:10)
- “the One who is called Faithful and True” (19:11)
- “the Word of God” (19:13)
- “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (19:16)
- “the Christ (Messiah), ruling on earth with His glorified saints” (20:6)
- “the root and the descendant of David” (22:16)
- “the bright morning star” (22:16).¹

Revelation also affirms the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ including ...

- His sovereignty (1:5)
- His eternity (1:17–18)
- His right to judge men (19:11)
- His right to decide who lives and who dies (1:18; 2:23)
- His right to be worshiped (5:13)
- His right to rule from God’s throne (22:1, 3).
- His equality with God the Father is affirmed by Revelation’s application to Jesus of Old Testament Scriptures that refer to God (Deut. 10:17 with 19:16; Prov. 3:12 with 3:19; Dan. 7:9 with 1:14; Isa. 44:6 with 1:17; also cf. 1:8 with 22:12–13).²

This book of the Bible is an eschatological gold mine. Greg Laurie wrote...

Revelation is a book that dares to predict the future many, many times over. Yet strangely, it is often a neglected book in the New Testament. People will get all worked up over the Mayan Calendar (2012 was supposed to be a doomsday year), or they will listen to some self-proclaimed prophet or guru. And yet they will neglect the

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Revelation 1–11](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 2.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., [Revelation 1–11](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 3.

Word of God that predicts the future, not once, not twice, but hundreds of times with 100% accuracy. ³

Get this now—*Revelation was given from God the Father to the Lord Jesus who then communicated it to the Apostle John through an angel.* If I am not mistaken, that makes Revelation the only book in the Bible that was delivered through an angel (1:1 and 22:16).

Okay, let's focus our attention on our text for tonight...

Revelation 1:1... *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John*

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ"— The Greek word translated "*revelation*" gives us our English word *apocalypse* which, unfortunately, is a synonym for chaos and catastrophe in our day. Actually, the verb simply means "*to uncover, to reveal, to make manifest.*" In this book, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain and gives us the privilege of seeing the glorified Christ in heaven and the fulfillment of His sovereign purposes in the world.

I want you to understand that this book is not all about sensational information. John wrote these words to make this point...

Revelation 19:10... *Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

You must not divorce the Person from the prophecy, for without the Person there could be no fulfillment of the prophecy. Consider this...

- In Revelation 1–3, Christ is seen as the exalted Priest-King ministering to the churches.
- In Revelation 4–5, He is seen in heaven as the glorified Lamb of God, reigning on the throne.
- In Revelation 6–18, He is the Judge of all the earth.
- In Revelation 19, He returns to earth as the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords.
- In Revelation 20-22, He is the heavenly Bridegroom ushering His bride, the church, into the glorious heavenly city.

Revelation is an *open* book in which God reveals His plans and purposes to His church. When Daniel finished writing his prophecy, he was instructed...

³ Greg Laurie, *Revelation: The Next Dimension* (2014, Allen David Books: India) p. 8.

Daniel 12:4... “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”

In Revelation, the angel instructed John...

Revelation 22:10... And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.”

“Which God gave Him to show His bondservants”— The recipients of this letter in the first century were members of local churches in Asia Minor. These were men, women, boys, and girls who had committed themselves to Jesus Christ. Because of this commitment, they were being severely persecuted.

The Roman emperor Domitian had declared himself to be *god* and he demanded that the masses should worship him. When true believers remained loyal to Jesus Christ, they were thrown into prison, killed, or banished to lonely islands. The message of Revelation was designed to encourage them to be steadfast, immovable, and to always abound in the work of the Lord. This letter pulsates with a powerful message of hope and a future beyond anything they could dream or imagine.

How does this apply to us? Every day our world heaves in great convulsions that strike fear and uncertainty in the hearts of even the strongest believers. Think about it...

- Natural disasters strike with alarming regularity and leave massive destruction of life and property in their wake.
- The world’s economy is in a free-fall and America is trillions of dollars in debt.
- Terrorism and evil (Afghanistan) are spreading like a fast-growing malignant cancer.
- Moral values are crumbling under the crushing weight of political correctness.
- Anti-Christian sentiment is being endorsed by the most powerful people in our nation.
- Religious freedom is being stripped away at an alarming rate.
- A pandemic is sweeping across the world.
- America’s power and prestige has literally tanked.

It seems that the whole world is coming apart at the seams. It is imperative that we learn the *truth* about the future. I am holding in my hand a copy of God’s Word. In this Word, God has gone to great lengths to communicate His eternal plan and how it will unfold in the days leading

up to the end of the world and the consummation of our Lord's eternal kingdom. This study can and should remind of us of several important truths...

1. **Christians can expect to suffer persecution.**
2. **Satan is a defeated enemy.**
3. **The church will be preserved.**
4. **God is sovereign and just.**
5. **Jesus is coming soon.**
6. **Jesus will reign over the new heavens and new earth.**
7. **Never lose faith in the end of the story.**

Did you know that you are considered to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ? *This letter is for you!* To honor His Son, the Father has graciously allowed you to have this book and to understand it.

"The things which must shortly take place"— John MacArthur pointed this out...

The first four books of the New Testament are about the past, especially the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the next twenty-two are about the present, especially the life of the church. Revelation, though it contains some information about the past (Rev. 1) and the present (Rev. 2-3), focuses on the future (Rev. 4-22).⁴

The word "*shortly*" means that once a series of events is set in motion things will unfold in rapid succession. I do believe that the return of Israel to the land of promise in 1948 set in motion a series of prophetic events that point to the soon return of Jesus Christ. Think about it.

- Soon the church will be raptured.
- Soon this planet will feel the brunt of God's judgment during the great tribulation.
- Soon the Antichrist will arrive on the world's stage.
- Soon the Lord Jesus will return victoriously.
- Soon the great White Throne Judgment will commence.
- Soon there will be a new heaven and a new earth!

No wonder Peter wrote these words...

⁴ *Because the Time Is Near*, MacArthur, , p. 21.

2 Peter 3:14... Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless

“And He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John”— Angels are referred to 71 times in the book of Revelation which is more than any other book in the Bible. John, the Apostle of our Lord, is the author of this book. Listen to the words of a second century church leader by the name of Justin Martyr...

There was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place.⁵

When did John write it? The early church indicated that John wrote this book during the reign of the Roman Emperor, Domitian. Again Irenaeus wrote...

We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen not very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign.⁶

So, this letter was written by John around 95 AD. This mighty man of God wrote five books in the New Testament—*The gospel of John, three epistles, and the book of Revelation.*

- He wrote the gospel so we might believe
- He wrote the epistles so we might have confidence
- He wrote Revelation so we might be ready

Now, let’s look at verse 2...

Revelation 1:2... who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

Again, the emphasis falls squarely on the Lord Jesus Christ! The material in this letter is not hocus pocus stuff. It is the Word of God. He is saying to you and me, “It’s time to wake up and be ready.”

⁵ Dialogue with Trypho, chapter 81 as found in *Because the Time Is Near*, John MacArthur, p. 10.

⁶ Ibid, 5.30.3

Revelation 1:3... Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

There is a special blessing promised in the book of Revelation. No other book in the Bible promises such a blessing. There are three prerequisites to receive this special blessing...

- You must read it out loud.
- You must hear it with your heart.
- You must obey the truths written in the book.

John did not send this book of prophecy to the assemblies to satisfy their curiosity about the future or to fill out their prophecy charts. God's people were going through intense persecution and they needed encouragement. As they heard this book read out loud, its message gave them strength and hope. But even more, its message would help them examine their own lives (and each local assembly) to determine those areas needing correction. They were not only to *hear* the Word, but they were also to keep it—that is, guard it as a treasure and practice what it said.⁷

"For the time is near"—This is a restatement of the thrilling truth found in verse 1. For 2000 years the return of Christ has been the blessed hope of the church!

Titus 2:11–14... For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, **12** instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, **14** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, "An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire 'BE' Series"--Jkt. (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Re 1:3.