

# The Last Days

## *An In-Depth Study of Biblical Eschatology*

### The Revelation of Jesus Christ

#### *An Introduction to the Revelation of Jesus Christ*

##### **Revelation** (*Apokalypsis*: unveil, uncover, disclose, unfold)

A revelation is God's device to remove a mystery (*mystērion*) <sup>Daniel 2:28, Romans 16:25</sup>.

The Bible has 66 books, penned by ~40 authors, in 3 languages over thousands of years, and yet it is an integrated message from outside the time/space domain of the universe. Everything introduced in the book of Genesis is consummated in the book of Revelation.

John the Apostle wrote Revelation in A.D. 95-96 while in exile on the Island of Patmos.

John's gospel was written so humankind would 'believe' (salvation) in Jesus (Prophet), his letters reveal how believers can 'be sure' of salvation (sanctification) in Jesus (Priest) and his prophecy was presented in order to remind all the children of God to 'be ready' for His presence (redemption) when He arrives at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ (King). The primary emphasis of Revelation is on redemption: especially the Jews and the Earth.

Revelation has 404 verses containing at least 600 direct references to the Old Testament. Fear of symbols, judgements, etc mostly results from a lack of understanding of the OT. Remember: God is the best interpreter of His Word, so let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Revelation adds substance and insight on the character of and God's plan for Jesus Christ, and is the main way God has shared a glimpse of history from the church age to eternity.

Only book in the Bible promising a blessing for those who read it, hear it, take it to heart.

The principal eschatological belief systems relative to interpreting the End Times are:

- Philosophies in the interpretation of Revelation prophecy (and prophecy in general): Futurism (future events), Idealism (all symbolic), Preterism (past historical events);
- Viewpoints of when the Rapture of the Church (the Body of Christ) will occur: Pre-Tribulation (Pre-Trib), Mid-Tribulation (Mid-Trib), Post-Tribulation (Post-Trib);
- Perspectives regarding the timing of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus and the Millennium: Premillennial, Post-Millennial (church reigns) , Amillennial (symbolic, no literal ML).

Seven is the Biblical number of completeness (not the number of God <sup>e.g., Revelation 12:3, 13:1</sup>).

Many things/concepts come in groups of seven throughout the Bible. Some of the sevens in Revelation are: churches, seals, trumpets, bowls, lampstands, spirits, stars, horns, eyes, angels, thunders, heads, crowns, hills, kings, years of judgements and countless others.

## An Outline of Revelation

“Write what you have seen” (Revelation 1)

Prelude, a View of the Glorified Jesus and the Commissioning of John (1)

“Write what is now” (Revelation 2-3)

Messages from Jesus to 7 Churches and to ‘the’ Church (2-3)

“Write what will take place later” (Revelation 4-22)

The Rapture and a View into Heaven: the Throne, the Scroll, and the Lamb (4-5)

The Seven Seal Judgements (6:1-8:1)

1. The White Horse (6:1-2)
2. The Red Horse of War (6:3-4)
3. The Black Horse of Famine (6:5-6)
4. The Pale Horse of Death (6:7-8)
5. The Souls Under the Alter (6:9-11)
6. A Great Earthquake (6:12-17)  
1<sup>st</sup> Interlude: Sealing of 144K Jews and a Multitude in White Robes (7)
7. Silence in Heaven (8:1)

The Seven Trumpet Judgements (8:2-11:19)

Introduction to Trumpet Judgements (Lightning/Thunder/Earthquake) (8:2-6)

1. Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood (8:7)
2. A Mountain Thrown into the Sea (8:8-9)
3. The Star Wormwood (8:10-11)
4. One Third of the Sun, Moon & Stars Destroyed (8:12-13)
5. The Plague of Locusts (9:1-12)
6. Release of the Four Angels (9:13-21)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Interlude: An Angel & a Little Scroll and Two Witnesses (10:1-11:14)
7. Kingdom Announcement, Lightning/Thunder/Earthquake, Bowls (11:15-19)

The Woman, the Dragon, two Beasts, the Lamb and the 144,000 (12-14)

The Seven Bowl Judgements (15-16)

Introduction to the Seven Bowls of God’s Wrath (15)

1. Ugly and Painful Sores (16:1-2)
2. The Salt Water Turns to Blood (16:3)
3. The Fresh Water Turns to Blood (16:4-7)
4. Sun Scorches People of the Earth (16:8-9)
5. Darkness (16:10-11)
6. Euphrates River Dries Up (16:12)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Interlude: Armageddon and One Last Plea (16:13-16)
7. Concluding Announcement, Lightning/Thunder/Earthquake (16:17-21)

The Fall of Babylon: The Abomination of the Earth (17-18)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, Millennial Reign, Final (Great White Throne) Judgement, Hell (19-20)

The New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)

Conclusion: Promises, Blessings and Warnings (22:6-21)

“Write ... what you have seen” – Revelation 1

## Revelation 1 *The Introduction*

### The Prologue (1:1-3)

**1:1** The very first thing John wrote is that this book is: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”.

The message was given from God ⇒ Jesus ⇒ Angel ⇒ John <sup>Revelation 22:8</sup>. The text declared the events must take place “soon” (*en tachos*: with swiftness) <sup>Revelation 22:6</sup>.

Soon is correct, because it indicates immediacy, but also a sense of happening quickly.

Angels (*angelos*: messenger) are always ready to do the will of God <sup>Revelation 22:16</sup>.

God the Father is the planner of everything throughout eternity, and He gives God the Son (Jesus, who is the One who carries out His Father’s plans.) His instructions. <sup>John 12:49, 17:8</sup>

Servants (*doulos*: bond slave): those serving freely after indentured service. <sup>Deuteronomy 15:12-18</sup>

**1:2** John <sup>1:1,4,9, 22:8</sup> gave testimony (*marturia*: bearing witness) to what he saw <sup>v.10-11</sup>, including “the Word of God” <sup>Hebrews 4:12</sup> and “the testimony of Jesus Christ” <sup>John 8:14</sup>.

All servants of God are called to give testimony about what they know. <sup>1 Corinthians 1:6, Revelation 12:17</sup>

**1:3** Only Biblical book promising a blessing (*makarios*: blessed, receiving God’s favor) for those who read, hear and believe (*pisteuō*: trust, with implied action <sup>John 3:16</sup>).

John said “the time is near” (*kairos*: appropriate time, *engys*: approaching).

The final statement is designed to encourage believers to have a sense of urgency. <sup>Romans 13:11</sup>

This verse is the first of 7 beatitudes in the book of Revelation. <sup>1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14</sup>

### Greetings and Doxology (1:4-8)

**1:4** The book is written to “the seven churches of Asia [Minor]” <sup>Revelation 2-3</sup> (all of them).

Grace (*charis*: a favor without expecting a return) and peace (*eirene*: absence of strife) were offered by the Trinity: the Father: “who is, who was, who is to come” <sup>Revelation 4:8</sup>

and The Holy Spirit: “the seven spirits” <sup>Isaiah 11:1-3, Zechariah 4:1-10, Revelation 4:5</sup> and from...

**1:5-6** Jesus Christ: “faithful witness” <sup>3:14, John 18:37</sup> (*martys*: one who remembers [lit]), “firstborn from the dead” (resurrection <sup>Acts 26:23, Colossians 1:18</sup>) and “ruler of the kings of the earth” <sup>1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 19:16</sup> (a Millennial title). Then John proclaimed that Jesus

“loves us” <sup>Romans 8:37, 1 John 4:19-21</sup> (us ⇒ genuine believers) and He “freed us from our sins by His blood” <sup>Leviticus 17:11, Romans 3:25, 1 Peter 1:18-21</sup> (*hamartia*: sin, offense to God emphasizing guilt) and He “made us into a kingdom” (citizenship <sup>Philippians 3:20-21</sup>) and “priests” <sup>1 Peter 2:4-5, Revelation 20:6</sup> (inherited position) to serve God the Father <sup>Romans 15:5-6</sup>.

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## The Last Days: 6 Revelation – Introduction+C1

This section of text ended with the first of 4 doxologies (increasing in scope) <sup>1:6, 4:11, 5:13, 7:12</sup>,  
“to [Jesus] be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” (*aiōn* ⇒ *aei*: always + *on*: being).

**1:7** One of the book’s themes: Jesus is coming back! John said Jesus is “coming with the clouds” <sup>Daniel 7:13, Matthew 24:30</sup> (clouds are related to God’s presence <sup>Exodus 19:16</sup>) and “every eye will see”, even “those who pierced him” <sup>Psalms 22:16, Zechariah 12:10, John 19:31-37</sup>.

**1:8** Jesus is the eternal God: “Alpha and Omega” ⇒ Beginning and End ⇒ First and Last (3 <sup>Isaiah 44:6, 48:12, Revelation 1:17, 2:8</sup>, 1+2 <sup>Revelation 21:6</sup>, 1+2+3 <sup>Revelation 22:13</sup>) and “who is, and who was, and who is to come” <sup>Revelation 1:4, 8, 4:8</sup>. “Almighty” is referred to over 300 times in the Old Testament, but only 12 times in the NT (9 of them in Revelation). In the original text “Alpha” is spelled out (past, complete); “Omega” is just the letter (future).

### Vision of the Glorified Jesus (1:9-18)

**1:9** In humility, John did not claim apostleship, but said he was a “brother” (*adelphos*: male countryman) and “companion” <sup>Philippians 1:7</sup> in “suffering” <sup>2 Corinthians 1:7, Philippians 4:14</sup>, “kingdom” <sup>v.6</sup> and “patient endurance” <sup>Philippians 4:10-13</sup>. John was imprisoned on Patmos (6 by 10 mile island 70 miles SW of Ephesus) because of “God’s Word and the testimony of Jesus” <sup>Isaiah 51:7, 66:5-6, Matthew 5:10-12, John 15:18-19, 16:33, 17:14 1 John 3:13</sup>.

**1:10** John was “in the spirit” <sup>Revelation 4:2, 17:3, 21:10</sup> “on the Lord’s Day” (Sunday? <sup>Acts 20:7</sup>). Trumpets signal important events <sup>Joshua 6:15-20, Matthew 24:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Rev. 4:1</sup>.

Some have suggested the “Lord’s Day” refers to the “Day of the Lord” <sup>Isaiah 13:9, Ezekiel 30:3, Joel 2</sup>.

**1:11** Jesus commanded John to “write what you see” <sup>v.19</sup>, compare to Daniel 12:4 and send it to these seven (the complete number) churches in Asia [Minor] (present day Turkey): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. <sup>Revelation 2-3</sup>

Jesus wrote specific letters to each of these seven churches <sup>Revelation 2-3</sup>; however, the entire book was meant for all seven churches, because they represent all churches throughout time.

**1:12** John turned around to “see the voice that was speaking to me”. He could “see” the voice (of Jesus), because it made such a powerful sound <sup>v.15b</sup>. As mentioned later, the “seven golden lampstands” <sup>Exodus 25:31-40</sup> represent the “seven churches” <sup>v.20</sup>.

Jesus referred to believers (therefore, the church) as the “light of the world” <sup>Matthew 5:14-16</sup>, because the followers of Jesus are agents of the genuine “light of the world” <sup>John 9:5, 11:9</sup>.

As lampstands, churches are not the light, but they are responsible for holding up the light.

## The Last Days: 6 Revelation – Introduction+C1

**1:13** John saw someone “like a son of man” <sup>Daniel 7:13, Revelation 14:14</sup> in the middle of the lampstands <sup>Revelation 2:1</sup> (Jesus, the ultimate high priest, was overseeing the churches). He then began to describe the glorified Jesus: He had a robe down to His feet <sup>Isaiah 6:1</sup> (kingship/priesthood <sup>Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4</sup>) and a gold sash around His chest <sup>Revelation 15:6</sup> (signifying faithfulness <sup>Isaiah 11:5</sup>, priesthood <sup>Leviticus 16:1-4</sup>, not a servant’s towel <sup>John 13:2-8</sup>)

**1:14** “His head and hair were white like wool” (an indication of absolute purity <sup>Isaiah 1:18</sup> and wisdom <sup>Daniel 7:9</sup>) and “His eyes were like blazing fire” <sup>Daniel 10:6, Revelation 2:18, 19:12</sup> (implying penetrating insight <sup>1 Samuel 16:7, Psalm 11:4</sup>, omniscience <sup>Jeremiah 23:24, Hebrews 4:13</sup>).

**1:15** “His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” <sup>Ezekiel 1:7, Revelation 2:18</sup> (the bronze feet <sup>Micah 4:13</sup>, red-hot furnaces <sup>Ezekiel 22:17-22, Matthew 13:41-42, 49-50</sup> and fire <sup>Revelation 20:10</sup> all represent divine, righteous judgement) and “his voice was like the sound of rushing waters” <sup>Revelation 14:2, 19:6</sup> (the undeniable sound of Jesus’ voice <sup>Ezekiel 1:24, 43:1-2, Daniel 10:6</sup>).

**1:16** “In His right hand” (His power <sup>Isaiah 48:12-13</sup>, authority <sup>Psalm 110:1</sup>) “He held the seven stars” <sup>Revelation 2:1</sup> (angels of the churches <sup>v.20</sup>); “out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword” <sup>Revelation 2:12</sup> (the Word of God <sup>Ephesians 6:17b, Hebrews 4:12</sup> and an instrument of judgement <sup>Isaiah 1:20, Revelation 19:15, 21</sup>) and “His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” (*dynamis*: power) (His glorified countenance <sup>Matthew 16:28-17:2, Exodus 34:29-35</sup>).  
John described 7 features: head/hair, eyes, feet, voice, right hand, mouth and countenance.

**1:17** John “fell at His feet as though dead” (absolute awe <sup>Ezekiel 1:27-28, Philippians 2:9-11</sup>); however, Jesus “placed His right hand on [John] and said: ‘Do not be afraid.’ ” (His hand of power <sup>see v.16</sup>, but it is also His tender hand of compassion <sup>Daniel 8:17-18</sup>) (*phobeomai*: afraid, terrified). The eternal Jesus is the “First and the Last” <sup>see v.8</sup>.

**1:18** Jesus is the “Living One”, He was dead, but now alive <sup>Revelation 2:8</sup> (He was the firstfruits <sup>1 Corinthians 15:20-23</sup> by His resurrection <sup>Acts 2:31-32, Romans 6:4</sup>), and will always be alive <sup>Daniel 4:34, Romans 6:8-10, Revelation 4:9-10</sup>. He holds “the keys of death and *Hadēs*” (OT, in Hebrew: *šē’ōl*: Sheol) <sup>Revelation 20:13-14</sup> (Jesus has power over death <sup>Hosea 13:14</sup>).

### Instruction and Explanation from Jesus (1:19-20)

**1:19** Jesus provided the divinely inspired book outline: what you have seen <sup>Revelation 1</sup>, what is now <sup>Revelation 2-3</sup> and what will take place later <sup>Revelation 4-22</sup>.

The NIV1984 translation “take place later” should be “after these things” (*meta tauta* <sup>Rev.4:1</sup>).

**1:20** A Biblical mystery is something God has not yet revealed. Jesus chose to clear up 2 mysteries mentioned earlier in this chapter. He explained the stars <sup>v.16</sup> are angels (actual angels or pastors?) and the lampstands <sup>v.12,13</sup> are the seven churches <sup>v.11</sup>.

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