

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE
REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

1:1-11

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Revelation 1:1-11

John Receives the Revelation of Jesus Christ

God, open our eyes as You unveil this before us, as you reveal these things that must shortly take place, open our eyes, unplug our ears. Give our minds understanding, give us knowledge, because we need it. We want to hear what You have spoken.

Are you ready for the Revelation of Jesus Christ? Good! Let's begin!

Revelation 1, Verse 1. ***“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him...”***
The revelation, or unveiling, that God gave to Jesus of the things which are about to take place.

“...to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place...” The word for soon here does not mean soon, like in tomorrow as opposed to next week—it means quickly. The Greek is *ha dei genesthai* and means that once these events start taking place they will all happen quickly like dominos falling one after the other. So, since it's all going to happen quickly once it starts, when should you learn, when should you take the time to study what's going to happen? When the first domino falls over? No. You would be so far behind you would be spinning. You need to study ahead of time because once they start taking place they're going to take place quickly. Once the first one goes down—boom—they're all going to go, so we need to know what the future holds ahead of time.

“...and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John...”
What did the angel communicate—the revelation, the unveiling of the things that are going to take place quickly. How did the angel communicate the revelation? The Greek word for communicate is *semaino* and means to indicate or signify. What word do you hear or see in signify? Sign. We don't know how God gave it to Jesus, we don't know how Jesus gave it to His angel, but we know how Jesus' angel gave it to John. How was it? In signs. It was visual. It is like he used high definition, virtual reality, 3D video in the air! The angel used a process of pictures, like a picture book. John saw the communication from the angel. In other words, it was not the angel *reading* something to him, but the angel was *showing* him, giving him signs and visual indications. Then John took what he saw and recorded it for us and that is why we have all these visions in the book of Revelation because John simply wrote down the visions that the angel showed him.

Revelation 1:2 ***“...who (John) testified to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.”*** How did John testify to the word of God, the testimony of Christ, and all that he saw? By writing it down, although I am sure he also

spoke about it whenever he got an occasion! On the island of Patmos he probably spoke the same things. But what is that telling us that the book of Revelation is? Two things: First, it's the Word of God. The daring claim of this document is that it is the Word of God. It is also the testimony, or witness, of Jesus Christ. That could be considered a theme of the book. What *is* in Revelation? Well, it's the things that are going to take place quickly, being revealed. That's what it is. But, ultimately you simmer that down, condense it to just the main thing and it's going to be the witness, the testimony, of Jesus Christ.

When John uses the Greek word for testimony it is usually the same word that he uses for witness. Your translation in your Bible might actually use the word martyr. What do you think of when you think of a martyr? We think of somebody dying for a cause. That's not what the literal word means. A martyr is someone who testifies; a martyr is someone who has witnessed something and is speaking forth about what he has seen. The word martyr means to witness. Why do we associate it with death instead? Because in the early church to witness most certainly meant death for many, many, many people. You weren't a martyr because you *died*, you were a martyr because you *witnessed*—*you died because you witnessed, or testified, about Jesus Christ*. That is important to know. What has happened through the years? We've taken the *result* of being a martyr (witness) and changed the definition. The connotation now is dying, but the meaning has to do with witnessing of Jesus. We *all* need to be martyrs; if that brings about our death—so be it.

Now, this one you'll love. I love this one. Revelation 1:3 says ***“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.”***

A promise! God promises that if you read, hear, and heed the things that are in this book you will be blessed. Does God keep His promises? Oh, yes! What we want to at least understand is how to receive that blessing. What is the requirement for receiving the promise that God offers? Well, three things: read, hear, and heed His Word in the book of Revelation. I have... and I am...

According to the Greek, reading is not technically you, yourself, reading it. Rather it carries the idea of reading it aloud. Now, why would they have used that word? John wrote it on the isle of Patmos, sent his one scroll across the sea to the mainland to the churches where it was read aloud. The scroll was possibly copied, or not, and sent on to the next church. The scroll had to make its round of the seven churches it was addressed to. In those days they didn't have computers, they didn't run off a copy, or run off a little handout of the Revelation of John. They *read* it in groups. Someone read, most of the group listened. I am going to come back to that in just a moment.

John writes *“he who reads”* which is singular and *“those who hear”* which is plural. It's not those who read it, but he who reads it. See the group reading situation?

You may not be the one reading it but in today's situation you're the one who's hearing it. Now, there is a catch here. It doesn't mean the words come in and the words are free to leave. The words come in and the words need to be captured by the hearer. The words come in and are embraced; they are taken captive by the hearer believing them. That is true biblical hearing.

True biblical belief involves obedience—heeding the words of God; to be blessed you must hear and heed the words of God. That's your job as you read the book of Revelation. I get to be, in this series, the one that reads it but I still have to do the other two things. As I read it, I must hear it—receive it so as to embrace it, and I must heed it—walk it out. There is a blessing available for each of us.

I am going to exposit this verse a little through the original Greek definitions. *Blessed* means having the kingdom of God within one's heart and fully satisfied no matter what the circumstances—favorable or unfavorable. Did you think your blessing was going to be that you go outside and there's a new car waiting for you? Huh-uh. That is not what the Bible says this one is. Listen to this wonderful meaning of being blessed. You are going to be blessed; you have the kingdom of God within your heart (your mind) and you are fully satisfied no matter what the circumstances—favorable or unfavorable. Having the kingdom of God in your heart, in your mind, means you understand the sovereignty of God and the righteousness of God and the holiness of God and you are fully at peace because you know everything is as it should be and you are part of His plan, you are part of His kingdom. *That* is the blessing that's awaiting the one who reads, hears, and heeds the words of Revelation.

Who receives the blessing? It is he who reads. The Greek definition for read is *anaginosko* is “aloud before others, perceives accurately”. That is my job in this situation. I need to read it—but I have to perceive it accurately so that *you* will perceive it accurately.

The Greek word for hear is *akouontes* and means understanding, comprehending. It is capturing those words and making them part of you, rather than just letting them float right by. We can all do that. Instead of letting the words float in, float out, go over, or go around; we have to capture those words we hear being read.

The Greek word *propheteia*, translated “*prophecy*”, is the forth-telling of future of events and warnings; the series of visions seen by the prophet (in this case John) and related to others by him. So, the words of this prophecy are a forth-telling of future events and warnings in a series of visions that are written down for us.

The Greek word for heed is *terountes* and means to guard, keep the eyes fixed on, observe attentively and obey. It means to heed and guard the words and the *logos*, the idea or meaning of the words. Keep the eyes fixed on what? On the words. Observe attentively and obey. What are you supposed to guard and keep the eyes fixed on and observe attentively and obey? The things that are written in this prophecy, the things that are written in this book, all twenty-two chapters.

John uses the word *kairos* when it says “...for the *time*...” The time is the season or period of opportunity during which certain preordained events take place, the time that is set for the coming again of the Messiah in His kingdom for judgment. It’s not just anytime, it is *the* time, the opportunity, for the things that are preordained to take place, which is the Messiah's return to His kingdom to *reclaim* His kingdom and to judge.

John says, “...*the time is near*”. The Greek word for near is *eggus* and means close at hand. And so although the things that are going to take place will take place quickly like dominoes once they start, those things are also near, they are close at hand. And if they were close at hand toward the end of the first century, how much closer at hand are they now?

So, why are we supposed to heed this message, other than receiving the blessing? Because the time is near. We are not doing Revelation because it's fun and interesting, although it *is*, it really is. We are studying it because the time is near that these things are going to take place and we have a responsibility to hear them and heed them and to warn others.

Let's move on...

Revelation 1:4-5 ***“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood...”***

Keep your eyes set on the phrase, “Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come” because you've all heard it—it's even in some of our favorite songs. Jesus and God are both going to be called Him Who was, Who is, and Who is to come in. That phrase is going to be repeated in Revelation and it is going to change in a remarkable way. There will be two times later on in the book where it just says “who is and who was.” Why is that? Because in those parts of the book He has come and He is praised by saying, “Who *is* and Who *was*,” because He's right there. That ought to give you goose bumps because we are going to be able to say that same thing someday soon, so watch that phrase as we go through.

In verse 4, the One Who is and Who was and Who is to come is God, the Father. Here's why. It goes on to say, “and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne” which is a different expression that is referring to the Holy Spirit. (Remember that our goal is not to do an in-depth study of everything in the book of Revelation, but rather an expository Read-thru that will give us the overall skeleton of the book. So we won't delve into why it says seven Spirits instead of one.) Verse 5 continues John's thought and says, “...*and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood...*” We can know that Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come is God, the Father because Jesus is identified as the third person in this list. We see the Trinity (the three persons of the One God) in verses 4 and 5. That is how we know the

first one is God the Father, the second one is the Holy Spirit, the third one is Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace come from God, the Father; grace and peace do not come from anyone else. Jesus, however, is identified as the One “Who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood”. We can know that the “Him” is Jesus because we are released from our sins by Jesus' blood.

Two things here; first of all, what are we released from? Are we released from having to not sin? Are we released from the penalty of sinning? We are released from *sins*. We are released from sinning. Do you understand? That is what Matthew 1:21 is talking about when it says that Jesus came to take His people *out of their sin*. That's what this is talking about, too. Our Savior, our Jesus... He released us from our sins! *We do not have to sin!*

Jesus is called the faithful witness—He is the only faithful witness for God to us, and He is the only faithful witness for us to God. He is the firstborn of the dead—He was raised to walk in newness of life after He died (He died instead of those who would believe in Him as their Lord and Savior). If you are saved, then you have (in the economy of God) died with Him, been buried with Him, and have also been raised to walk in the same life Jesus lives—a life unto God. (Romans 6) He was the firstborn, we have followed. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. This should sound very menacing to the kings of the earth. They were fiercely ruling God's people back then, and they govern the nations of the world today, but they have not ruled according to God's pleasure. The book of Revelation is all about God's ultimate triumph over all His creation, specifically here it calls out the kings of the earth.

Next it says, “to Him Who loves us”. That word for “love” is a present participle. What it means is “to Him who *keeps on* loving us”. Is that not gorgeous? To Him who *keeps on loving us*. And I don't think that it is a coincidence that it says, “and released us from our sins” because what better love could He have for us...

And that “keeps on loving us” comes first because, you know what? Even though He has released us from our sins we keep sinning. Not as a way of life, but we still sin sometimes and He keeps on loving us in spite of the fact that we keep on sinning even though He has released us from sins. I am blessed! This is great! He is so wonderful!!!

Verse 6 says, “***...and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS.***”

Priests would perform sacrificial rites so that a person, or nation, could be accepted by God rather than destroyed—they are bridge builders; a priest is someone who allows somebody else to get to another area. So, to be a priest is to be able to help people get to God. What a high honor!

Speaking of honor, what belongs to Jesus forever and ever? The Glory and the dominion—His true Glory will be seen by all and He will rule over all.

Do you see the small caps used for the font when it says, “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS”? That means it is a quote from the Old Testament.

Revelation 1:7 **“And every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.”**

It says that every eye is going to see Him when He comes in the clouds. Is this talking about the rapture then? No, because the Rapture will happen in a twinkling of an eye—we’ll be gone before we know what is happening. Nobody left will know what happened because they will not see Him. He will not even come *to* the earth—He just comes part way, just to the sky. Here, He comes *with* the clouds, but He comes all the way.

Here, it lists two groups of people who will see Him. Who are the two groups of people? “Those who pierced Him” would be whom? The nation of Israel. The Bible is truth and the Bible says that the Jews crucified Him *by the hands of* ungodly men meaning the Romans, but the Jews were responsible for crucifying Jesus. This is why John describes the nation of Israel as “those who pierced Him”.

“All the tribes of the earth” is synonymous with “those who pierced Him”. This is not talking about the nations of the earth—the tribes of the earth are the tribes of Israel, which will still be, at that time, scattered in many nations across the globe. God has been bringing Israel back to her land, and He will continue to do so until He is finished. That won’t be until Jesus returns in Glory at the end of the age.

If it called this group the nations of the earth we could think Gentiles, but it uses the word tribes. Those of you that know end times might be recalling Zechariah 12:10. When Christ comes again all the tribes of Israel will see Him and they will mourn over Him as an only child. The phrase “as an only child” is used to show how great their mourning is. There is a greater mourning if your only child dies, or if it’s your firstborn, than if you had many children or if it wasn’t your firstborn. The firstborn was very important to the Jews so if you lost that child they would experience greater mourning. Jesus was the only Messiah for the Jews and they rejected Him so they lost their “only child”. He was the firstborn, the preeminent one, so they will experience great sorrow when they realize Who it was that they pierced.

Do you still wonder if it might be Gentiles when it says “of the earth”? It might help if you understand when all this is taking place—Jesus’ arrival is going to end the period of Great Tribulation for the Jews and begin Christ’s judgment of the nations which will lead into the Millennial Reign. This is not showing two groups of *different* companies of people (Jew and Gentile) but two different groups of the *same* people (the Jews). First they see Him, and what should their response be if they know who He is? It should be, “Praise the Lord! He’s finally come to end the Tribulation for us!” But, instead when they see Him, this same group of people is seen doing something different—they mourn

over Him. Why are they mourning? Because they realize that they pierced and crucified their Messiah, their Savior. As a nation, they will realize Jesus is their Messiah when He comes in the clouds and not before.

Revelation 1:8-9 “*I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’ I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*”

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. He started it all and He will end it according to His good pleasure.

So, when you're in Christ, what is it that you get? You get tribulation, you get the kingdom, okay, but because you're part of the kingdom you need to persevere. In Christ you are able to persevere tribulation—that is what is in Jesus Christ. John was on the isle of Patmos because he *testified* to the Word of God, because he *spoke* the Word of God, because he *testified* or witnessed of Jesus. The island called Patmos was a penal colony at that time.

Revelation 1:10-11 “*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, ‘Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.’”*

What does John mean when he says, “in the Spirit”? Well, it doesn't mean that he was knocked out cold or anything like that. John is being controlled and governed by the Spirit—all his thoughts, everything. He is *in* the Spirit, meaning, he is not separate—he is not on his own, he is not choosing what he wants to do. You can catch the idea pictorially by imagining John inside of the Holy Spirit so that whatever the Spirit does, John is going to go right along with it. He is completely controlled by the Spirit. What is he probably doing? Praying.

So what did he hear when he was in the Spirit? He heard a voice like the sound of a trumpet. It was not a trumpet but it was a voice that sounded *like* a trumpet.

He *heard* what the voice said and he turned to see the voice that was speaking with him. When he turned, what did he see? A voice? No. He saw a vision... a vision of Jesus...

Stay tuned...