

Link to Lonnie Woodruff's *Revelation for Christians Today*, online:

<http://www.abiblecommentary.com/howtounderstandthebookofrevelation.htm>

## A Study of Revelation 1

### I. Outline.

1. A SIGNIFIED message is given which will bless those who read it (1-4).
2. Praise for the Lord Jesus (5-7).
3. Jesus is Beginning and End (8).
4. John's circumstances at the time of writing this book (9-10).
5. Jesus gives John his instructions (11).
6. John's vision of Jesus amid the seven candlesticks (12-17a).
7. Jesus speaks to John and explains two symbols of the first vision (17b-20).

### II. Summary.

The Book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. John was the human penman, but it was given him by our Lord (v. 1). The first verse also urges upon us the need to reject any view of the Revelation which makes it deal only with FUTURE happenings (e.g., the Premillennialists' view). It was intended to mean something to those first century saints. The fact that a blessing is pronounced upon those who read and keep its sayings take away the view that it deals only with the past. The first chapter begins by heaping praise upon the beloved Son of God. John, himself, was a companion in suffering with those other suffering Christians of the day and had been banished to the Isle of Patmos (v. 9). John is told to write these things he sees down in a book. The first readers of the book would be the seven churches of Asia and we learn more about them from chapters two and three. The first vision of the book is an especially comforting one for Christians who are suffering in that it pictures Jesus in and around and amongst the seven candlesticks (which symbolize churches, v. 20). That we have such a Lord and Savior as Him who speaks the words which end this chapter should bring us entirely sufficient comfort!

### III. Chronology.

**BIBLE PERIOD:** The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the **15 Bible Periods**, please *click here*:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

### IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- 1:1... **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**... What kind of book is Revelation? (1) It is a **revelation**; (2) It is a **prophecy**; (3) It is a **letter** written to the seven churches of Asia [W.B. West, *Revelation Through First-Century Glasses*, pp., 21-24].
- 1:3... **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein**... "Most automatically think of prophecy as 'a prediction of the future.' Notice, however, that **the words** of this prophecy were to be *obeyed*. One does not obey a prediction; rather, one obeys commands. Even though Revelation contains predictions regarding the future, the term 'prophecy' primarily has to do with the inspired message which contains commands that are to be obeyed (see 22:7, 12). Commands abound in the Book of Revelation, both explicit and implicit. Most of the explicit commands are at the beginning and the end of the book (see 2:5, 16, 25; 3:2, 3, 11, 18, 19; 22:11, 17), but the commands found in 2:10 are *implied* throughout the book: "Do not fear what you are about to suffer"; "Be faithful until death." Hearing and heeding these commands is not optional" [David Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary, Revelation 1-11*, p. 69].
- 1:3... **... for the time is at hand**—"It was noted above that "shortly come to pass" cannot be applied to all that is revealed in the prophecy; but the last clause here surely indicates that some of the events foretold would soon occur, the very imminence of them leading to this double beatitude which was

to be heeded by the persons who originally received the epistle. Regarding the events which were indeed imminent, the great persecution about to break forth against the Christians was most certainly one of the things in view. "There is general agreement that John expected persecution of the church by the Roman Empire." [Coffman].

- 1:4... **from the seven Spirits**-- "Assuming that this reference is to the Holy Spirit, since there is only 'one Spirit' (Ephesians 4:4), seven must be used here with its symbolic significance or 'perfection' or 'sacred completeness'" [Roper, p. 72]. Cf., Isaiah 11:2.
- 1:6... **And hath made us kings and priests**—"The apostle Peter wrote that Christians are 'a royal priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9). 'Royal' suggests kingly, or reigning, for every Christian is a 'king' and a 'priest,' serving under the oversight of Christ, our High Priest. This is not something yet future, but we are 'priests' with Christ now, and we 'reign' with Him now" [Flavil Nichols, in *The Book of Revelation*, edited by Jim Laws, p. 120].
- 1:7... **Behold, he cometh with clouds**—"This is the topic-sentence of Revelation, a great deal of which relates to the final judgment, an event mentioned at least seven times in the prophecy; and these are not seven different kinds or occasions of judgment, there being only one judgment day, the final and awesome event that shall conclude the dispensation of grace, see the resurrection of the dead and the assignment of every man's destiny, and bring the redeemed into their eternal habitations. It will occur at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ our Lord." [Coffman].
- 1:9... **I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ**—"Some today claim the kingdom has not yet come, but John and his brethren were participants together in the kingdom (Revelation 1:6, 9). For them it was a present reality, rather than a future hope. Since their loyalty was to King Jesus, not to Emperor Domitian, tribulation was the natural result (John 16:33; Acts 14:19)" [David Roper, p. 78-79].
- 1:10... **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day**,--"It so happens that the word "Lord's" (kuriakos, pertaining to the Lord) appears only twice in the New Testament, once in referring to the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:20), and once in referring to the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10). Apparently these two, the supper and the day, belong together, and what God has joined, let not man put asunder" [Hugo McCord, *The Royal Route of Revelation*, p. 16]. The reason brother McCord would take space to make this point is that Adventists and other sabbatarians try to say that the LORD'S DAY here was the Sabbath. |||| "Not much is known of this state of being 'in the Spirit'; but, evidently, all of the Scripture writers were in such a state when they received their divine revelation. Jesus said of David, 'How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord?' (Matt. 22:43). Many speculations about this have yielded little or no valuable information" [Coffman].
- 1:15... **and his voice as the sound of many waters**—"His voice as the sound of many waters is a voice of power and authority, as the sound of the rumbling of water such as Niagara Falls" [W.B. West, p. 30]. Turn up the volume on your computer and go to the following link to hear the power of Niagara Falls: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPsXm2dd2B4>
- 1:16... **And he had in his right hand seven stars**—"The discussion of the puzzle of the seven stars emphasizes a principle we will continually need in our study of Revelation. Though we cannot know for certain who or what the stars are, we can still comprehend Jesus' point. Whoever or whatever the stars/angels were, they represented the churches—and therefore the members of those churches (see 2:1, 7). The cryptic language in verse 16, then, must mean that Jesus holds the faithful in His hand, and no man or government can "snatch them out" against their will (John 10:28; see 2 Timothy 1:12). Is not that message far more important than knowing specifically who or what the stars were?" [David Roper, p. 88].
- 1:17... **...Fear not**—"Jesus had not come to John to frighten him, but to encourage him; so He told him not to be afraid. Words can soothe the soul. In the Old Testament, the Lord spoke with 'gracious words, comforting words' (Zechariah 1:13)" [David Roper, p. 91].
- 1:19... "It is preferable to understand verse 19 as saying that we cannot tell the true state of affairs by simply looking at "the things which are"; we must also look at "the things which shall take place

after these things.” That is what Revelation is all about. It tells us that no matter how bad our situation seems right now, a brighter future awaits” [David Roper, p. 93].

- 1:20... **...the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches...**—“The best view, it seems to this writer, is to take the angel as the symbol of the spiritual life of the church, as the candlestick symbolizes its outward embodiment or its visible existence” [Frank Pack, *The Living Word: Revelation, Part I*, p. 27].

## V. Lessons & Applications.

- **Blessed is he that readeth...** (3)—As I read these words, my mind goes to the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus as He speaks of the wise and the foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27). The person who is wise hears the words of Jesus and does them. This WISE person is building his/her house upon a solid rock foundation! That may not have seemed to be the case to the original recipients of these words during a time of great persecution, but Jesus tells us here the same thing He taught before. There would likely be one person who would read this correspondence to the assembled saints. A blessing is pronounced upon that one who would do the reading; also, those who hear and keep the words would likewise be blessed. I am confident that there are rich blessings to be had in a study and application of the Book of Revelation!
- **...and washed us from our sins in his own blood** (5). What a marvelous blessing is here described. I like the way Flavil Nichols explains it—This verse tells us that the precious blood of this Savior washes away our sins. However, we must remember **where** that **blood** was shed: **It was in His death**. John by inspiration recorded this sequence of events: (1) Jesus was “**dead already**” (John 19:33); (2) A soldier pierced his side with a spear; (3) “Forthwith came there out **blood** and water” (v. 34). So, in order for anyone to reach or contact the saving **blood** of Christ, he must come to the **death** of Christ, for that is where His blood was shed! No man in the Bible was told to “believe” into His death. Nor was any told to “pray” into His death. Instead, we read: “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death” (Romans 6:3-4). Thus, one must be baptized **into His death**, in order to contact the saving **blood that was shed in his death!** This explains why Ananias told Saul to “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Later, it was this apostle Paul who wrote that “we were baptized **into His death**” (Romans 6:3-4). Note these two irrefutable facts: (1) Revelation 1:5 tells us **what washes away** our sins: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins **in his own blood;**” (2) Acts 22:16 tells us **when** this takes place: “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and **be baptized**, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord [Flavil Nichols, in *The Book of Revelation*, edited by Jim Laws, p., 119].
- **Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced him...** (7)—Taking that this refers to the final Judgment Day, focus in on those last five words. Immediately what comes to mind would be the cruelty of the cross, but what about other “piercings”? There absolutely is that day coming on which those who have opposed the Lord Jesus Christ, His church, and His Word, will receive judgment for that opposition. Think about how grateful you will be on that day, if you are NOT among the number of those who have not been forgiven!
- **I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...** (9)—It is a constant source of amazement to me how Bible believers can read such statements as this and still believe the false doctrine of Premillennialism. Either John was in the kingdom of Jesus Christ or he was not. By inspiration he wrote that he was. How then, do we have folks believing that the kingdom is yet to be established?
- **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man...** (13)—As we read further (v. 20) and find that the seven candlesticks represent the seven churches (and I think the symbolic nature of the number SEVEN stretches out to cover all faithful churches), what joy and happiness ought to come upon us who are in the Lord’s church! When Jesus gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), He promised to be with us. As John begins the final book of the Bible, the image he

records reminds us of that wonderful promise. Those suffering saints of that day (1<sup>st</sup> Century) should especially be comforted by such a picture as this presented to them to ponder. In our modern day, with all of our comfort and conveniences, we need to stop and consider that Jesus is still with His faithful followers!

- **Verses 12-16**—Many commentators have taken the description here of Jesus as High Priest. To me, the descriptive units of the image fit together more precisely to the concept of Jesus as JUDGE. Concerning one part of the image, David Roper writes: In Micah 4:13, the daughter of Zion was given bronze “feet” so she might “pulverize many peoples.” Similarly, the symbolism in Revelation refers to Christ’s ability to “tread down the wicked,” making them “ashes under the soles of [His] feet” (Malachi 4:3).
- These suffering Christians knew who was Lord. They were making the proper and correct decisions in not bowing to the pressures put upon them in those difficult days. However, we find later in the book sentiments that surely came to their own hearts--Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?. The Book of Revelation is saying that there will indeed be reward for the faithful and there will indeed be punishment for the wicked.
- **Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death** (17-18)—To receive a message from such a One as Jesus, had to have been a most welcome prize to these Christians. Though John was afraid, Jesus called upon him not to fear. The Apostle Paul wrote: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). For us today, when we are following the teaching of the Holy Bible, we really have nothing to fear. The One we serve has the keys of hell and of death!

**VI. Questions.**

**True or False**

01. \_\_\_\_\_ John was not instructed to write anything down about the present.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ The word SHORTLY is found in this chapter.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ John considered himself to be IN the kingdom.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ John claimed to be ALPHA and OMEGA.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ John saw Jesus in the middle of the seven golden candlesticks.

**Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)**

06. \_\_\_\_\_ The seven golden candlesticks represent: (a) seven things God hates; (b) seven ways to shine forth; (c) the seven churches.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ In John’s vision of Jesus, he saw this coming out of His mouth: (a) a sharp sword; (b) a dull knife; (c) nothing.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ John tells us that the agent for cleansing us of our sins is: (a) good works; (b) prayer; (c) the blood of Christ.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ John considered himself to be this kind of companion: (a) faithful; (b) in tribulation; (c) loving.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ This book (Revelation) is the revelation of: (a) John; (b) Jesus Christ; (c) prophecy.

**Fill in the Blanks**

11. John was in the isle that is called \_\_\_\_\_.
12. We do not have to wonder about what the meaning of two symbols are from the vision in this chapter because Jesus tells us the meaning of the seven \_\_\_\_\_ and the seven \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The number \_\_\_\_\_ is found 12 times in this chapter.
14. The eyes of Jesus are described as a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
15. There is no support for the premillennial idea of the rapture in this chapter in that John said at His coming \_\_\_\_\_ eye shall \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week's handout*

**The following questions are from the book, *Revelation for Christians Today*, by Lonnie Woodruff. I am using this book (with permission) as my primary source for my radio broadcast of "Walking in Truth." You can read online here:**

<http://www.abiblecommentary.com/howtounderstandthebookofrevelation.htm>

From Page 24 of *Revelation for Christians Today*...

01. Who devised the symbols and figures used in the book of Revelation? (1.1).
02. When were the events described in Revelation to begin? (1.1).
03. What period of time do these visions cover? (Introduction).
04. Define the following symbolic descriptions of Christ:
  1. Alpha and Omega (1.11).
  2. Clothed down to the foot (1.13).
  3. Golden girdle (1.13).
  4. White hair (1.14).
  5. Eyes like flame of fire (1.14).
  6. Feet of brass (1.15).
  7. Voice of many waters (1.15).
  8. Sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth (1.16).
  9. Countenance as the sun (1.16).
  10. Liveth, was dead, and alive forevermore (1.18).
  11. Controls keys of hell and death (1.18).

05. Define the seven gold candlesticks (1.20).
06. Where does Jesus dwell in relation to the candlesticks? (1.13).
07. Compare Matthew 18.20 and 2 Corinthians 6.16 to the symbolism in this verse.
08. What is Christ holding in His hand? (1.16, 20).
09. Who does Jesus hold in His hand? (John 10.28).
10. From the above information, who do the stars represent?
11. In verse 20 who do the seven stars represent?
12. Since the stars are also referred to as angels, then who do the angels represent?
13. Compare Ephesians 1.3, 20; 2.6 with the symbolic angels of this verse.

**VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.** The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

J L O R D H A N D E S O  
 O S L A A N G E L V K P  
 H T A T I J R D A E C T  
 N A S B E H O L D R I G  
 E R T S F S J O I V T P  
 D S U E E I T G O K S H  
 R S E R C H R I S T E T  
 O S A V D A C S M O L G  
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 A M E N Y N I K U T N I  
 I D M T I G A L P H A Y  
 S M O K H H C K K J C A  
 A P C T H N T I R I P S

<b>ALPHA</b>	<b>ALSO</b>	<b>AMEN</b>	<b>ANGEL</b>	<b>ASIA</b>
<b>BEHOLD</b>	<b>CANDLESTICKS</b>	<b>CHRIST</b>	<b>CHURCHES</b>	<b>COME</b>
<b>DEAD</b>	<b>EARTH</b>	<b>EVER</b>	<b>FIRST</b>	<b>GOLDEN</b>
<b>HAND</b>	<b>JESUS</b>	<b>JOHN</b>	<b>KINGS</b>	<b>LAST</b>
<b>LIKE</b>	<b>LORD</b>	<b>OMEGA</b>	<b>RIGHT</b>	<b>SAYING</b>
<b>SERVANT</b>	<b>SEVEN</b>	<b>SPIRIT</b>	<b>STARS</b>	<b>TESTIMONY</b>
<b>THINGS</b>	<b>VOICE</b>	<b>WORD</b>		

