



Revelation 1

# IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

Generally speaking there are two extreme attitudes toward Revelation. Some say the book cannot be understood, and therefore it should not be studied, taught, or preached. Differences of interpretation, they point out, have divided Christians, and therefore the book should not be interpreted. Others consider themselves so sure of every detail of the book that they set dates and propose highly fanciful interpretations. To them Revelation seems to be the only book in the Bible worth studying. The proper attitude toward this book does not lie in either extreme. ...Let us approach it as worthy of all the Spirit-directed study we can give it, focusing every God-given ability on its words, and fitting it into the whole of God's truth as given in the Bible.

—Charles C. Ryrie

## HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

Of all the books in the Bible, Revelation evokes the widest range of interpretations. Even among conservative, Bible-believing Christians, there are strong differences in how to interpret this book. There are generally four approaches:

1. **Preterist.** It has been fulfilled in the *past*.
2. **Historicist.** It is being fulfilled in the *present*.
3. **Futurist.** It will be fulfilled in the *future*.
4. **Idealist.** It is *timeless*, symbolically revealing the ongoing spiritual battle between good and evil.

Realizing the different interpretations and our own limited perspective (1 Cor. 13:12), we must approach Revelation with humility, teachability, and a laser-like focus on the purpose of the book...to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ!

## THE PROLOGUE (1:1-8)

**The Revelation.** Greek, *apokalypsis*, “uncovering, unveiling”

**The Author.** The apostle John.

**The Promise.** Blessed are those who read, hear, and keep.

**The Audience.** Seven churches in Asia.

*Revelation is the strangest book in the Bible.* —J. Scott Duvall

*Only fools and madmen are positive in their interpretation of the Apocalypse.* —Charles Spurgeon

*Of the 404 verses of the Apocalypse, there are 278 which contain references to the Jewish Scriptures.* —Henry B. Swete

**Shortly.** Greek, *en tachei*, “with speed.” “The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden” (Walvoord).

*In the Revelation, THE LAMB is the center around which all else is clustered, the foundation on which everything lasting is built.* —H. H. Snell

*It will be vain to become occupied with sevens, hundred-forty-four thousands, six-sixty-sixes, the restoration of the Roman Empire, the person of the antichrist, the two wild beasts, the millennium, or even the new Jerusalem; unless, along with God the Father, who has subjected all things unto Him, Christ is ever before our eyes!*

—William R. Newell

**The Doxology.** Grace and peace from the triune God.

- God the Father
- God the Spirit [cf. Isaiah 11:2; Zech. 4:1-7]
- God the Son, Jesus Christ
  1. The faithful witness
  2. The firstborn from the dead
  3. The ruler over the kings of the earth
  4. The One who loves us
  5. The One who washed us/freed us from our sins
  6. The One who makes us a kingdom of priests
  7. The One who is coming again [cf. Dan. 7:13; Zech. 12:10]

### THE VISION OF JOHN (1:9-20)

Because of his Christian witness, John was exiled on the isle of Patmos, most likely during the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96). He has a vision from Jesus Christ in the Spirit in the Lord's day.

1. Jesus is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE RESPONSE OF THE BELIEVER (1:17-20)

I am to fall down before Him in worship.

I do not have to \_\_\_\_\_.

I am to be a faithful part of a \_\_\_\_\_.

*The numeral seven represents the fullness of the Spirit abiding in God's throne room and dwelling with the churches.*

—David Schrock

*God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.*

—Augustine (354-430)

*[Domitian] insisted upon being regarded as a god and took vast pride in being called 'master' and god [theos]. These titles were used not merely in speech but also in written documents.*

—Dio Cassius (155-235)

*Domitian was the first emperor to understand that behind the Christian movement there stood an enigmatic figure who threatened the glory of the emperors. He was the first to declare war on this figure, and the first also to lose the war—a foretaste of things to come.* —Elbert Stauffer

*The key that unlocks the door to the understanding of this book is, we believe, that it relates to The Day of the Lord, and not to any tradition which limits the reception of this Vision to a particular day of the week; and that day Sunday.* —E.W. Bullinger

*It is primarily as Judge that Jesus Christ appears in Revelation. He judges the churches, the whole earth, Babylon, world rulers at Armageddon, and Satan.*

—Thomas Constable

*Angel means messenger and could mean...that each church has its guardian angel. Or the word could be used in a nontechnical sense as a human messenger—the human leader or pastor of the church.* —Charles Ryrie