

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation: 1:1-6 | Session 2 | Notes

In verse one, we saw how the Revelation of Jesus Christ (or the unveiling of Jesus Christ) was given by God to Jesus. It was sent to an Angel, then to John. Its purpose is to show his (Christ's) **servants** things that will transpire rapidly once they begin (See notes from session 1 for a discussion on **servants**). The revelation is from Jesus Christ, and **John** recorded it. We assume it was the apostle John, but the text does not state which John; maybe it is best just to say it was *John on Patmos*.

Is the Church the subject of the Book of Revelation?

Before we move on to verse 2, let's take a moment to review the idea that I put forward last week about the Body of Christ (The Church as we know it).

I said that the Church is not the subject of Revelation. Therefore, we will not see references to the Body of Christ when we read Revelation. That statement is a tough pill to swallow because it has been so ingrained into us that the Church is in Revelation. (*See Session 1 for the complete discussion*).

While the Church is not the subject of Revelation, and there are no references to us in the Body of Christ, I want to be clear that **the Body of Christ is present with the Lord during the events of Revelation**. Although John does not mention us specifically, we are there.

Take, for example, the Old Testament book of Esther. God is never mentioned in that book, but is God present during the events of Esther? Of course. While God isn't revealed in the book of Esther, nor is He the subject, His hand can be seen moving throughout the world events in that book.

The subject of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ to Israel during the Tribulation **so that they might believe**.

In Jeremiah 30:7, the Tribulation is called "**The Time of Jacob's Trouble**." It is not a time of trouble for the Church. We are present, but Revelation is not written about us or to us since we are not part of Jacob or Israel.

OUR ROLE IN HEAVEN WITH CHRIST DURING THE EVENTS OF REVELATION IS NOT REVEALED.

Nevertheless, Christians in the Body of Christ and the dead in Christ will have been "*caught up together...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Therefore, the church is not absent in Heaven during the events of Revelation, **we are there with Christ**, but we are not the subject that John is writing about.

Verse 2—

John **bare record of the word of God**, which was given to him by direct prophetic communication. The **testimony** (Greek noun: *marturia*) **of Jesus Christ**. It is unclear, but perhaps by **testimony**, John means Jesus's prophetic teaching while on earth. The things John saw, while described in more detail, do not go outside the scope of what Jesus gave testimony of in His earthly prophetic teaching. The phrase, **All the things that he** (John) **saw**¹ are represented in the vision that came to John on *The Lord's Day*.

Verse 3—

Blessed is he that readeth (The Greek word *anaginosko*) normally, it means to *read out loud*. **He that readeth is singular. They that hear the words;** are many listeners. This was the typical method of reading and hearing God's word in the Jewish synagogue. For example, Jesus in the synagogue, in Luke 4:16,

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up to read."

Blessed is a word from a Greek word that means happy and happier. The one who reads it out loud is **blessed**. Some might think it odd that a book about judgment would use the word *happy*, but each time the word **Blessed** is used, it refers to those who will not face the wrath of the judgment of the Tribulation. And, since the dispensation of the Tribulation will be based on the Law (we will see the Law when we look at the Seven Churches in chapters 2 and 3), many of the **blessed** passages in Revelation are connected with works (not grace).

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, and keep... 1:3

Blessed are those which die in the Lord... 14:13

Blessed is he that watcheth... 16:15

Blessed are they which are called... 19:9

Blessed...is he that hath part in the first resurrection... 20:6

Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy...22:7

Blessed are they that do his commandments... 22:14

Not only is the reader blessed, but also **those that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things...written**. The word **keep** is the Greek *tereo*, which is also translated as "hold fast," "observe," and "take care of." It doesn't mean *keep (or ponder) those things in your heart*; that is a different word, *suntero* (as in Luke 2.19, *But Mary kept all these things...*).

We have to conclude that this is not a promise given to us directly since we cannot **keep** this prophecy, but we will see when we get to chapters 2 and 3 that the words of this prophecy will

¹ Notice the past tense, **saw**; he is writing this introduction last.

be able to be kept by the Jewish remnant in the Tribulation. And as we have already noted with the blessings above, the words of this prophecy are works based and contrary to grace.

We can say confidently that everyone who reads and hears God's word is blessed! Reading God's word aloud more often in our public church gatherings would prove valuable! The Psalmist said (Psalm 119), regarding God's word, "My tongue shall speak of thy word." "Make me alive according to thy word." "Strengthen me according to thy word." "I hope in thy word." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." "My heart stands in awe of thy word."

It is possible that the blessing or happiness for the reader of Revelation applies to all in every dispensation who read this prophecy of future events regarding the revelation of Jesus Christ, even if they can't keep the prophecy.

The word **prophecy** is used seven times in Revelation. Seven always denotes *spiritual perfection* (*blessed* is also found seven times). Since every word of Scripture is inspired, there is undoubtedly a reason for *the sevens*; perhaps it is to point us to the Holy Spirit, who inspires His complete Word as the one who will bring these prophecies completely to life.

For the time is at hand. In verse one, we read "*the things which must shortly come to pass,*" and we noted that the word **shortly** was *tachos* in Greek which is a *speed word*, not a *time word*. But in verse 2, the word **time** could be translated as **season**. **Time** here is the Greek word *Kairos* which is often translated as **season**. It is more of a broad word, whereas John could have used the Greek word *chronos* from which we get our word, Chronometer (or a watch/timepiece). In Acts 1:7, we see both words used, *Chronos* and *Kairos*.

That the time is **At hand** is how we should live our lives; the nearness of the Lord should influence our lives. We should walk in His timing and not our own, knowing that God's season for judging man is always at hand. When the Lord comes, "He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Corinthians 4:5).

What a blessing it would be if we always were in a state of mind that the season of the Lord's return is near. Expecting Him to return as King of kings and Lord of lords should influence our daily living. And so we are directed, for example, by the apostle Paul on how to live as believers in a season of expectation (Titus 2:12,13).

Verses 4,5—

To whom is **John** testifying? **The seven churches which are in Asia**? Last week we proposed that whenever the word **church(es)** (*ekklesia*, which means assembly) is used, we have to interpret it. What kind of an assembly? We don't know what kind of assemblies these are at this point in the book since we have little information about them. Since the body of Christ is not in the book

of Revelation (my assumption), the seven churches/assemblies (seven being the number of perfection in Scripture) likely represent all of Israel.

Let's not jump the gun and read into (eisegesis) the seven assemblies. We can better identify them when we get to chapters 2 and 3. All we know about these seven assemblies, as of verse 4, is that they are **in Asia**, which in the Bible is modern-day Türkiye (formerly Turkey). Second, when the prophecies of this book are fulfilled (in the future), we might assume that these assemblies will be on Earth. We must remember that Revelation is a prophecy of future events (1:3). Therefore, when we look at these assemblies more closely in chapters two and three, we must be careful not to separate them from the rest of the prophecy. This entire book is one Revelation.

We will see that Revelation concerns *The Day of the Lord* (or, The Tribulation), which during that time, there will be assemblies of people who will need certain instructions on how to live *on That Day*.

In our dispensation of Grace, we have letters (or epistles) from the apostle Paul in which we develop our doctrine for Christian living. During the Tribulation, these seven churches living again under the Law will receive their prophetic doctrine in seven epistles on how to live by the Law during the Day of the Lord.

Insight: The Day of the Lord = The Tribulation.

Old Testament Names:

- ⇒ Old Testament's most common name for the Great Tribulation is "The Day of the Lord."
- ⇒ The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord—Joel 2:31
- ⇒ **The Time of Jacob's Trouble—Jeremiah 30:7**
- ⇒ **One Week (or the Seventieth Week of Daniel)—Daniel 9:24,27**
- ⇒ The LORD's Strange Work and Strange Act—Isaiah 28:21
- ⇒ **The Day of Israel's Calamity—Deuteronomy 32:35; Obadiah 12-14**
- ⇒ The Tribulation—Deuteronomy 4:30
- ⇒ The Indignation—Isaiah 26:20; Daniel 11:36
- ⇒ The Overflowing Scourge—Isaiah 28:15,18
- ⇒ The Day of Vengeance—Isaiah 34:8; 35:4; 61:2
- ⇒ The Year of Recompense—Isaiah 34:8
- ⇒ The Time of Trouble—Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 1:15
- ⇒ The Day of Wrath, Distress, Wasteness, Desolation—Zephaniah 1:15
- ⇒ The Day of Darkness, Clouds, Thick Darkness—Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:2
- ⇒ The Day of The Trumpet, Alarm—Zephaniah 1:16

Note: The body of Christ is not Israel, spiritual or otherwise, so the Time of Jacob's Trouble and the Day of Israel's calamity is not our time or day.

The New Testament names for the Tribulation:

- ⇒ The Day of the Lord—1 Thessalonians 5:2
- ⇒ The Wrath of God—Revelation 15:1, 7; 14:10, 19; 16:1
- ⇒ The Hour of Trial—Revelation 3:10
- ⇒ The Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb of God—Revelation 6:16,17
- ⇒ The Wrath to Come—1 Thessalonians 1:10
- ⇒ The Wrath—1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 2:22; 7:14

- ⇒ The Great Tribulation—Matthew 24:29
- ⇒ The Hour of Judgment—Revelation 14:7
- ⇒ The Lord's Day—Revelation 1:10

Verses 4,5 (continued)—

Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is (time present), **and which was** (time past), **and which is to come** (forever). This is Jehovah seated on His throne, the great *I AM*, or *Yahweh (LORD)*, who was and is and is to come. Exodus 3:14,15, "This is my name forever..."

And from The seven spirits which are before the throne. This is not The Holy Spirit as some claim; If the Holy Spirit is equal with God, how can He be divided into seven? Likewise, the Holy Spirit, being equal with God, does not *serve* God. Angels are called both *spirits and servants* (Hebrews 1:7). Psalm 104:3 states, "Who maketh his angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire." These spirits are mentioned again in 4:5, and *seven angels stand before God in 8:2*. The plain sense is that these are some sort of *servants* (created beings).

It would only be speculation that the Seven Spirits before the throne refer to the Holy Spirit because God the Father and Jesus Christ are included in this salutation. Some say that the seven spirits complete the Trinity. But, in the New Testament, Holy Spirit is never included in any salutation, which includes the Father and the Son (Romans 1:7; Philemon 3; 2 Peter 1:2).

And grace and peace be unto you from...Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the passage could be read as **Grace be unto you, and peace from Jehovah, Jehovah's servants, And Jesus Christ.**

It is Jesus to whom the Revelation concerns, who, at His first coming, humbled himself (Philippians 2:7). At His second coming, he will be exalted and glorified (Philippians 2:9-11)

The Jesus of Revelation is, vs. 5, 1) **The Faithful Witness**; because He is faithful, we can trust this Revelation given to Him by the Father. **The first begotten of the dead**, since others in Scripture were resurrected, we have to assume they all died again. Still, Jesus was the first to rise in an immortal body which many will follow, **and the prince** (Greek: Arkhone=ruler) **of the kings of the earth** that in all things he might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). Psalm 89:27,37 uses all of these titles (*Firstborn, higher than kings, faithful witness*).

I have stated that the Body of Christ is not seen in The Revelation, and yet we have this in verse 5: **Unto him that loved us**; while this sounds like a statement that is referring to Christ's love for those in the body of Christ the "us" is referring to the *seven churches* (vs.4) which at this point we can assume are Jewish assemblies. The statement **him that loved us** is true of God's lovingkindness to Israel (Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 54:10) but also to the entire world (John 3:16). But the pronoun **us** seems to be, in context, specific to the assemblies (vs.4) and Israel in general.

And washed² us (that is again, those in the seven churches, vs. 4) **from our sins in** (better, **by our sins in**) **his own blood**; washing **by blood** is how sins were purged away in the Old Testament.

King David knew God would **wash him thoroughly from his iniquity** and asked God to **wash** him, and he **shall be whiter than snow** (Psalm 51:2,7), and because of Judah's iniquity, they needed to be **washed** (Isaiah 1:16,18).

As believers in Jesus Christ in the body of Christ, we are also *washed* (1 Corinthians 6:11), but similar things are not always the same. We are washed by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit when we believe by grace through faith (not by works of righteousness; Titus 3:4-7).

Verse 6—

Still addressing the Seven assemblies (vs. 4); **And hath made us kings³** (as in royalty: 1 Peter 2:9) **and priests unto God**. This is one of the statements that is easy to *read into* (eisegesis). We should ask, is this meant for Israel? If so, we should not read the Body of Christ into this statement, nor should it be applied to the body of Christ, though many do.

Here are just a few examples from several commentaries where the body of Christ is *read into* this passage because of misinterpreting the pronoun **us**:

² Modern translations from the critical text use *loosed us* or *freed us*.

³ Critical text says "Kingdom".

“Believers are now a kingdom and priests with the purpose now and forever of serving God.”⁴

“By virtue of being washed in Christ’s blood, believers become a kingdom (community) of priests....”⁵

“Christians, therefore, are a kingdom because they are priests....”⁶

“This idea is expressed here by saying that Christ had made us, in fact, kings and priests; that is, Christians are exalted to the dignity and are invested with the office, implied in these words.”⁷

It is no wonder so many people have difficulty figuring out The Revelation; we have been told by authorities over and over that the book that it’s all about us.

Rather, this expression **and hath made us Kings** (denoting royalty, as in 1 Peter 2:9) **and priests unto God and** (even) **his** (Jesus Christ’s, vs. 5) **Father**, is very Jewish and is addressed to the seven churches (follow the pronouns). John is quoting from Exodus 19:6, referring to Israel. Israel shall be unto God a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (See also, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:21, 26:19, 28:9). One more thought about **priests**; The office of the Priest was hereditary; only those from the line of Aaron were eligible (Exodus 29:9: *“And the Priest’s office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute”*). **Perpetual** means FOREVER. The last I checked my family tree, Aaron was not at the top. Peter quotes the same Exodus passage in his epistle⁸ regarding Israel (1 Peter 2:9). Christians are not kings or a kingdom of priests. We are the body of Christ, and we are not visible in Revelation.

To him (That is, the Father), **be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

⁴ Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985. Print.

⁵ Wilkin, Robert N., ed. *The Grace New Testament Commentary*. Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010. Print.

⁶ Lange, John Peter et al. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Revelation*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008. Print.

⁷ Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: Revelation](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.

⁸ Peter’s first epistle is addressed to “The (elect) strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” not to the body of Christ. The only people in the Bible shown to be *elect* is the nation of Israel (See Deuteronomy 7:6; The body of Christ cannot hijack the status of Israel for ourselves. Believers in the body of Christ are not *elect*, we have accepted the gift of salvation by grace through faith.