

Revelation Bible Study

Remember, Revelation is a book of comfort to the Christian!!

Chapter 1

1:1-3:

(Notes to help understanding)

1:1 his angel. The word “angel” occurs over 70 times in Revelation. The vast majority of Revelation was given through angels. There are only a few times when Jesus speaks directly to John (chapters 1-3 and 22). One commentator seems to think that it was to make sure that John and all who read this would know that Jesus is who is giving this revelation. Once this was established, then he could turn the mediation of the message over to angels.

1:3 Blessed. The word means more than “happy,” because happiness is an emotion which is dependent on outward circumstances. Blessed” here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.

1:3 time is near. Instead of losing precious time in speculation as to when the end of the world will come, it is better for everyone to remember Ps. 90:12, which reads “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

(Meditation/Discussion)

Read these verses and think of all the comforting thoughts that are described in these three verses for us as believers.

1:4-8:

(Notes to help understanding)

1:4 seven churches. These were located about 50 miles apart, forming a circle in Asia moving clockwise north from Ephesus and coming around full circle from Laodicea (east of Ephesus). They are listed in verse 11 and described in chapters 2 and 3. (download map)

Seven is the number of completeness, so these may be considered representative of all the Christian churches on earth including ours and those in our community.

1:4 seven spirits. This is the sevenfold description of the Holy Spirit. The seven spirits mean that the triune God is fully present.

1:6 kingdom of priests. This was what God wanted His OT people to be to the people around them. They were to be His instruments in bringing the nations around them to faith in God. Instead, they joined the heathen nations in worshipping their idols. In the NT the church is to be His kingdom of priests.

1:7 Clouds. They were a symbol of God's presence. A cloud by day and fire by night led them out of Egypt and also gave them direction in the desert. At Mt. Sinai God spoke from a cloud. In the New Testament the Transfiguration was another example.

The whole human race will witness His coming. No one will be exempt from this confrontation with Jesus Christ, not "even those who pierced him." The whole history of the world and the Church is patterned toward and converges upon the glorious reappearance of Christ.

1:8 Alpha and Omega. These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This expresses the eternity of God. In rabbinic theology these letters represented totality and entirety, of God's visible presence for the benefit of his people.

(Meditation/Discussion)

Read these verses and think:

- Of new insights that you might apply to your daily living;
- Of all the comforting thoughts that are described in these three verses for us as believers.

1:9-20:

(Notes to help understanding)

1:9 Patmos. A small (four by eight miles), rocky island in the Aegean Sea some 50 miles southwest of Ephesus, off the coast of modern Turkey. It probably served as a Roman penal settlement. Eusebius, the "father of church history" (A.D. 265–340), reports that John was released from Patmos under the emperor Nerva (96–98). (CSB)

1:9 because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.† Exiled as a punishment for preaching the gospel (cf. v. 2). (CSB)

1:10 the Lord's Day. A technical term for the first day of the week—so named because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. It was also the day on which the Christians met. (CSB)

1:10 in the Spirit.† In a state of spiritual exaltation—not a dream, but a vision like Peter's in Ac 10:10. Cf. 2Co 12:1–6. (CSB)

Because of the Spirit's role in his visions, John message was inspired and authoritative as those of the OT prophets. (TLSB)

View the picture (1:12-16) that represents verses 12-16. At first glance this picture might be very frightening. For John's readers this picture would remind them of an OT prophet. For unbelievers this would be a scary sight. For Christians it is a great comfort and strength.

1:12 golden lampstands.† The seven churches. These are the churches name in verse 11. Remember, these churches represented all Christian churches of all time including ours. Christ is here seen dwelling in the very midst of His churches.

1:13 son of man. It is a title used in Ezekiel and Daniel and used often by Jesus to identify Him as a spokesman for God.

1:13 robe ... to his feet. The O.T. high priest wore a full-length robe (Ex 28:4; 29:5). (CSB)

1:13 a golden belt or sash is tied around his chest. Such a high tying of a sash, around the chest rather than around the waist, was usual with this robe.

And the golden girdle that he wears indicates his royal dignity. As a king he rules. All things are in his hands. He rules the world and directs his Church. (Stoeckhardt)

1:14 white like wool.† The hoary head suggests wisdom and dignity.

1:14 eyes ... like blazing fire.† Penetrating insight. In the OT God's eyes suggest his knowledge or his concern for his people. (CSB)

1:15 feet...bronze glowing...furnace. Feet of brass represent a strength that conquers all enemies. This is as if they burned in a furnace, that is, like shining brightly, like metal under intense heat. God is not an idol, with feet of clay. He shall stand forever and tread all his enemies underfoot.

1:15 voice was like...rushing waters. It is similar to the voice of the heavenly figure in Dan 10:6, whose voice sounded like a great crowd of people. But Christ's voice suggests especially the mighty voice of God which attended the coming of his glory.

1:16 right hand...held seven stars. The angels assigned to guard the seven churches. The fact that Jesus held these seven stars in His hand means that He plays an active part in protecting and caring for His people. (TLSB)

1:16 sharp double-edged sword.† A long sword. The sword symbolizes divine judgment, authority and God's word. (CSB) It represents the Word of Christ, who rules in His Church by means of His Word. (CC p. 51)

1:16 face...like sun shining...brilliance. In the OT the sun is used as a metaphor for God. Light produces life, bringing them out from darkness.

1:17 right hand. The right hand here symbolizes fellowship in the Bible.

1:17 do not be afraid. For the people of God those words of assurance come as a great comfort, assuring them that God has put away their sins, that they stand cleansed before God, and that God has declared them to be his people. Someone has said that this phrase or something similar is found at least 365 in Scripture. That means at least one per day.

1:17 the First and the Last. The Lord Christ identifies himself as "the First and the Last." Like "the Alpha and the Omega" (1:8), "the First and the Last" also denotes the eternalness, but the titles are not synonymous. "The Alpha and the Omega" refers to the eternalness of God (1:8) and Christ (22:13), an eternalness that is far beyond creation, but "the First and the Last" refers to the eternalness of Christ in relationship to his bride, the church.

1:18 keys of death and Hades. This is absolute control over their domain. (CSB) In Matthew 16:18 Jesus gave these keys to His apostles to forgive or retain sins. In each Sunday's worship service believing repentant people receive forgiveness of their sins as announced by the pastor in the "absolution." Those who do not believe or repent are not forgiven by God.

Summary of 1:12-18

This above picture of Christ and the notes show us:

- Jesus as an OT prophet for the comfort of John's readers,
- Jesus as the all-power God who can deliver what He promises,
- Jesus who is always in the middle of His children's lives,
- Jesus who knows and sees everything and knows our every need,
- Jesus and His pure Word which convicts and comforts,
- Jesus who is alive and lives forever, and
- Jesus and His comforting words of "Do not be afraid!"

(Meditation/Discussion)

1. What new insights did you discover in verses 9-20? How will they impact your life?
2. What comforting thoughts did you find for your life?
3. What verse(s) made the greatest impact on as you studied verses 9-20?