

**Covenant Bible Study**  
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Revelation 1-3 (Review)  
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**Author:**

**Revelation 1:9**

9 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.

- John has been exiled to the island of Patmos (in a Roman Prison) to be **silenced**.
- The letter was written in approximately 95AD
- The Roman Emperor, Titus Flavius Domitian, had demanded that **he** be worshipped as “Lord and God”

**Title and Purpose:**

- The Revelation – Means the **unveiling**  
Apocalypse (our word) – Unfortunately now a synonym for chaos or catastrophic events  
Apocalypse (Means Unveiling – once hidden, now visible)  
Revelation is **singular** (not the book of revelations)
- The Book of Revelation’s Stated Purpose (verse 2) is to **Unveil** the Things Which Must Soon Take Place

**2 Peter 3:3-8**

3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation...

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. NASB

- As he measures it – it will **soon** occur
- As we measure it – it will happen at **any moment** (imminent)

**An Outline of Revelation**

**Revelation 1:19**

19 "Write therefore the things which **you have seen**, and the things **which are**, and the things which **shall take place** after these things.

Chapter One:	Prologue and The Things You Have Seen
Chapters Two and Three:	The Things That Are (Seven Churches)
Chapters Four - Twenty Two:	The Things That Will Take Place and Epilogue

**Why did John use Symbolism:** (Drastically different from any of his other writings!)

- Symbolism is not weakened by time.  
But be careful that you not dismiss them as pure symbolism or not real – it is from God after all
- Symbols not only convey information, but impart values and arouse emotion.
- It was a common form of literature in Old and New Testament days.
- Protect** the **Letter**.  
Only those who knew Christ personally would understand this “Spiritual Code”  
The writings would be dismissed as crazy!

### **The Blessing of the Book**

3 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.

- ❑ Blessed is appropriately defined here as “finding the **right path**”

Hebrew Root – “Ashar” – to find the right pathway in the face of false pathways

#### Psalms 1:1-2

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!  
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

### **The Greeting of the Book**

4 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 the seven Spirits who are before His throne; 5a and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

*Different Interpretations:*

- ❑ Seven Church **Ages** – Panorama of Church History
- ❑ Seven **Literal** Churches (Representative of Churches in every Era)

### **Milt's Approximate Version**

#### Revelation 1:1-8

1 This is the unveiling of Christ and the things that will take place unexpectedly. This revelation is given by God to Jesus, through His angel to John, and for us through John. 2 I, John, witnessed these things of which I write. 3 Blessed are those who read and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is imminent.

4 I, John, am writing to the seven churches that are in Asia and to Christians everywhere: Grace and peace, from God the Father, the Holy Spirit, 5 and from Jesus Christ the son. Glory to Christ who loves us, and released us from our sins by His sacrifice, 6 to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold what I have seen, He is coming with the clouds, and everyone will see Him this time, and all the earth will mourn over Him regretting their unrighteous deeds. 8 "I am complete," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

MAV

## What John Heard

### Revelation 1:9-20

9 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.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice **like** the sound of a trumpet, (military call or announcement) 11 saying, "**Write** in a book (biblio/scroll) 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 John Saw (First Vision)

12 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one **like** a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. 14 And His head and His hair were white **like** white wool, **like** snow; and His eyes were **like** a flame of fire; 15 and His feet were **like** burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was **like** the sound of many waters. (Loud rushing water) 16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword (long sword – not a dagger); and His face was **like** the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

19 "Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

Chapter One:	The Things You Have Seen
Chapters Two and Three:	The Things That Are (Seven Churches)
Chapters Four - Twenty Two:	The Things That Will Take Place

20 "As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- Seven lampstands represent the seven **churches**. (Verse 20)
- The Son of Man is the **Glorified Christ**.  
It is a man/person – don't forget all the "likes"  
Volumes have been written on the meanings of the robe, sash, etc – **MOST LIKELY A JUDGE**  
stick with the plain and obvious:  
**JOHN WAS IN AWE** – that is the point! See descriptions again when addressing 7 churches
- The Stars are the **leaders** or **pastors** of the seven churches.  
(likely the ones who will read the scroll)  
See verse 20 – stars are the angels – or messengers!  
Angels in scripture always masculine and adult – sorry, no sweet little cherubs!

Sort of a performance review of the 7 churches

## Letters to the Seven Churches

Revelation 1:1-12 "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."

### Things Similar

1. Each evaluation (performance review) is addressed to the **angel** or messenger/pastor.
2. Each Church is identified by the **city** in which it was - **location**. (not the denomination – one assembly)
3. Jesus immediately **identifies** himself to each Church.
4. In each letter, it is clear that he **knows** them well. (underline the words "I know")
5. A pattern is followed:
  - a. Description of Christ
  - b. Approval
  - c. Rebuke
  - d. Command
  - e. Promise

### Things Unique

1. Laodicea had no **commendations**.
2. Smyrna and Philadelphia had no **rebukes**.

### The Process

1. John wrote the revelation on the island of **Patmos**.
2. Scroll taken to the **mainland** by a messenger and given to the "angel" to read to the Church.

"He who has an ear,  
let him hear what the Spirit says  
to the churches."

A message to all Christians – not just for the local church...

(1) **Ephesus** – The Careless Church (Revelation 2:1-7)

Description of Christ

Ephesus had some stellar leaders – Pal, Timothy, John (himself) – God is in control – he holds them – he chooses the leadership

1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

Approval

2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

*Nicolaitans* –A sect of false teachers that exaggerated the doctrine of Christian liberty and freedom.  
Irenaeus wrote that the Nicolaitan's "lived lives of unrestrained indulgence."

Rebuke

4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Command

5 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent...

Promise

7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life (eternal life – genesis 2:9), which is in the Paradise of God.' (heaven luke 23:43; 2 cor 12:4)

(2) **Smyrna** – The Crowned Church (Revelation 2:8-11)

Description of Christ

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

Approval

9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Rebuke

*None*

Command

10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.

Promise

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Stephanos – Winners Crown / James 1:12 Award given at the annual athletic games) 11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.'

### (3) Pergamum – The Compromising Church (Revelation 2:12-17)

#### Description of Christ

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:  
The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

#### Approval

13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (obviously a sinful area – emperor worship / god of asklepios – god of healing – snake)

#### Rebuke

14 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak (see numbers 22-25) to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality. 15 'Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

#### Command

16 'Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

#### Promise

17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna (bread given to Israelites, bread of life who came down from heaven – some was kept inside the arc of the covenant – represents the blessings and benefits of knowing Christ – eph 1:3), and I will give him a white stone (lot of speculation on this one – diamond? Stone on breastplate of the high priest representing the right to approach God? **Most likely reference to the white stone used as ticket to enter a public party or feast...**), and a new name (pass to heaven) written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

### (4) Thyatira – The Corrupted Church (Revelation 2:18-29)

#### Description of Christ

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:  
The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

#### Approval

19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

#### Rebuke

20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel (not real name – but reference to 1 Kings 16), who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 'And I gave her time to repent (GRACE); and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

#### Command

24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them (believing they could explore the things of Satan and still worship God – another abuse of liberty) — I place no other burden on you. (wow – that's enough!)

### Promise

25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. 26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star (Christ himself – a closely identified with christ that he will seem to belong to them!) . 29 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

## (5) Sardis – The Feeble Church (Revelation 3:1-6)

### Description of Christ

1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:  
He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this:

### Rebuke (comes before approval)

'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

### Command

2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. 3 'Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.

### Approval

4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled (stain or defile) their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.

### Promise

5 'He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. 6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. '

## (6) Philadelphia – The Faithful Church

### Description of Christ

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:  
He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

### Approval

8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door (opportunity/security of salvation) which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie — behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. (this passage used to support a rapture before the tribulation)

### Command

11 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.

Rebuke

None

Promise

12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar (stability/permanent) in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God (we will have fullness in Christ), and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 13 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

(7) Laodicea – The Foolish Church (Revelation 3:14-22)

Description of Christ

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:  
The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Commendation

None

Rebuke

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. (the water supply there was lukewarm due to the several miles it would have to travel through the aqueducts) 17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

Command

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Promise

21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne (heaven / fellowship with the Lord – our time with him will be intimate), as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "

*“He who has an ear,  
let him hear what the Spirit says  
to the churches.”*

## **An Outline of Revelation**

### Revelation 1:19

19 "Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

Chapter One:                               The Things You Have Seen  
Chapters Two and Three:               The Things That Are (Seven Churches)  
Chapters Four - Twenty Two:         The Things That Will Take Place

### **Prologue**

- Promises of Blessing for Reading, Hearing, and Keeping the Words of the Book (*Revelation 1:1-8*)

### **Things You Have Seen**

- Vision of the Glorified Christ (*Revelation 1:9-20*)

### **Things Which Are**

- Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches (*Revelation 2:1 – 3:22*)
  - Ephesus (2:1-7)
  - Smyrna (2:8-11)
  - Pergamum (2:12-17)
  - Thyatira (2:18-29)
  - Sardis (3:1-6)
  - Philadelphia (3:7-13)
  - Laodicea (3:14-22)

### **Things That Will Take Place**

- Vision of Heavenly Throne Room, Where John Witnesses the Worship of God the Father & Jesus Christ (*Revelation 4:1 – 5:14*)
- Vision of Judgments Upon the Earth that Increase in Magnitude While God in His Mercy Continues to Call Humankind to Repentance (*Revelation 6:1 – 18:24*)
  - Judgment of the Seven Seals (6:1 – 8:1)
  - Judgment of the Seven Trumpets (8:2 – 11:19)
  - Vision of the Dragon, Woman, and Beasts (12:1 – 14:20)
  - Judgment of the Seven Bowls (15:1 – 16:21)
  - Judgment of Babylon (17:1 – 18:24)
- Return of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon (*Revelation 19:1-21*)
- Reign of Christ and His Resurrected Saints Over the Earth (*Revelation 20:1-6*)
- Final Destruction of Satan, Evil, and Death (*Revelation 20:7-15*)
- Ultimate Eternal Peace and Perfection (*Revelation 21:1 – 22:5*)

### **Epilogue**

- Final Promises of Blessing for Reading, Hearing, and Keeping the Words of the Book (*Revelation 22:6-21*)