

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

An Overview

TITLE: “Revelation” is from the Greek word *apokalupsis* which means, “a disclosure, an unveiling.” The book of Revelation is an unveiling of the character and program of God.

AUTHOR: The author of Revelation called himself “John” (1:4, 9; 22:8). He was a prophet (22:9) and a leader who was known in the churches of Asia Minor to whom he writes (1:4). Revelation indicates a similarity with the Gospel of John, employing words that are common to both: word, lamb, witness, true, overcome, dwell, fountain of living waters, and others. Most Bible students believe that the Holy Spirit used John, Christ’s beloved disciple, to give us three kinds of inspired literature: the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the book of Revelation. Warren Wiersbe has outlined the purposes of each as follows:

<u>Gospel of John</u>	<u>Epistles (1-3 John)</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Believe (20:31)	Fellowship (1:3)	Preparation (22:20)
Life received	Life revealed	Life rewarded
Salvation	Sanctification	Sovereignty
The Prophet	The Priest	The King

THE PURPOSE: The stated purpose of Revelation is to reveal Jesus Christ (1:1): His person, His power, and His plan for the future.

THE THEME: Central to the book is the existence, power, sovereignty, justice, wisdom, and goodness of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

DATE AND ORIGIN: The traditional view for the date of Revelation is during the reign of emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96). The early church fathers affirmed this and most scholars since have agreed. The date has been traditionally set at between A.D. 94-96 (during the final and most severe years of Domitian’s reign). It is likely that John wrote Revelation during his exile on the island of Patmos.

KEY IDEAS: The book opens and closes with similar ideas and phrases, among them are the words of Jesus, “I am coming soon” (1:1-8; 22:12-21). In between, the book deals with vivid descriptions of God’s judgments on sin.

KEY VERSES: Revelation 1:7: “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen” (cf. Rev 19:11-16). Revelation 1:19: “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”

KEY WORDS: Two key words are repeated throughout the whole letter. They are “lamb” (29 times) and “throne” (47 times). The dual ideas of sacrificial atonement and God’s sovereignty and judgment dominate the letter. Four numbers also play a significant role throughout Revelation: “seven” (55 times), “four” (29 times), “twelve” (23 times) and “ten” (9 times).

KEY NOTE: There are no formal quotations from the Old Testament, however there are many allusions. Bible students have found between 250-550 Old Testament allusions in the book of Revelation.

NUTSHELL OUTLINE:

1. Introduction (1:1-20)
2. Letters to the seven churches in Asia (2:1-3:22)
3. Visions of the end of this age and the new heaven and earth (4:1-22:5)
4. Conclusion (22:6-21)

IMPORTANCE:

1. Revelation, like all Scripture, is “profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. Revelation reveals Jesus Christ like no other book (Revelation 1-22).
3. Revelation deals with “things, which must soon take place” (Revelation 1:1).
4. Revelation is the one book that promises a blessing to all who will read it (Revelation 1:3).
5. Revelation contains unique warnings and challenges to the church (Revelation 2:1-3:22).
6. Revelation discloses conditions that will be present in the end-times (Revelation 6:1-19:21).
7. Revelation is NOT to be sealed up (Revelation 22:10)

CHRIST IN REVELATION: Since Revelation is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” it demonstrates His glory, wisdom and power (1:1-20), and portrays His authority over the church (2:1-3:21) and His power and right to judge the world (5:1-19:21). But as the revelation of Christ, it is loaded with descriptive titles. In particular, it describes Jesus Christ (1:1) as:

- The faithful witness (1:5)
- The firstborn from the dead (1:5)
- The ruler over the kings of the earth (1:5)
- The Son of Man (1:13)
- The first and the last (1:17)
- The living One (1:18)
- The Son of God (2:18)
- He who is holy, who is true (3:7)
- The Amen (3:14)
- The Beginning of the creation of God (3:14)
- The Lion that is from the tribe of Judah (5:5)
- The Root of David (5:5)
- A Lamb (5:6)
- The Word of God (19:13)
- King of Kings and Lord of Lords (19:16)
- The Alpha and the Omega (22:13)
- The beginning and the end (22:13)
- The bright morning Star (22:16)
- The Lord Jesus (22:21).

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