

Revelation 1:1-8 The Prologue

I. Introduction (1-3)

A. The Revelation Of Jesus Christ (1a)

1. The Father Gave to Jesus

- a. Revelation is About Jesus
- b. Given by God through Jesus and Concerning Him

2. Given to Show What Must Soon Happen

- a. ὅ δεῖ γενέσθαι (ha dei genesthai) – that which is necessary to happen
- b. This exact phrase appears only here, in Rev. 4:1, and 22:6 in the NT
- c. This exact phrase appears nowhere in the Greek Translation of the Old Testament (LXX) except Daniel 2:28,29, 45
 - i. Daniel Context: Daniel is interpreting the King's dream of a statue made of different kinds of metals. The interpretation of the vision is the four coming kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
 - ii. During the fourth kingdom (Rome) God would set up His Kingdom which would rule for eternity
- d. John uses Daniel's phrase (what must take place) and replaces Daniel's "in the last days" (Dan. 2:28) with the word "soon, shortly"
 - i. What Daniel sees as far future, John sees as beginning in his own day
 - ii. Daniel is told to seal up his visions until the time of the end (Dan. 12:4) but John is told not to seal his because the time is at hand (Rev. 22:10)

B. The Revelation Given To John (1b-2)

1. To John Through a Messenger

2. John Testified To what He saw

- a. Concerning the Word of God
- b. Concerning the Testimony of Christ
 - i. Notice that Revelation is the Testimony of Jesus Christ
 - ii. We miss the significance of what this Scripture's purpose is when we look at it as nothing more than a news report of the end of the world
 - iii. The Revelation, like all Scripture, is pointing the people of God to Jesus

C. The Revelation's Blessing (3)

1. Those who Read and Hear are Blessed

- a. The point is not to decipher the end of the world

- b. The reader and the hearer of the book is blessed when they heed the words contained in it
 - c. This raises questions as to interpretation
 - i. If the book is just an end times prediction, would the first century church have been blessed by it? What about the 10th century church?
 - ii. The book is a blessing for all who heed it in every era of Church history – so interpretation of it must include the first readers as well as modern readers
2. The Time is At Hand
- a. This does not mean the events will happen quickly once they begin
 - b. John is presenting the fact that the last age is now beginning. The times of the end spoken of by Daniel are unfolding as John is writing
 - i. Jesus and John the Baptist preached that the kingdom was at hand (Mark 1:15)
 - ii. John says that the time is near at the end of the book (22:7) as well
 - iii. The death and resurrection of Christ inaugurates the Kingdom of God preached in the OT
 - iv. Many NT writers confirm that the “last days” have begun with Christ’s resurrection (Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18)

II. Greetings

A. To The Seven Churches (4a)

- 1. John addresses seven churches in Asia Minor
- 2. Why only these seven churches? (there were others in that area)
 - a. The use of numbers in Revelation and the OT prophets
 - b. Numbers convey symbolism
 - i. Be careful not to take this too far
 - ii. Symbolism in prophetic writing is not numerology or finding hidden meanings
 - c. Seven – signifies “completeness” in the OT
 - i. The completion of Creation in 7 days
 - ii. Lev. 4:6,17 shows the priests completing their sacrificial work by sprinkling blood 7 times
 - iii. The festivals of the Jews were 7 days before their completion
 - iv. The period of uncleanness was complete by multiples of 7
 - v. Lev. 26:18-28 says God will punish Israel seven times – meaning a complete punishment

vi. Seven churches represent the universal complete church

- i. We will see this more when we get to the seven lampstands
- ii. In chapter 4, the focus of the book changes from the 7 specific churches to the worldwide church

B. Greetings From The Father (4b)

1. Grace and Peace open this letter just like the other NT epistles
2. Him who was and is and who is to come
 - a. John is referencing passages in Isa. Where God says he is eternal. i.e. first and last (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12)
 - b. Isaiah's references point back to God's name given in Exodus 3 at the burning bush "I am that I am"
 - c. The LXX renders the name Yahweh as εγω ειμι ο ων – I am the one being, or I am who I will be
 - d. The "I am" is expanded in Jewish writings (Targums, Midrash) to the threefold description (who is, who was, who will be)

C. Greetings From the Spirit (4c)

1. Once again we see "seven" Spirits representing the fullness of the Holy Spirit
2. The picture of seven spirits comes from Zech. 4 where the seven lamps represent the One Spirit by which God's power will enable his people
3. In Rev. 4:5-6, we will see that John identifies the seven lamps before the throne with the Spirit
4. There also may be an allusion to Isa. 11:2 which shows that the Spirit (with the seven-fold description) is the one who equips the Messiah to establish the kingdom

D. Greetings From the Son (5a)

III. The Testimony of Jesus Christ (5b-6)

A. The Glory of the Son (5b)

1. The Faithful Witness
 - a. Taken from Psalm 89:27, 37 (Messianic Psalm)
 - b. Jesus has been faithful to witness to the gospel and the Kingdom of God
2. The Firstborn From Among The Dead
 - a. Jesus has the preeminent position over all creation because of His resurrection
 - b. Jesus is the first man (although God-man) to be resurrected never to die again
3. The Ruler Over the Kings of the Earth
 - a. Jesus has been exalted to the throne of the Father

- b. His resurrection began the new creation that will be completed at His return

B. The Work of The Son For Us (5c-6a)

- 1. He loves Us
 - a. Jesus loves His people
 - b. Jesus demonstrated that love in the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection
- 2. He Freed us From Sin By His Blood
 - a. By the sacrifice, he has freed his people from the punishment of their sins
 - b. The law of God is satisfied and justice has been accomplished
- 3. He made Us Kings and Priests
 - a. The church as a kingdom of priests (kings and priests) comes from God's stated purpose for Israel in Exodus 19:6.
 - b. Israel was charged with spreading the knowledge of Yahweh to the nations
 - c. This fulfillment of Exodus points to the fact that we will see throughout Revelation and the NT
 - i. The church of Jesus is the fulfillment of God's Israel
 - ii. Ephesians 2 teaches this explicitly – God has taken both (Israel and the Gentiles) and made one people in Christ

C. The Doxology of God (6b)

IV. God's Perfect Will In History (7-8)

A. Jesus is The Fulfillment of God's Promises (7)

- 1. Coming in the Clouds
 - a. A quote from Daniel 7:13 – which refers to the Son of Man receiving his throne and kingdom from the Ancient of Days after God's judgment
 - b. Notice the direction of the Son of man in Daniel. He is not coming from heaven to earth. He is coming from earth to the Ancient of Days to receive dominion
 - c. The point John is making is that Jesus is this Son of Man foretold in Daniel – this is the same thing Jesus meant when he told the High Priest that he would see him coming on the clouds (they charged him with blasphemy for this)
- 2. Every Eye Will See Him
 - a. A quote from Zechariah 12:10 – they will look upon the one who they pierced
 - b. Zech. 12 also pertains to the times when God will judge the nations and redeem His people

- c. Matthew also records these verses in Zech. On the lips of Jesus in Matt. 24
 - i. John changes Zechariah's quote
 - ii. John says "every eye" will see him and he adds "all the tribes of the earth" to show the universal aspect of God's work. No longer limited to the Jews
 - iii. Πασαι αι φυλαι της γης – only appears in the LXX in referencing the universal sense (Gen. 12:3; 28:14; Ps. 71:17; Zech. 14:17)
 - 3. The prophecies of Kingdom, Redemption, and Victory are Fulfilled in Jesus. The last days have begun.
 - B. God is Sovereign Over History (8)
 - 1. The Alpha and Omega
 - 2. The One Who is, Was, and Will Come
 - 3. The Almighty
 - a. (See earlier descriptions of 3 fold description of God in Isa.)
 - b. God is accomplishing his will in history