

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY
The Book of Revelation
Pastor Jim Otte
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Session 3: Revelation 1:1-20

The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

- a. “**what soon must take place**” – “soon” is a relative term
- b. “**servant John, who testifies to everything he saw**” – a legal action of bearing witness to what one has seen and heard.
- c. “**Blessed is the one...reads aloud...hear it...take to heart**” – as scriptures were read loud in the worship settings, believers were to “hear” them: obey in attitude, mindset, and behavior.
 - a. **Attitude** – respect and gratitude for Jesus
 - b. **Mindset** – the Word is the guide for your thinking
 - c. **Behavior** – your actions and choices reflect the centrality of the Word in your life
- d. “**the words of this prophecy**” – prophecy had two meanings: foretell & tell forth
- e. “**the time is near.**” – time (Kairos) – God’s appointed time to act in grace and opportunity - within man’s time (chronos)

⁴ John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits^[a] before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

- a. “**the seven churches in the province of Asia**” – the Roman province of Asia Minor
- b. “**from the seven spirits**” – each church enjoying the presence of the Holy Spirit (number 7 symbolic of completion) and its fruit of “faith, hope, and love.”
- c. “**Jesus Christ...the firstborn from the dead**” – Jesus is the Truth, which is “faithful (reliable)” as opposed to false truths, which dominate world thinking. The proof of His reliability is the fact of His resurrection; the proof of our trust in Him will be our own resurrection!
 - a. ***1 Corinthians 15:20-23.*** *But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death*

came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

d. **“who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood,”**

a. **1 John 4:9-11**. *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

e. **“has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve”**

a. **Isaiah 61:1-6**. *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a] to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁶ And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God.*

b. **1 Peter 2:9**. *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

⁷ **“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”^[b] and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”^[c] So shall it be! Amen. ⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

a. **“He is coming with the clouds” –**

a. **1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**. ¹⁴ *For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

b. **“will mourn because of Him” –**

a. **Zechariah 12:10**. ⁰ *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit^[a] of grace and supplication. They will look on^[b] me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one*

mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

- c. **“the Alpha and the Omega”** – the beginning and ending letters of the Greek alphabet signifying the eternal nature of God

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

- a. **“on the island of Patmos because of the Word of God”** – Patmos was a rocky island 40 miles off the coast. Roman emperors used it as a place of banishment.
- b. **“companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus”** – note the radical perspective, which faith in Christ brings to the Christian’s experience of religious persecution or governmental attempts to silence the true Gospel (as opposed to Caesar worship). “Companion” suggests an accompanying teacher of “kingdom” perspective and “patient endurance” (as opposed to a spirit of resentment and terror).
- c. **“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit”** – though banished to exile, John did not let that circumstance deter him from his devotional worship.
- d. **“Write...what you see and send it to the seven churches”** – the seven cities were seats of Roman government, with centers for Caesar worship. “Seven” is a number of completion, so this could also be considered representative of all Christian churches on earth.

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,^[a] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

- a. **“seven golden lampstands”** – the function of the churches (vs. 20) is to express the light of God’s divine presence on earth.
- b. **“among the lampstands was someone like a son of man”** – Jesus is portrayed as the light of the world, within the seven churches
 - a. ***Daniel 7:13-15.*** ¹³*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,^[a] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*
- c. **“robe...golden sash...hair white as snow...eyes blazing fire”** – John is witnessing the majesty and power of God, expressed in His Son Jesus!

- a. **Daniel 7:9-10.** *“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.*
- b. **Matthew 17:1-2.** *After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.*
- d. **“He held seven stars”**
- e. **“out of His mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword”**
 - a. **Hebrews 4:12.** ¹² *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

- a. **“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last” – Literally “Do not give in to your fears!”** – Jesus reassures John that He is in everlasting God and totally in control of all that is happening.
- b. **“Living One...alive forever and ever!”** – Jesus’ resurrection is the key reality, which proves His power over all that is happening. For whose benefit?
 - a. **Ephesians 1:18-23.** *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*
- c. **“hold the keys”** – keys lock or unlock one’s access to death and Hell

¹⁹ “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels^[e] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- a. **“what will take place later.”** – what is now (tell forth) and what will (foretell) take place later.
- b. **“seven stars are the angels of the seven churches”** – angels portrayed as those proclaim the good news of the “light of the world.”