

# Part I

## Preparation of the Prophet: His Past Vision (1:1–20)

# Chapter 1

## Prologue of the Apocalypse (1:1–8)

**Overview** The first chapter describes how God prepared John to receive the revelation contained in this book. It has two parts:

1. the **prologue** of the book (1:1-8), and
2. the **vision** of Christ (1:9-20).

## 1.1 Preface (1:1-3)

The prologue contains:

1. a preface which includes **title** and the **content** of the revelation (1:1-3),
2. the book's **address** and a **doxology** (1:4-6), and,
3. the **theme** of the book (1:7-8).

The preface gives an overview of seven broad features:

1. the title of the book (v 1),
2. the channels used for communication (v 1),
3. the content which is the fulfilment of the OT prophecies (v 1)
4. the time of fulfillment which is near (v 1),
5. elaboration on the method of communication (v 1),

6. a brief allusion to the prophetic process (v 2), and
7. the practical purpose of the book (v 3).

### Revelation 1:1

Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

1. **Title:** The book starts with a title pointing to its content.
2. **Revelation Apokalypsis:** The essential nature of the book is revelation. The word **Apo** means away and **kalypsis** means a cover. Thus the word revelation means **uncovering** something that was concealed. Hence, the book reveals mysteries.
3. **Of Jesus Christ:** Jesus is the agent of revelation (immediate theme) as well the object of revelation (ultimate theme). Its central theme is to reveal or uncover the glory of Jesus hidden in the incarnation.
4. **Channels of communication for the revelation:** Father ⇒ Son ⇒ Angels ⇒ John ⇒ Servants.
5. **God gave Him:** Shows the divine source of the book which is from God the Father.

6. **Servants doulois** are the human recipients of this book, the members of the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3. The Greek word literally means slaves.
7. **Content of the book** to be shown to the churches is future events.
8. **Things must soon take place**: It shows the prophetic nature of the book. The expectation of the kingdom of God began in Daniel 2 in now unfolded. The book of Revelation gives a detailed account of events that must take place resulting in the institution of the everlasting kingdom that will replace other earthly, temporary kingdoms

Da 2:28. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days . . .

Mt 24:6. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet

Re 4:1. After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Re 22:6. Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place

### Time of fulfillment of the revelation

9. **Shortly:** indicates that things in this book is going to happen very soon. It serves as a comfort to those who are persecuted. Then how do we account 1900 years passed after John wrote these things? Remember that the way God measures time is different from ours. Note the use of **after this** by Daniel

Dan 2:29. As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be

Dan 2:45. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands ... the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this ...

and **not yet** by Jesus

Mat 24:6. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet

Mark 13:7. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet

## Method of communicating the revelation

10. **Signified:** Show communication of the message by signs. This does not means, this book should be interpreted symbolically. Signs and symbols are part of the process used to convey the revelation. This book should also be interpreted literally, i.e. the normal grammatical-historical system of interpretation.
11. **Angels:** Though Christ spoke to John directly at some time, there are many occasions where angels spoke

Rev 17:1. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me ...

21:9. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me ...
12. **John:** The human author is apostle John and is written to authenticate the book as genuine, i.e. inspired by the Holy Spirit. As is true with all prophecy, it is important that the prophet's name be given so that the reader may know the credentials of the writer. For this reason, no writing of Scripture that is prophetic in a narrower sense is ever anonymous.

## Revelation 1:2

who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

1. **Bore witness to the word of God:** It refers to the declaration that John is making in this book that it has come from God and is hence the word of God.
2. **Testimony of Jesus Christ:** The testimony given by Jesus Christ is that what He communicated to John in this book is the word of God.
3. **Witness emartyrēsen** and **Testimony martyria:** By the way, from the Greek words for witness and testimony came the English word **martyr**, implying that martyrs are giving witness or testimony to their faith Jesus by their death. Martyrdom is not any failure of Christ or a Christian, but is an opportunity to witness to the world.
4. **To all things that he saw:** It shows the prophetic nature of this book. John used the words 'I saw' several times in this book

Rev 4:1. After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven

5:1. And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll ...

6:1. Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

### Revelation 1:3

**Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.**

#### The practical purpose of the revelation

1. **Blessed:** There is seven fold blessing attached with this book

Re. 1:3. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear ...

Re. 14:13. ... Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...

Re. 16:15. Blessed is he who watches ...

Re. 19:9. ... Blessed are those who are called to the marriage ...

Re. 20:6. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection ...

Re. 22:14. Blessed are those who do His commandments ...

Re. 22:7. ... Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book

This reminds of the blessings announced by Jesus in the sermon on the mount

Mt 5:3. Blessed are the poor in spirit ...

Mt 5:4. Blessed are those who mourn ...

Mt 5:5. Blessed are the meek ...

Mt 5:6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst ...

Mt 5:7. Blessed are the merciful ...

Mt 5:8. Blessed are the pure in heart ...

Mt 5:9. Blessed are the peacemakers ...

Mt 5:10. Blessed are those who are persecuted . . .

2. **Time is near:** Urgency and readiness of His coming. Time normally refers to the the end times when the earthly kingdom of Israel will be instituted

Acts 1:7. And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority

Acts 3:20. and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before

1 Thess. 5:1. But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you

The events of this book are the last of the stage of what God has foreordained to humanity. Hence, it is **near** or **soon**.

## 1.2 Address and doxology (1:4–6)

**General:** Any epistle will the writer, the addressees, and the greeting. The writer is [John](#), the addressees are the [to the seven churches that are in Asia](#), and the greeting is [grace to you and peace](#).

### Revelation 1:4

[John, to the seven churches which 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,](#)

#### Address

1. [John](#): Another internal evidence that the author is Apostle John.
2. [To the seven churches that are in Asia](#): John specifically address them for he was ministering to these churches where he spent last about 30 years of his life and ministry.
3. [Grace](#): From this word the English word greetings came. The word means the distinctive spiritual benefit that belongs to Christians. The word also implies the favor of God has been freely showered on us, though we deserve the opposite.
4. [Peace](#): The Hebrew equivalent is [Shalom](#) and is a familiar greetings of the Old Testament. A person can experience and know that he has peace with God through Jesus Christ

Jdg 6:23. Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

Ro 5:1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

### The source of the greeting

5. **Who is and who was and who is to come:** Trinitarian blessing pointing to the eternal existence of God. Similar usage in this book includes few

Re 1:8. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Re 4:8. The four living creatures . . . saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

Re 11:17. saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned

Re 16:5. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be . . .

6. **From the seven spirits who are before His throne:** Some think this not Holy Spirit, but angels, since Here Holy Spirit cannot be seven and spirit can also refer to angles in Greek. However, angles cannot be the source of blessing and cannot be equated with God. OT give a clue to the identity of the seven spirits, which is the Holy Spirit

**Zac. 4:2-7.** And he [angel] said to me [Zechariah], "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps ... 6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts

Similar usage is found elsewhere in this book also

**Re. 4:5.** And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

**Re. 5:6.** And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth

## Revelation 1:5

and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

1. **Jesus Christ:** Normally referred in the second position, but here in the third position, possibly to elaborate on Him in the following verses.
2. **Faithful witness:** It is an allusion to throne of David mentioned in Psalm 89 which is considered as a commentary of David Covenant

2 Sa 7:8–18. Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone . . . I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son . . . 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him . . . 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

Ps. 89:36-37. His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; 37 It shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky.”

3. **Firstborn from the dead:** refers to the promised seed of David who will sit on David’s throne is “the first-born from among the dead ones and others will be raised from the dead, but Jesus Christ is the first one raised from the dead

Ps 89:27. Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.

Col 1:18. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence

1 Co 15:23. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming

4. **Ruler of the kings of the earth:** This anticipates the fulfillment of God’s promise to make David’s seed “the highest of the kings of the earth”

Ps 89:27. Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.

Re 19:16. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

The three titles taken from Psalm 89 points to the promises made to David regarding an eternal kingdom.

### The doxology

5. **To the one who loves us:** Here Christ's love for His own is pictured as continuing in the present. This is the only NT instance where His love is so described. Usually NT tells of His past love. (This inference is based on the Greek grammar).
6. **Washed us from our sins in His own blood:** A better translation is Loosed us from sins implying sin has a master-slave relation. The blood Jesus shed at Calvary was the purchase price to obtain our release.
7. From the beginning portion of this doxology, we can see that the praise is ascribed "to the one who has an abiding love for believers which is demonstrated by His completed past work of redemption from sins by means of His blood shed for them.

and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1. **Kings:** Kingdom is a better translation which means a collective designation for all believers in Christ. It is an evidence of the love of Christ. The book shows the present kingdoms will fade away and the future kingdom gains significance. It reaches a climax in chapter 20 where the saints in Christ's rule with Christ

Re 20:4. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years

2. **Priests:** Another evidence of Christ's on-going love for believers is His appointment of them as priests. Corporately they are a "kingdom," but individually they are "priests". The priestly office established by the OT law was hereditary, and only members of Aaron's family were eligible. Jesus Christ has provided a new family relationship by which all believers have a priestly ministry to God. Their opportunity for priestly service is a continuing theme in the remainder of this book

Exo 19:6. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

Isa 61:6. But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God . . .

1 Pet. 2:5-9. you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ . . . 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

Re 5:10. And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.

Re 20:6. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years

3. **His God and Father**; the priestly service is directed to God the Father of Jesus Christ.

4. **To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever:** Glory and dominion is attributes of Jesus Christ who sits on the throne. The duration of this praise is forever.
5. **Amen:** This was the common solemn response to show approval of the words of others, probably including a commitment to what is expressed in those words also. The word is transliteration of the Hebrew word **amen** which means **to be firm**. Exalted doxology. Response to revelation is worship

## 1.3 Theme (1:7–8)

### Revelation 1:7

**Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes (families) of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.**

1. **Behold:** The word indicates importance of what is being conveyed after this word. The content of this verse is from two OT passages

**Da 7:13.** "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

Zec 12:10. "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn

2. **He is coming:** The certainty and imminence of his coming. Necessity of His coming:

(a) Promise of the Father

Gen 49:10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people

Ps 2:8. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession

(b) Promise of Jesus

John 14:2. ?

Luke 19:11. Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately

(c) Holy Spirit guarantees

Jh 15:26. "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

Jh 16:13. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Jh 14:26. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you

(d) Program of the Church requires it - Rapture and longing for Christ

Ro 14:10. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

I Co 3:12. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

I Co 4:5. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

II Co 5:10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Phi 1:6. being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

I Th 4:18. Therefore comfort one another with these words

(e) Judging unbelievers and Satan

Joel 3:1. “For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,

Joel 3:9. Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up.

Isa 11:1. There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Mic 4:1. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it.

Mat 25:31. “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Rom 16:20. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

I John 3:8. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil

(f) Program of Israel

Rom 11. ?

Je 31:35. Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The Lord of hosts is His name)

(g) Christs humiliation demands an exaltation

Ph 2:10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

Mt 26:63. And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper

3. With clouds: Shows the presence of God and He is coming from above. His coming is heavenly origin

Ex 13:21. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.

Ex 19:16. Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

Ex 40:34. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

2 Ki 8:10. And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the Lord has shown me that he will really die."

Act 1:9. Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight

4. **Every eye . . . even they pierced:** The scope of His coming - two groups of people: the Romans and Jews who actually crucified Jesus. Here, obviously earlier generation of Jews and Romans is dead and will not be alive to witness the Lord's return, but a class of people similar to them in opposing Christ will be among those future witnesses.

5. **Every eye** indicates the whole humanity will witness His coming. Thus, all the families of the earth will mourn over Him with remorse because of the severity of punishment inflicted upon them in connection with His return. The return of Christ is anything but a comfort to those who continue in their rebellion against Him

Re 9:21. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Ze 12:10. “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Jh 19:37. And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced”

6. **All the tribes** refers to the tribes of Israel.

#### Revelation 1:8

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord [God], “who is and who was and who is to come [coming], the Almighty.”**

1. **Alpha and Omega** refers to God the Father who attest to the facts in the previous verse about the coming of Christ. These words shows the certainty of His coming due to omniscience, omnipotence, eternally of God.
2. **Beginning and the End**: It expresses both eternity and also infinitude, which means the boundless life which embraces all while it transcends all

Isa 41:4. Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'"

Isa 44:6. "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God

Isa 48:12. "Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last

3. **who is and who was and who is to come**: As already discussed in v4, this refers to the eternal Being of the past and present who is to come in judgment.
4. **Almighty** refers to the one who has authority over all. The term focuses on God's sovereignty, and authority. Thus, the omnipotent one will surely implement what His prophet has predicted by way of future judgment.

