



Part 1: Jesus — the First and the Last

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apokalypsis = an uncovering or revealing

Revelation 1:1-18

¹The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.

The Book of Revelation was not written to scare you.

It was written to unveil Jesus to you.

^{1b} 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.

The Book of Revelation was written

to bless its readers and to restore hope.

⁴ John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you...

The Church was facing untold evil: Nero and Domitian.

A biblical principle of Revelation: Relax! It's all under control.

^{4b}...from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits 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.

⁷ “Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” 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.”

Notice the order: present, past, future

⁹ I, 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.

John is a partner in suffering, not an arrogant elitist.

People need to know that their pain is your pain.

¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹² I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In 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.

Imagery of Revelation

Robe and sash = Jesus as High Priest (Hebrews 4-8)

White hair = Jesus as wisdom (Daniel 7:9)

Blazing eyes = Jesus as all-seeing (Revelation 19:12)

Bronze glowing feet = Jesus as Supreme Judge (Matthew 25)

Voice = Jesus as the powerful and authoritative voice of God (John 5:25)

Mouth = Jesus as the Living Word of God (Hebrews 4:12)

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Jesus seeks true worship, not the empty worship of Palm Sunday.

^{17b} 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 forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

If Jesus is the First, I don't have to strive to be number one.

If Jesus is the Last, I cannot be left behind.

If Jesus is the Living One, I don't need to fear death.

If Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades, I can live with the promise of heaven.

Small Group Questions

- 1) Who are you bringing to Easter?
- 2) What do you think are the most prevalent fears in the world today? Have Jesus' promises removed fear from your life? What promises, in what ways?
- 3) If Jesus is First, what does that mean in your life? If Jesus is Last, what does that mean?
- 4) John used his suffering as a platform to unveil Jesus. How could you do the same?
- 5) What do you need prayer for today?