

Aspects of the Book of Revelation

Michael Heiss—December 16, 2023

Today, we are going to take a look, albeit a cursory one, at the Book of Revelation, a fascinating book, a book that is filled with hope and encouragement. *It really is!*

Now, you might start turning to Revelation, the first chapter, because that's where we're going to be in just a few minutes. To begin with, We're not going to talk about the beast and false prophet we're not going to discuss the seals, the trumpet plagues, or any of the trumpets, for that matter. we're not going to even discuss very much about the new heavens and the new earth.

Hopefully, we will give at least a basic background view of the Book of Revelation, its place in the canon, its importance, what it signifies, and the incredible messages that Christ gave to the seven churches. And believe me, when you read them, you will see what hope and encouragement they were.

Revelation 1:1: “*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that are ordained to come to pass shortly; and He made it known, having sent it by His angel to His servant John.*”

Well, we have a message that comes from the Father, to Christ, to John, and then to us.

Who was this John? The Bible doesn't say. However, bishops Melito and Irenaeus say it was John the apostle.

Let's consider this. What disciple of Jesus can we think of that Jesus would entrust to finishing off His written Word. I think we're pretty safe when saying that the Apostle John, the beloved apostle is this John.

Verse 4: “John to the **seven** churches that are in Asia: Grace and peace be to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come; and from the seven spirits that are before His Throne.”

Now, this would seem to be more the Father than it would be Christ. Let's go to the next verse where we read:

Verse 5: “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Verse 8—*Jesus speaking*: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending,*” says the Lord, ‘Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come—the Almighty.’”

So, we see that both Father and Son have the

same titles. In fact, this is the same expression used in Exo. 3:14.

Remember, God was sending Moses to Pharaoh. They were back in Egypt, and Moses says:

Lord, when I go before Pharaoh and the Israelites, what name am I going to use? They'll want to know who you are. What do I do? What do I say?

God said:

You tell him, ‘I was what I was, I am what I am, I will be what I will be, **I Am** that **I Am**, the Ever-Living One, or The Being One.’

That's the same language here in Revelation, ‘The Being One.’ We get some background to this book:

Verse 9: “I, John, who *am* also your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation...” *There was tribulation going on!*

This was probably during the days of Domitian, who was ruling over Rome in the 90s_{A.D.} He was not a very nice ruler. In fact, his own people didn't like him. He was vicious.

At any rate, John says he's our brother and joint partaker in tribulation—times were tough—and in the Kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ. John was on the island that is called Patmos.

Patmos was an island just off the coast of Asia Minor. If you've ever seen a map of Asia Minor, look for Ephesus and then go south and west of Ephesus a little bit and you will come across the island of Patmos.

Patmos was more like a penal colony. Anytime the Romans wanted to get rid of someone they didn't like, and wanted to put him out of commission; not to necessarily assassinate him or kill him, because that might make a martyr out of him. Rome tried, if they could, to avoid that. So, they put him on the island of Patmos. Why? Look what John says:

“...was on the island that *is* called Patmos **because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ**” (v 9).

He was preaching the Kingdom of God! The Romans didn't like that, so they just exiled him. He's told to write what he sees in a book, the Revelation, the seventh and final book of the New Testament. In fact, this is the seventh and final book of the whole Bible.

We had Law, the Prophets, and the Writings,

and then you had the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and finally Revelation.

We're going to see that God is going to sign off on the book of Revelation the way He signed off on creation week' primarily to the #7.

SEVENS

The book of Revelation is honeycombed with *sevens*. So let's take a look. And we'll start in:

Revelation 1:4: "John to the ¹seven churches that *are* in Asia... and from the seven spirits..." *Seven churches, seven spirits!*

Revelation 3:1: "And to the angel of the Church in Sardis, write: 'These things says He Who has the ²seven spirits of God and the ³seven stars.'...."

Now the fact that there are *seven stars*, *seven churches*, and *seven angels*, of course that by itself doesn't necessarily mean that much, but you find them used in the book of Revelation more often than any other book. In fact, the word seventh—seventh this, the seventh that—was used 54 times in the book of Revelation alone. This book is honeycombed with sevens the way around it.

Revelation 15:1: "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and awesome: ⁴seven angels having the ⁵seven last plagues..."

Revelation 5:1: "And in the right hand of Him Who sits on the Throne I saw a book, written within and on *the* back, which had been sealed with ⁶seven seals,"

Revelation 8:2: "Then I saw the ⁷seven angels who stand before God, and ⁸seven trumpets were given to them.

Verse 6: "Then the seven angels who had the ⁹seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound *their* trumpets.

BLESSED

- blessed is he
- blessed are these
- blessed are those

Revelation 1:3: ¹"Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy..."

Revelation 14:13: ²"And I heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write: ³Blessed are the dead who die in *the* Lord from this time forward....'" *That's true!*

Revelation 16:15: ⁴"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is the one who is watching..."

Revelation 19:9: "And he said to me, 'Write: ⁵Blessed are those..."

Revelation 20:6: ⁶"Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection

Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I am coming quickly. ⁷Blessed is the one..."

Verse 14: ⁸"Blessed are those who keep His commandments..."

What God is doing is *signing off on His written Word* just the way He did back in:

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested...[ceased] ...from all His work, which God had created and made" (vs 1-3).

In Hebrew this account is comprised of 3 sentences, 7 words each: 3x7—*finality! Total finality! Seven: perfection. Complete perfection!* God is signing off on the creation week. His job was done perfectly.

Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly good*..."

Not just good as you find in Gen. 1 elsewhere. But very good! The superlative.

Back in Revelation what we have is God signing off on Revelation, With His 7s; He is saying, 'My written word is complete from Genesis to Revelation no more.' *It is the grand finale!*

Now God would, later on of course, I'm sure reveal to His servants certain things, certain other teachings and so forth. Not in terms of a book though. Not in terms of a document or a letter. *No!*

His written Word. or as Peter would talk about it, *the sure word of prophecy*. That is His Word of preaching. The book of Revelation completed it in toto.

So, we have this magnificent book. But now let's look at some things mentioned in those letters to the *seven* Churches. We will find some very interesting things!

THE RIGHT HAND

Revelation 1:16: "And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword..."

We're going to look at the right hand and then we'll look at the two-edged sword. What is it talking about here?

Revelation 5:1: “And **in the right hand** of Him Who sits on the Throne...”

Doesn't God have a left hand? *He certainly does!* And I'm sure He could pack a wallop with that left hand. But you never read about that, because in Hebrew, the consciousness is the right hand is the hand of power.

When God talks about by His hand He saves, He's talking about *His right hand!* The people there would know it. When He holds things and does things with His right hand, it is absolute. ***God will do what He will do and He will finish it,*** because it is ***in His right hand,*** the hand of power.

TWO-EDGED SWORD

In that hand of power we read of **a two-edged sword.**

Revelation 1:16: “And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a **sharp two-edged sword** went out of His mouth...”

If you've ever seen pictures as I have and paintings you'll see what appears to be a person that they call *Christ*, and out of his mouth comes a sword. No, that's not what it's referring to. We're not talking about a literal sword.

What are we talking about? The Apostle Paul explained that.

Hebrews 4:12: “For **the Word of God is** living and powerful, and **sharper than any two-edged sword,** piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the joints and the marrow,* and *is* able to discern *the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” *This is the two-edged sword.*

It's His Word that comes out of His mouth and He speaks with power, and:

- what He says He will do, *He will do!*
- what He says He will not do, *He will not do!*

But that is the powerful ***two-edged sword!*** It's really the Word that proceeds forth from Him.

Now these people, many of these individuals in these seven churches knew that, because a lot of them were Jews. Antiochus III, the father of the infamous Antiochus IV, you know when Antiochus Epiphanes went into the temple in those days and offered swine on the altar.

Antiochus III third was a decent ruler and he favored the Jews and encouraged many of them to migrate and settle in the seven cities that we read about in Revelation. You see these seven cities were not (inaudible). They were not just ordinary cities. Whether it's Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira or Sardis, these were powerful cities and known for certain things.

Many of them were wealthy cities and they were the seat of Roman government in that area. When you read the Bible, you read Revelation, you might not get that. But when you check the background and the history of those cities, you realize they were important cities.

THE WHITE STONE

Revelation 2:17: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and **I will give him a white stone...**”

What was this white stone? In those days, we had a (inaudible) contest. And the winners of each event was given a white stone. That stone served as a pass to a banquet given in honor of the victors.

If you didn't have that white stone, you didn't get in, that's all there was to it. We are going to be given a white stone, and on that stone will be written a name; that will be our pass.

Think of a heavenly banquet. Think of the marriage supper of the Lamb. That's our ticket to get in. I remember many times I would attend seminars and we would have lunch. You were given a meal ticket, lunch ticket. And if you didn't have a lunch ticket, you had a problem getting in.

So, we're all going to have a white stone. They knew that the white stone meant that they had entrance into this magnificent dinner. Well, we have that white stone, our new name will be entrance for us to the marriage supper into the glorious Kingdom. That's what the white stone was. We're going to get one. Just exactly what it's going to look like, what it's going to be exactly...

But it's going to serve the same purpose. Now, in addition to that *the crown of life and the Morning Star.*

This is absolutely breathtaking!

THE MORNING STAR

In Rev. 2—Christ is talking here about a particular Church, He's talking about Pergamos. Then He's down to side Thyatira.

Revelation 2:28: “And I will give **him...** [who overcomes] ...**the Morning Star.**”

It doesn't matter what Church we're talking to because we find it seven times: ‘Let he who reads, let him who hears listen to what the message to the seven churches; you have to overcome:

Verse 26: “And **to the one who overcomes and keeps My works unto the end...**”

Shades of Matthew 24.13: “But the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved”—for he is going to be given the Morning Star!

Who and what is this Morning Star? *Jesus Christ. He is the Morning Star!*

Revelation 22:16: “I, Jesus, sent My angel to testify these things to you in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star.” *What does that mean?*

- He is giving of Himself to us
- He is sharing all of His glory with us
- we are going to be as He is
- we are going to shine

Look at what Daniel says, talking about a resurrection:

Daniel 12:2: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever” (vs 2-3).

That’s us! Those of us who endure until the end, who overcome, Christ is going to have us on His Throne.

Revelation 3:21: “To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His Throne.”

We are going to sit, as it were, on the Throne of Christ. We are going to be equal with him. Now not an authority. The Father will always be the grand patriarch of the clan. Christ will always be over, whether at the side, slightly underneath. It’s hard to say, because after all, they both call themselves the first and the last.

So, it’s really hard to determine authority here, but I think the Father does have the edge there. Maybe a little bit, anyway. But He is going to accept us on His Throne. The only way that can happen is if we are His equals in terms of spirit composition. Look what Paul said:

Romans 8:17: “Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and **joint heirs** with Christ...”

I know what a joint heir is. I deal with that in my tax practice. Sometimes dad dies or grandma dies and the beneficiaries are joint heirs. That means you split up equally. That’s what joint means.

This means whatever Christ inherits, we inherit. We cannot be on the same plane as Christ is. Or shall I say, we cannot be like that. We cannot

have His glory unless we are joint heirs. Joint heirs can only be joint among the equals. Jesus is saying:

To him who does overcome, to him who endures unto the end, I will have him sit with Me in My glory, and our faces will shine as the brightness of the sun and its full strength.

That’s the message that God is giving to those people. Saying it doesn’t matter how powerful Rome looks. It doesn’t matter how strong the empire is. It doesn’t matter what you go through. Look at what He told the people at Smyrna. This was His advice to them:

Revelation 2:10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.**”

Now in those Roman games, the winner, the victor got a crown, a wreath. Not one of those magnificent crowns such as kings get, but the wreath, the laurel of the victor.

Christ is saying that it’s nothing—‘Here today, gone tomorrow.’ ***IF*** you are faithful to Me, faithful unto death, ***IF*** you endure to the end, stick with it and don’t give up, *I will give you a crown of life—the crown of eternal life! Glorious eternal life!*

That is the message to all those Churches: ***Hang in there!*** Don’t be dismayed of what might happen to you. Doesn’t matter what persecution comes your way. Yes, it may be painful and you may die, but I will resurrect you. I will give you ***the crown of life*** and you will get to sit with Me on My Throne governing the universe.

What more could we ask for? This is the crowning book of all Scripture. *It is the finale! The end!* This is the promise that we have. What a magnificent book it is.

Let us all be thankful that God did give us this revelation. We can

- read it
- enjoy it
- meditate on it
- let it become part of us

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1:1, 4-5, 8-9, 4
- 2) Revelation 3:1
- 3) Revelation 15:1
- 4) Revelation 5:1
- 5) Revelation 8:2, 6
- 6) Revelation 1:3

- 7) Revelation 16:15
- 8) Revelation 19:9
- 9) Revelation 20:6
- 10) Revelation 22:7, 14
- 11) Genesis 2:1-3
- 12) Genesis 1:31
- 13) Revelation 1:16
- 14) Revelation 5:1
- 15) Revelation 1:16
- 16) Hebrews 4:12
- 17) Revelation 2:17, 28, 26
- 18) Matthew 24:13
- 19) Revelation 22:16
- 20) Daniel 12:2-3
- 21) Revelation 3:21
- 22) Romans 8:17
- 23) Revelation 2:10

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Exodus 3:14

MH:bo/po
Transcribed: 12/20/23

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