

# Revelation – Part 2 | 4/30/17

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Revelation 1:1-2
  - **Read Revelation 1:1-2**
  - As we previously discussed in the introduction, the Book of Revelation is really the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
  - God gave this truth to Jesus who in turn gave it to an angel to deliver to John, while also being inspired by the Holy Spirit just as the rest of Scripture. We see the Trinity at work in the delivering of the important book.
  - The things that must soon take place
    - In the first 3 verses, twice we are told that these events will come “soon” (1:1) or is “near” (1:3) and it is also mentioned at the end.
      - Revelation 22:20
        - “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come Lord Jesus!”
    - First thing we should realize is that when God says something is going to be “soon” or “near” that it doesn’t always translate into our vision of what that means.
      - **In fact, when it comes to God’s promises in Scripture it was common for those He made the promise, to at times wonder if God was going to fulfill it because he delayed for so long.**
    - When God says soon it could be our version of soon, or His version which may be thousands of years later. Because to God a day is a thousand years.
      - 2 Peter 3:8
        - “But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord on day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”
    - Peter helps us understand that we cannot use our own human reasoning to determine God’s timing.
      - 2 Peter 3:1-10
    - Peter says that instead we should simply be patient and rely upon the promises of God.
      - 2 Peter 3:13-15a
    - Christians must be patient with God’s plan and the fulfillment of His revelation.
      - Very common is it for us to try and figure out the time when these things will happen.
        - The disciples asked the very same question while He was here on earth.
          - Matthew 24:3
            - “As he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and the of the end of the age?”
        - They asked Him when He was going to establish His earthly kingdom right before His ascension, but He told them it wasn’t for them to know.
          - Acts 1:6-7
            - “So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.”
      - How many predictions have we heard through the years when people predict the timing of the rapture or the return of Christ.

- We must be patient with God, lean on His promises and that these things will take place according to His will not ours.
  - Jesus gave one clue as to the end of times, that it would happen after the gospel of the kingdom has been proclaimed throughout the whole world.
    - Matthew 24:14
      - “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”
  - **Why does God not want us to know His timing of events?**
  - **What do you think of the hint in Matthew 24:14?**
- Blessed are those who read, hear and obey what is written – Revelation 1:3
  - ***Read Revelation 1:3***
  - In case it was not immediately clear if Revelation should be a book that we read and study, we see that God has told us there are blessings for those who read it.
    - We can see this was intended to be read to the church – “Blessed is the **one who reads** aloud...blessed are **those who hear**....
  - God wanted us to know that there are blessings for those who study this book. In fact, this is the only book in Scripture where this blessing is explicitly given.
    - **Why do you think God will bless those who study Revelation?**
  - Blessed are those who keep/obey this Scripture
    - As with all Scripture it is not only important to read and understand, but it is vital that we obey.
      - James 1:22-25
- The seven churches – Revelation 1:4a, 1:11, 22:16a
  - The Book of Revelation was given to all. However, it was specifically intended to be written and delivered to seven churches’ in Asia – Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.
  - **While these were of course not the only established church’s, they were the ones that God chose to address directly.**
    - Revelation 1:4a
      - “John to the seven churches that are in Asia...”
    - Revelation 1:11
      - “saying, Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”
    - Revelation 22:16a
      - “I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches....”



- Some see the church's as a "panorama of church history".
  - That the early church begins with Ephesus and the modern-day church with Laodicea.
  - While there may be some similarities, it can be certain that all of these churches with their positive and negatives, have been around in every century.
  - **They were most likely selected to reveal universal praises and corrections that apply to churches of all ages.**
- **God knew at this time what state these 7 churches were in and He knew what they were getting ready to go through.**
  - Their condition and circumstances would have been applicable to the others and even to our modern-day church.
  - **This was a volatile and vital time for the early church. Where they going to fold under persecution, or continue on in obedience.**
- God sought to encourage them because they were being persecuted.
  - The Lord's church was being heavily persecuted and these letters sought to bring them encouragement.
  - The persecution under Emperor Domitian was intense and Revelation records a few of their struggles.
  - Revelation 2:9-10
    - "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- God praised them for their faith even though they had to dwell among those who were evil and opposed Christ.
  - Revelation 2:13
    - "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."
  - Satan's throne
    - This could have been the large throne-shaped alter to Zeus located in the acropolis in Pergamum.
    - This also could have been a symbol for emperor worship which was prevalent in this time.

- Pergamum also had a very old temple that was dedicated to emperor worship.
    - You were required to say that “Caesar was Lord”. To do so would be to say that essentially the Emperor was your god.
  - God also sought to correct the churches for they had gone astray.
    - These churches were not perfect and while God had praised them He also sought to correct them and pointed out their faults.
    - They abandoned their first love of Christ, they had lost their passion for Him.
      - Revelation 2:4
        - “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”
      - This first love, was the love for Christ. They had abandoned their zeal and love for Him.
    - They had accepted false teachers and idol worshipers and tolerated the sexually immoral within their church.
      - Revelation 2:14
        - “But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the son of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.”
      - Revelation 2:20
        - “But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.”
      - The church will always welcome the sinner, in fact that is what it is completely made up of. However, the church must not get to a point where many forms of sin are openly accepted and even applauded.
    - Some of them were dead inside
      - Revelation 3:1b
        - “...I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”
      - This act of being dead inside unfortunately describes many churches and church members today. They put on a show that “looks” the part, but in fact they are dead on the inside.
  - **Think for a moment what God might say if He was addressing a letter to New Site. Would there be words of praise? Would there be words of correction?**
  - **Then examine yourself and see if you are a “reason for the praise”, or if perhaps you are a “reason for the correction”?**
- Grace and peace from the Triune God – Revelation 1:4-8
  - ***Read Revelation 1:4-8***
  - In John’s salutation of his letter to the seven churches, we are given a picture of the glory and power of the Triune God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  - The Triune God seeks to deliver to us grace and peace.
  - The Father
    - There is no holding back in the Book of Revelation at revealing the power and glory of God. This is reminiscent to how He is described in the Old Testament.
    - Him who is and who was and who is to come – Revelation 1:4, 8
      - This describes the eternal Father, who has always been and always will be.

- There is never a time that God has not existed, and He will always be there in the future.
- Who is to come is also a reference to Jesus Christ
  - We can see how this phrase changes the closer we get to Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
  - Revelation 11:17
    - "Saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, **who is and who was**, for you have taken your great power and **begun to reign.**"
- He is the Alpha and the Omega – Revelation 1:8
  - Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last.
  - This signifies that not only is God the first and the last, but He is also everything in between.
  - God is the entire alphabet, there isn't anything that is unknown to Him.
  - You can use the alphabet in infinite combinations to convey all wisdom, which also describes God.
- He is the Almighty
  - The Greek word for "Almighty" is *pantokrator*, which means one who has unlimited authority or influence.
  - This is God's omnipotence.
  - This word only appears in the New Testament in 2 locations, here and also in 2 Corinthians 6:18. In both cases it is the prophetic name of God.
- **How do these descriptions of God make you feel about who He truly is?**
- The Holy Spirit
  - The Holy Spirit we see described in a way that perhaps might seem unusual to us, as the one "Holy Spirit" is referred to as "seven spirits" who are before his throne.
  - The choice of this is best understood when we see the significance of the use of the number "7" throughout Scripture.
    - Revelation is organized in seven's and we also find its use throughout the rest of the Scripture.
    - **The seven is understood to have significant meaning to God and it is seen as a number of fullness, completeness and perfection.**
    - God used the number 7 in many times of significance in the Old Testament
      - God blessed the 7<sup>th</sup> day and made it the Sabbath as a day to remember Him.
        - Genesis 2:2-3
          - "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."
        - Exodus 20:12
          - "Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.
      - The number seven was significant in sacrifices.
        - 2 Chronicles 29:21a

- “And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah...”
  - The number seven was significant when the Israelites marched around Jericho.
    - Joshua 6:4
      - “Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priest shall blow the trumpets.”
- The number seven is also used in many times throughout Revelation
  - The seven churches’ – (1:4)
  - The seven stars – (3:1)
  - The seven spirits of God – (3:1)
  - The seven torches of fire – (4:5)
  - The seven horns and seven eyes – (5:6)
  - The seven seals, trumpets and bowls – (6:1, 6:1, 16:1)
  - The seven angels with seven plagues – (15:6)
  - There are seven beatitudes
    - Blessed is the one who reads aloud the prophecy – (1:3)
    - Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord – (14:13)
    - Blessed is the one who stays awake – (16:15)
    - Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb – (19:9)
    - Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection – (20:6)
    - Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book – (22:7)
    - Blessed are those who wash their robes – (22:14)
- In Revelation, we see more than once where the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “seven spirits”
  - Revelation 4:5
    - “From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,”
  - Revelation 5:6
    - “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into the all the earth.”
- While referring the Holy Spirit as “seven” may seem difficult to understand we can see this also being used to describe the various ministries of the Holy Spirit and or 7 titles.
  - Isaiah 11:2
    - “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD”
  - The seven spirits of God describe the perfection and completeness of the Holy Spirit.
- The Son Jesus Christ

- Then we have a wonderful description of Jesus Christ.
- The faithful witness
  - Jesus is described as the faithful witness to the Word of God, He is the source of all truth that has been proclaimed to the world.
- The firstborn of the dead.
  - Jesus was given a title of honor, he is the greatest of them all.
  - Colossians 1:15
    - “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”
  - Colossians 1:18
    - “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”
- The ruler of the kings on earth.
  - Jesus has always and always will be our king. At His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming he will truly reign here on earth over the kings on earth.
    - Revelation 19:16
      - “On his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”
    - Daniel 7:26b
      - “...his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him.”
- His sacrifice on the cross
  - His great sacrifice that Jesus made by spilling His blood, is what has allowed us to be in the kingdom with Him.
- The unity of the trinity
  - In Chapter 22 we see that Jesus refers to Himself as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. This brings the unity of the Trinity into full view.
  - Revelation 22:13
    - “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
  - Isaiah 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 not god.”