

Jesus, The Conquering Warrior

A Study of the Book of Revelation



Bible Study
by Rhonda Graham

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Dedicated to Norma Hodge, without whom I would not have started this effort, Debra Becknell of WriteNow Marketing, without whom I would not have finished this effort, and Mark Graham, who supported me from start to finish.

Thanks to Dr. David R. Reagan of Lamb and Lion Ministries whose books and teachings first helped me understand and value the book of Revelation. Thanks to pastor Steve Idle who gave me the opportunity to teach Revelation.

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How to Use This Book

I believe every one of us needs to open our Bibles every day to allow God to speak to us personally. Commentaries, books about God, sermons, and teachings can not take the place of reading God's Word for yourself. Enduring Word Bible Studies are designed to get you into God's Word every day so the Holy Spirit can speak to you.

These studies can be used for formal classes and informal group studies as well as individual study. They are suitable for those new to the Bible as well as those who have studied God's Word for years.

The study begins with an Introduction followed by the first week's study questions. Before you begin each lesson, pray for God's guidance and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. In a group study, you will come together each week to discuss your responses to the questions. A group facilitator or teacher can keep the group focused on the passage and help the group avoid discussions that distract from the week's lesson. In a formal study, the group discussion can be followed by a lecture from a Bible teacher who will clarify the passage and enhance the week's lesson. At home, before you begin the next week's lesson, read the commentary notes that will further clarify the passage and bring to your attention the truths I don't want you to miss.

The ultimate goal of this study is not to simply fill your head with knowledge of the Bible but to fill your heart as you apply the truths you learn and grow in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Rhonda Graham

Possible Sequence of End Time Events

Church Age

Pre-Tribulation Rapture (could be before or after Russian attack on Israel)

Russian invasion of Israel, Ezekiel 38-39

Antichrist covenant with Israel begins the Tribulation, Daniel 9

First 3 ½ years of Tribulation:

- Seal judgments, Revelation 6
- 144,000 evangelists and great soul harvest, Revelation 7
- Trumpet judgments, Revelation 8-9
- Two witnesses, Revelation 11
- Rebuilding of the Temple

Mid-point of Tribulation:

- Two witnesses killed, Revelation 11
- War in heaven—Satan cast out, Revelation 12
- Antichrist breaks covenant with Israel, Daniel 9
- Possible location of a Mid-Tribulation Rapture

Last 3 ½ years of Tribulation:

- Wrath of Satan begins
- Martyred saints, Revelation 12
- Intense persecution of Jews, Revelation 12
- Remnant of Jews protected, Revelation 12
- One world religion, Revelation 13
- False prophet arises, Revelation 13
- Antichrist at full power, Revelation 13
- Mark of the beast, Revelation 13
- Three angels warn & preach gospel, Revelation 14
- Bowl judgments, Revelation 15-16

At the end of Tribulation:

- Destruction of the one world religion, Revelation 17
- Destruction of 'Babylon' government and commercial system, Revelation 18
- Judgment Seat of Christ for rewards of believers takes place in heaven sometime between the Rapture and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.
- Wedding of the Lamb, Revelation 19
- Second Coming of Jesus accompanied by the Bride (the church age believers in heaven), Rev. 19
- Armageddon, Revelation 19 (with flash forwards in chapter 14, 16, & various Old Testament passages)
- Destruction of all unbelievers, Revelation 19
- False prophet and Antichrist cast into hell, Revelation 19

Millennium Reign of Jesus:

- Satan bound for 1000 years, Revelation 20
- Resurrection of Old Testament & Tribulation Martyrs, Revelation 20
- One thousand year reign of Jesus with believers, Revelation 20
- Satan released, Revelation 20
- Final rebellion of Satan and man, Revelation 20
- Satan cast to hell, Revelation 20
- Great White Throne Judgment of all unbelievers, Revelation 20
- Unbelievers judged for works and condemned, Revelation 20

Eternity:

- Earth and heavens pass away, Revelation 21
- New Earth & heavens formed, Revelation 21
- New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, Revelation 21
- Eternity on Earth, Revelation 21 and 22

Introduction To Revelation

Introduction to the Bible

The Bible is a library containing sixty-six books. There are law books, history books, poetry, and books of prophecy. God used forty-four different authors on three different continents over a period of 1,600 years to write the Bible. It was written in three different languages. In spite of all that diversity, the Bible has one main theme or plot—God’s plan to redeem man from sin and restore the relationship between man and God, the relationship strained by man’s sin.

Throughout history, there have been those who have tried to destroy the Bible, keep it out of the hands of the people, or discredit the Bible but God has supernaturally protected and preserved the Bible. It remains a best seller and the most translated book of all time. Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

John 17:17 says the Bible is truth and 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that although the Bible was penned by human hands, it was breathed by God. God protected the Bible from human error.

One of the amazing things about God’s word is that even though it was completed hundreds of years ago, it is still completely relevant to our society and applicable to our lives today. The Bible is active and living because God is active and living.

Introduction to Revelation

Most people find Revelation to be the scariest book in the Bible. It has plagues, wars, murders, and natural disasters. Dr. Earl Palmer of First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley said, “Revelation is hard to understand, but it is impossible to forget.” The Apostle Paul said, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” That includes Revelation. Studying the Bible without ever studying Revelation is like reading a book without reading the ending. The Bible starts in Genesis when man was in paradise, in a right relationship with God. The Bible ends in Revelation with mankind back in paradise, in a restored relationship with God. In Genesis, man first rebelled against God and was denied access to the tree of life. In Revelation, man’s rebellion against God ends forever and access to the tree of life is restored. Genesis records the first sorrow and the first death. Revelation records the time God will wipe away every tear and there will be no more death. Genesis introduces Satan. Revelation records his final destruction. Genesis promises a Savior. Revelation records the Savior’s reign in heaven and on earth.

Why Study Revelation?

There are several reasons why we should study Revelation.

1. Revelation reminds us that Jesus will ultimately triumph over His enemies. Maybe the decay in society discourages you. Maybe you worry when you hear of that decay seeping in to our schools and even our churches. Revelation reminds us that God is still in control. God’s plans will prevail.
2. We should study Revelation because it is about Jesus’ return. The book begins and ends with that theme. Jesus promised believers, “I will come back and take you to be with me” (John 14:3). There are 330 references to the Second Coming in the New Testament. There are five times more prophecies about the Second Coming of Jesus than there are about His first coming.
3. Revelation is the only book that promises a blessing to the reader. “Blessed is the one who reads 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” (Rev. 1:3). Many Christians have missed the blessing because they have been scared off by the symbolism and imagery of Revelation. As you read and study, ask for a blessing. What blessing do you want from this study? How about the blessing of understanding? There are some things in Scripture that will remain a mystery until we see the Lord face to face (1 Cor. 13:12) but there is still a whole lot we can understand.

Revelation Study Tips

Several tips from Dr. David R. Reagan helped me when I first studied Revelation.

1. **Believe God wants you to understand.** God wouldn’t write something He didn’t want us to understand but it does require the Holy Spirit. *Paul wrote, “God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him,*

and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:10-14).

Since the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is required for understanding, Revelation has been called a believer’s study. God wants you to understand; that is why He gave this revelation. Revelation has also been called a believer’s study because it describes a characteristic of God we don’t often discuss—God’s wrath. This topic will be covered in class during the lecture.

2. Accept the plain sense meaning of the passages. This is different from the ‘literal meaning.’ For example, Jesus said He is the Bread of life. Did Jesus literally mean He was a loaf of bread? No. It was a symbolic reference to being our nourishment, our sustenance. So, in that case, the plain sense meaning is to take the passage symbolically. Zechariah said the Messiah would come on a donkey. Old Testament Jews thought Zechariah didn’t literally mean a donkey because that would be too common for the Messiah. But Jesus literally entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on a donkey. In this case, the literal sense made plain sense. Dr. David Reagan said, “If the plain sense makes sense, don’t look for any other sense or you will end up with nonsense.”

3. Understand the table of contents. In his excellent study and tape series, “An Overview of Revelation”, Dr. David Reagan says the table of contents for Revelation is found in verse 19. “The things which you have seen”—John saw the glorified Jesus in chapter one. “The things which are”—the current situation of Jesus’ church during John’s day which is described in chapters two and three. “The things which shall take place after these things”—the future presented in chapters four through twenty-two.

4. Be aware of time changes. Revelation contains flashbacks and flash-forwards. It will be helpful to mark those in your Bible as we study them. Anytime there is a passage dealing with great suffering or persecution, it is almost always followed by a flash forward to the return of Jesus to give the reader comfort.

5. Study the Old Testament. The more Old Testament you have under your belt, the better you will understand Revelation. For that reason, be patient as we flip back and forth from Revelation to the Old Testament.

6. Focus on Jesus. Revelation 1:1 is clear that the focus is Jesus. Revelation 19:10 says, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Jesus is the focus of prophecy. It’s about Jesus! Verse 1 of chapter 1 says, “...the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.” The word “revelation” comes from the Greek word “apocalypse” which means unveiling or revealing. When Jesus walked this earth, He was veiled in humanity so that many did not recognize who He was. Members of His own family didn’t recognize Him as the Messiah.

Through prophecy, God unveils Jesus. When the prophecies of the Old Testament are unveiled, we see they were about Jesus. When the prophecies of Revelation are unveiled, we see Jesus. Would you watch during the next several weeks as God parts the veil and gives you new glimpses of Jesus? You may want to jot down new things you see about Jesus’ character as you see Him in a new way.

As the veil is drawn away, we will be given a glimpse into heaven where Jesus Christ is worshipped now as He will be in eternity. Revelation gives us God’s eternal perspective. When you develop eternal perspective, you will find it easier to make godly decisions in the present. When you have eternal perspective, you will find encouragement in your present difficult situation.

Four Schools of Thought

Christians are not all in agreement as to the interpretation of the signs and events in Revelation. The various viewpoints can be summarized under four main views.

The Futurist view accepts Revelation as prophecy yet to be fulfilled. This was the view of the early church fathers and there was no other interpretation until the fourth century.

The Historicist view came about during the Reformation when Protestants were separating from the Roman Catholic Church. They saw Revelation as a history of the church. Those who hold to the historicist view consider everything in Revelation to be past history, all fulfilled.

The Preterist view developed in the 17th century claiming Revelation was about God’s wrath directed to the Roman Empire.

The Idealist view spiritualizes Revelation to mean the story of triumph of good over evil. It was popularized

before the 20th century during a time in history when the world seemed to be getting better and better perhaps headed toward the kingdom of peace described in Revelation.

In addition to the different views about interpreting the book of Revelation, there are also different views about specific end time events, especially the Rapture and the millennial reign of Jesus. The millennial reign of Jesus or the 'Millennium' is the 1000-year period of Jesus' reign on earth discussed in chapters 21 and 22.

The **Historic Premillennial view** is the oldest view and the only one in the Church for 400 years. Generally, it holds that the Church Age, which started at the ascension of Jesus, will end with the seven year Tribulation. Jesus will then return for His Church and reign on earth 1000 years. In this view, the Rapture and the Second Coming are one in the same. Believers alive at the beginning of the Tribulation will experience the Tribulation.

The **Amillennial view** was endorsed in 400 AD by Augustine who spiritualized scriptures about a 1000 year reign of Jesus. He taught that the Millennium began when the Holy Spirit entered the world at Pentecost. Obviously more than 1000 years have passed since Pentecost, so amillennialists view the 1000-year period as a symbolic rather than literal thousand years. This view says the tribulation is also occurring presently because Christians experience persecution. Most believe Jesus will appear at some point for believers to take them to heaven. Jesus will not reign physically over an earthly kingdom. The earthly kingdom of Jesus is considered to be the Church.

The **Postmillennial view**, like the Idealist view of Revelation, taught that the world would get better and better until Christians would take over and rule the nations for 1000 years. Jesus would then return to take them to heaven. After two world wars, this viewpoint died out as it became obvious that Christians were not ruling the world but becoming a minority.

Modern Premillennialism, also called Dispensational Premillennialism, is much like Historic Premillennialism except that the Rapture and the Second Coming are seen as two separate events. Jesus will appear to take believers out of the world in the event called the Rapture. Then, after the seven year Tribulation, Jesus will return to reign on earth for 1000 years.

Is your head spinning from all the terms and unfamiliar language? Don't worry. We will define these terms during our study. If you are frightened by these words, consider that studying end time events should motivate you:

- To live holy in a time of immorality.
Peter told us how should we live while we wait for God's perfect plan to unfold. He said, "...what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him" (2 Peter 3:11-14). What sin in your life keeps you from being spotless and blameless? What lifestyle changes do you need to make? Peter said 'make every effort'. What effort do you need to make to be 'holy' or 'set apart' for God's use?
- To step up your efforts in evangelism and missions.
The more you learn about end time events, the more personal responsibility you should feel to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.
- To pray urgently for your lost friends and family members.

I hope you are convinced that Revelation should be studied because the Revelation is not about beasts and false prophets but about Jesus. Chapters one through three are about Jesus in the Church Age, the time from the Ascension to the Rapture of the Church. Chapters four through eighteen are about Jesus in the Tribulation. Chapters nineteen and twenty are about Jesus in the Millennial kingdom. Chapters twenty-one and twenty-two are about Jesus in eternity. Revelation, then, is about Jesus! Most of you have studied the gospels, which detail the earthly life of Jesus, the cross, and the Resurrection. Revelation tells us the rest of the story. It is the only New Testament book that presents Jesus as He is today, in glory and majesty, and as He will be in the future, victorious and triumphant!

Revelation - Lesson 1 Questions

First Day: Read the notes from last week's lesson.

1. What did you find new, interesting, or helpful from the notes or last week's lecture?
2. Was there something practical from the notes or lecture that you applied or plan to apply to your situation?
3. Why do you think it is important to rely on the Holy Spirit any time you study Scripture? See John 14:26 for help.

Second Day: Read all of Revelation 1, then pay particular attention to verses 1-3.

1. What do you learn in the following verses that help you see a 'balanced' view of God?

Numbers 14:18

Nahum 1:2-3, 7

John 3:16, 36

2. How can God be a God of love and also a God of wrath?
3. According to verse 1, what does the Revelation reveal?
4. What reasons do you find in Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 19:10 that indicate why Satan does not want us to read or understand this book?
5. Who gave the revelation to Jesus? To whom did Jesus give it and for what reason?
6. What does 2 Peter 3:8 tell you about God's idea of "soon"?

Third Day: Read Revelation 1:3-6.

1. What kind of literature is Revelation according to verse 3?

2. Also from verse 3, who will receive a blessing?

3. Who recorded the Revelation?

4. To whom was the writing addressed? See 1:4 and 11.

5. John uses the word “from” three times in verses 4-6. List them separately:

From:

From:

From:

6. How does the description of the Lord (the first ‘from’) in verse 4 compare to the one in:

Exodus 3:14

John 8:58

Fourth Day: Read Revelation 1:4-8

1. What do you learn about the “seven spirits” from Revelation 1:4, 4:5, and Isaiah 11:2?

2. Jesus is called “the firstborn from the dead” in verse 4. What does 1 Corinthians 15:20 say about this? What do you think this means?

3. In verse 6, those who have been “freed from our sins by His blood” are called “priests”. What are some of the priestly roles a believer can perform?

4. Have you been freed from your sins by His blood? Have you ever asked Jesus to be your personal Savior? Have you ever taken the steps given in Romans 10:9-11?

5. What is the theme of the Revelation found in verse 7? What do you learn in Titus 2:11-14 (particularly verse 13) about this subject?

6. How does Isaiah 44:6 help us understand the meaning of “the Alpha and the Omega”?

7. Compare what God says about Himself in Revelation 1:8 to what Jesus says about Himself in Revelation 22:13. How can they both make the same claim?

Fifth Day: Read Revelation 1:8-18

1. List some of the things you can learn about God from the information in verse 8?

2. Which description of the Lord in verses 4-6 and 8 means the most to you?

3. Why was John on the island of Patmos? Try to find Patmos on a Bible map.

4. What information do you find about “a son of man” in:

Psalm 80:17

Daniel 7:13

Mark 9:31

5. Based on the description in verse 18, whom do you think John saw? See Romans 6:9 and 14:9 if you need help.

Sixth Day: Read Revelation 1:12-20

1. What do you think is the meaning of the following symbolic descriptions:

Long robe and golden sash:

Hair like white wool:

Eyes like blazing fire:

Feet like glowing bronze:

Voice like rushing waters:

Face shining like the sun:

2. John saw “a son of man” holding seven stars and walking among seven golden lampstands. What did the stars and lampstands represent according to verse 20?

3. What is the purpose of a lampstand according to Matthew 5:15? How are believers to be a lampstand according to Matthew 5:14-16?

4. Is there an area where you have neglected to “let your light shine before men”, perhaps in your place of business, in your home, in your extended family?

5. Verse 18 refers to ‘Hades’. What is your understanding of Hades?

6. Revelation 1:19 has been called the table of contents for the book. What does the book of Revelation contain according to this “table of contents”?

Revelation Lesson 1 Notes - Chapter 1

Jesus, The Living One

Notes:

The Source of the Book, 1:1

God was the original source of the revelation to John. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.” God gave it to ‘him’, Jesus Christ. The sequence established in the first sentence is God to Jesus to Servants. There are two different opinions about how John got the revelation. Continuing in verse 1, “He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.” The different opinions concern the word “he”. If ‘he’ refers to God, then according to the sequence established in the first sentence, ‘his angel’ wouldn’t be a real angel but would be a reference to Jesus Christ. Several times in the Old Testament there is an appearance of ‘the’ angel of the Lord. These appearances are considered by many scholars to be no mere angel but a ‘theophany’, an appearance of Jesus before His physical time on earth. If “he” refers to Jesus, then ‘his angel’ refers to a real angel. God gave the revelation to Jesus who made it known to an angel and the angel showed it to John. In the book of Daniel, Daniel received visions that involved both an angel and Jesus. Verse 2 is clear that John received ‘the testimony of Jesus’. In chapters 2 and 3, Jesus was clearly the one who spoke to John. However, in chapter 19, an angel spoke to John. Revelation 22:16 says, “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches” so the sequence could involve a messenger angel.

Fortunately, it’s easier to identify ‘John’. He doesn’t specifically identify himself as the Apostle John but there has never been much debate that this wasn’t the Apostle John. The initial recipients of the revelation were seven churches in Asia but the ultimate

recipients were 'his servants'—you and me. God intended for us to receive this book for the purpose of knowing “what must soon take place.” It has been over 1900 years since John was told these things would take place *soon*. Peter said, “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Peter 3:8). Two thousand years, then, would be like two days to God. God looks at time differently. He compares it to eternity.

The Witness of the Book, 1:2

John tells us in verse 2 that this book will bear witness to three things. “John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

1. The Word of God. John quoted the Old Testament 384 times. He drew from twenty-four of the thirty-nine Old Testament books.
2. The testimony of Jesus Christ. John quoted what Jesus gave him. In Revelation 19:10, John said, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
3. John testified to what he saw. Revelation is *not* John’s prediction of future events. John ‘saw’ future events in advance. Thirty-one times John said, “I saw...” Twenty-two times, he said, “I heard...”

Jesus is alive. You can have an on-going relationship with Him.

The Blessing of the Book, 1:3

Our introduction lesson made us aware of the blessing available to those who read, hear, and take to heart the book of Revelation. Notice that verse 3 also tells us exactly what Revelation contains—prophecy. Revelation is not a parable. It is not a make believe story told to make a spiritual point. It is prophecy—declaring the Word of the Lord especially when concerning a future event.

The Salutation of the Book, 1:4-6

The salutation in verse 4 tells us the original recipients of John’s writing were seven churches in Asia, which would be in modern day western Turkey. Jesus specifically selected the churches in verse 11.

John told the churches that he was writing on behalf of the triune God.

- 1) God the Father—‘He who is and who was and who is to come’, the eternal nature of God.
- 2) The Holy Spirit—‘the seven spirits before His throne’. Revelation 4:5 refers to the seven spirits of God or the seven-fold nature of God. (See also Isaiah 11:2 and Zechariah 4:10).
- 3) The third person of the Trinity in verse 5 is Jesus Christ, the Son.

John describes Jesus as:

- the faithful witness. Jesus reveals God to us. Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).
- the first born from the dead. Jesus was the first person to experience resurrection—new life in a new, glorified body, never to die again. Since Jesus is said to be the ‘first’, we can have confidence in our own resurrection.
- the ruler of the kings of the earth. The Lord controls the kings of the world. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases” (Proverbs 21:1). The title ‘ruler of the kings of the earth’ refers ultimately to the day Jesus will reign as King of Kings.
- the one who *loves* us. Present tense, not past. Jesus is alive. He loves you right now. You can have an on-going relationship with Him.
- the one who freed us from our sins by His blood. Have you personally trusted Jesus as your Savior? If you have, you are free from the penalty, the power, the presence, and the guilt of sin.
- the one who made us to be a kingdom. Christ’s present kingdom is His Church.

Scripture identifies Satan as the prince of this world. The earth was created to be man's dominion. Satan stole it from man when man rebelled in the Garden of Eden. Jesus will reclaim dominion. We look forward to His future kingdom, which will be an earthly kingdom.

➤ the one who made us to be priests. You have direct access to God. You can approach the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). No middleman is required.

The Theme and Signature of the Book, 1:7-8

Verse 7 contains the theme of Revelation, the visible return of Jesus Christ. You can trust in this promise because God signed His name to it in verse 8. You have God's promise that He will do what He said He would do. God is a promise keeping God. God signed as:

- the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. God is everything from A to Z. That's what He wants to be to you—your Comforter, Defender, Fortress, Helper, Joy, Lord, Master, Protector, Rock, and Shield. (You can fill in the other letters of the alphabet!)
- the One “who is, and who was, and who is to come”. God is omnipresent. He always has been and always will be eternally the same.
- the Almighty. He is all-powerful and fully in charge. He is bigger than your biggest problem. He not only desires to intervene in your situation, He has the ability to do something about it.

Location and Date of the Book, 1:9-11

John was sent to a prison on Patmos, a volcanic island forty miles off the coast of Asia Minor, during the reign of Roman Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96). Rather than participate in emperor worship, John continued to give testimony about Jesus (verse 9). Paul said, “...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” (2 Timothy 3:12). Christians should expect to suffer for what they believe. What advice did the apostles give us for dealing with persecution? They said ‘rejoice and be glad’ that we would even be considered worthy to suffer for Jesus (Matthew 5:12, Acts 5:41). Times of suffering can draw us nearer to God. John had walked, lived, and worked side by side with Jesus but it was in the midst of suffering in exile on Patmos that God most clearly revealed Himself to John. Dave Ramsey said, “You meet God on the way up but you get to know Him on the way down.”

John received and recorded the Revelation probably around AD 95. The Revelation was given at that time to give hope to Christians who were experiencing horrible persecution. They were crucified, burned at the stake, and fed to lions as entertainment. John also wrote to Christians future to us who will know the greatest persecution ever experienced. Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” Do you need hope in your current situation? Scripture was written and preserved by God for thousands of years to be an encouragement and source of hope for you. Have you opened His Word to find the hope and encouragement that awaits you there?

The Vision, 1:12-20

In the vision, John saw someone like a son of man walking among seven lampstands. Daniel, the first writer to use the phrase ‘son of man’, used the title as a clear reference to the Messiah. Jesus referred to himself as ‘son of man’ eighty times in the gospels, more than any other name. John, then, saw Jesus. Jesus told John the lampstands were seven churches. A lampstand is a fitting symbol for a church because Jesus called us ‘the light of the world.’ Jesus was walking among the lampstands. He is the source of the light that we are to shine into the darkness of this world. Often, we try to

He is bigger than your biggest problem. He not only desires to intervene in your situation, He has the ability to do something about it.

attract others to church by our programs, our music, or our minister. But programs and ministers change. Ultimately, they must be attracted to Jesus.

John saw Jesus dressed in a robe, possibly symbolic of Jesus' current position as our High Priest. Jesus walks among the seven churches, tending them just as Israel's high priest walked through the tabernacle, tending the seven-branched lampstand. Jesus had a gold sash representative of the authority of a king in the ancient world. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). The rest of the description of Jesus matches the Old Testament description of God.

- White hair—wisdom, age, the pre-existence of Jesus (which means Jesus existed from the beginning of time, even before his earthly incarnation). In Daniel, the Messiah is called 'the Ancient of Days'. "White like wool, white as snow" could also refer to His righteousness or holiness (Isaiah 1:18).

- Eyes of blazing fire—nothing can hide from their piercing insight. In the Greek, this read "his eyes shot fire" which could refer to Christ's indignation over the condition of some of these churches.

- Feet like bronze glowing in a furnace—this could refer to the fiery furnace of judgment. In the Old Testament, the altar of the Tabernacle where sin was judged was made of bronze. Revelation 19:15 says, "He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty." Jesus will judge all the things that caused pain, suffering, tears, loss, and heartbreak in your life.

- Voice like the sound of rushing waters—I'd guess that if Jesus' eyes are shooting fire, then His voice doesn't sound like a gentle, trickling stream but more like Niagara Falls! One day, all the other voices that compete for your attention will be silenced and the only voice you will hear will be that of Jesus. Are you practicing now for the day you will hear that voice? Jesus said His sheep follow him because they know his voice (John 10:4-5, 27).

- Mouth with a double-edged sword—Jesus' weapon is the power of His words. Revelation 19:15 says, "Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations." The Word of God will conquer the armies of the world. Don't you think it's powerful enough for whatever enemy you may be facing?

- Face brilliant like the sun—Paul said, "God made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

In his right hand, Jesus held seven stars, which Jesus said were the 'angels' of the churches. The Greek word 'angel' means messenger. Some think these angels were the pastors of the churches since the letters were addressed to them. Others think angelic guardians are assigned to churches.

Did you notice John's reaction to seeing Jesus? He fell down like he was dead! I think we have no idea of the sight that awaits us when we see Jesus in the glory and majesty of heaven. What a beautiful picture we have in verse 17 when Jesus put His hand of reassurance on John's shoulder! He gave John three reasons why you can have encouragement and reassurance in your difficult situation:

- 1) Jesus is "the First and the Last." Jesus was before all things; He will be after all other things have passed away. He is unchanging. Who He was to Abraham, Moses, David, and John, He is to you.

- 2) Jesus, who was dead, is the "Living One", "alive forever and ever." We don't follow a dead man but a risen, living Christ.

- 3) Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades. By His death and resurrection, Jesus destroyed the one who had power over death. You no longer need to fear death. Salva-

The Word of God will conquer the armies of the world. Don't you think it's powerful enough for whatever enemy you may be facing?

tion is the key to your freedom.

Have you accepted the key of freedom that Jesus offers freely to you? Is there someone in your life who may still be in bondage to sin and guilt because you have not shared with them this key to freedom?

Notes:

Additional Notes for Chapter One:

Hades and Hell

In Revelation 1:18, Jesus said, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." What did He mean by 'Hades'? Is Hades the same as hell or do the two words have different meanings? Let's study the meaning of both these words. 'Hades' is a Greek word that is equivalent to the Hebrew word "sheol" which means "the abode of the departed, the gathering place of the dead."

The confusion about Hades and hell started when the translators of the King James Version didn't know the original languages very well. When they translated the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament), they sometimes correctly translated "Sheol" as "Hades", but other times they erroneously translated 'Sheol' as the word 'hell'. 'Hell' was the word 'ghenna', not 'Sheol'. 'Sheol' should have been translated as 'Hades'. 'Ghenna' should have been translated as 'hell'. They took two different words, ghenna and Sheol, and translated both words as 'Hades' sometimes and 'hell' sometimes.

In the original language, Hades was never used as the final state of punishment. That was ghenna, hell. Let's go back to the definition of Hades or Sheol—"the abode of the departed, the gathering place of the dead." Gathering place not punishment place. Did you notice the definition did not say 'the abode of departed *unbelievers*' or 'the gathering place of dead *unbelievers*'? Before the cross, spirits of dead people, godly or ungodly, went to a place called Hades (Sheol). There were two parts to Hades. One part was for the godly (remember this is before the cross) called 'the bosom of Abraham' or paradise. The other part of Hades was for the ungodly called the 'place of torments.' In Luke 16, Jesus tells the story of a godly beggar and an ungodly rich man who both die. The beggar goes to 'Abraham's side' and the rich man goes to 'the place of torments'. The rich man wanted the beggar to cross over to bring him some cool water for his tongue but he could not because the two parts were separated by an abyss that could not be crossed.

When Jesus ascended into heaven after the Resurrection, He took with Him all the godly people who had been confined to the paradise side of Hades. In other words, because of the cross, Jesus could move paradise from Hades to heaven. Jesus said no one comes to the Father except through Him. No one comes to the Father. Old Testament saints could not go directly to heaven because their salvation was not complete. The blood of Jesus had not been shed to atone for their sin. They could not appear before a holy God.

After the cross, the spirits of dead believers go directly to Heaven while a believer's body awaits the Rapture when spirit and body will be reunited. We can see this in several Biblical passages.

- Paul confirmed this in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 when he said he was caught up to 'heaven' and a few verses later said he was caught up to 'paradise'. Paul used the words 'paradise' and 'heaven' interchangeably after the cross.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 pictures Jesus coming from heaven at the Rapture and taking believers with Him back into heaven, not to paradise but directly to heaven.
- Paul said to depart is to be with Christ and to be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord (Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8). After the cross, believers go immediately into the presence of the Lord.

- In Revelation 6:9, John saw the souls of the martyrs under the altar. They were in heaven as soon as they died.
- In Revelation 7:9, John saw in heaven a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and praising God.

After paradise was emptied into heaven, only the place of torments was left in Hades. The spirits of lost people, unbelievers, still go to Hades, the place of torments. Unbelievers do not go directly to hell although hell is the ultimate destiny of the unjust. Who is in hell right now? Your mean old uncle? Ted Bundy? Hitler? No one. The first occupants of hell will be the Antichrist and his false prophet. Satan will join them at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ (Revelation 19:20, 20:10). How do we know this? There has been no judgment of unbelievers yet. The great white throne of judgment will take place after the Millennium earthly rule of Jesus (Revelation 20:11). *“The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire”* (Revelation 20:13-15). At the day of final judgement, Hades will be emptied so its occupants can stand before Jesus at the throne of judgment. Remember that the occupants of Hades are unbelievers because from the time of the cross, the souls of believers go directly to heaven. Hades will then be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). The bodies and the spirits of unbelievers will be cast into hell. Hades will be emptied into hell.

Believers do not appear before the great white throne judgment. Believers appear before the judgment seat of Christ so their rewards can be ‘judged’ or decided (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10). If you are a believer, your salvation will not be in question because of your trust in Christ’s work on your behalf on the cross.

Satan is not in charge of hell as art and poetry indicates. Satan did not create hell for unbelievers. God created hell for Satan. Jesus said, “...I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

Do you find this study of hell and Hades disturbing? I hope so. I pray you find it disturbing enough to do everything in your power to introduce your unsaved family members, friends, and co-workers to the Lord Jesus Christ. When you become a Christian, you receive the Holy Spirit as a deposit, a guarantee of your salvation (2 Corinthians 5:5). Your reservation in heaven has been made and guaranteed. You don’t have to spend any more of your precious brain power worrying about the difference between hell and Hades, Sheol and ghenna! Instead, you can use your time to invest in the lives of others, to worship and serve the Lord, and to look forward to the day you will see Jesus face to face!

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End Revelation Lesson 1 questions & lecture notes

Jesus, The Conquering Warrior

The book of Revelation is without a doubt the scariest book in the Bible. Earthquakes, mass destruction of life, war, plague, and persecution make it a frightening book. But Revelation can also be one of the most comforting, glorious books of the Bible.

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You will learn how relevant this book of encouragement and victory can be to your situation today. The book that originally gave hope to persecuted Christians of the early church will bring hope to you.

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The book of Revelation promises a blessing to the reader. Don't miss the blessing!

About The Author...



Rhonda Graham

The Enduring Word Bible Study is written and taught by Rhonda Graham. Rhonda has been teaching the Bible for over 12 years. After graduating from college in Louisiana, Rhonda began a career in accounting. After working for 21 years, she left the workforce to focus full time on her family and teaching the Bible. Rhonda jokes that her current job is a Bible salesman. She loves to 'sell' people on the truth of the Bible and the God of the Bible. Rhonda teaches weekly classes of men and women of all ages, speaks to women's groups on various topics, and writes Bible studies. Her second study to be published, a study of the book of Romans is now available.

To have Rhonda speak at your next event or to order the studies of Romans or Revelation

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