



Rev. 1:1-8 – THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST INTRODUCTION

“Revelation”

- Paul's pet peeve: “Singular, not plural” Revelation not “Revelations”
 - **A singular revelation**
 - **“Uncovering, making plain what was not known before.”** *The word may be used of something God makes known during a church service (1 Cor. 14:26), but more usually it has to do with something on a larger scale, like God's righteousness, wrath (Rom. 1:17–18), or righteous judgment (Rom. 2:5). It may be used to describe a book (Rev. 1:1). God reveals things through the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). The gospel is not something people have made up but has been revealed by Christ (Gal. 1:11–12). The fullness of revelation awaits the return of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:13).*
The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton, IL; 1984), p. 356

4 Views of the 2nd Advent of Jesus Christ:

1. Non-Literal/Allegorical/Spiritualized View

- Denies that there will be a literal, bodily, personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
- Sees the coming of Christ as a perpetual advance of “Christ” in the church that includes many particular events.
- Tribulation events already fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem – 70AD, or the day of Pentecost, or even the death of a saint – basically any crisis in history or an individual's life.
- Christ's coming fulfilled at the conversion of each person.
- **vs** Scares people away from attempting to interpret God's word.
- They believe only a select few are able of proper Biblical interpretation.

- Primarily the Priests, thus the laws forbidding “common” people from owning or possessing a Bible. Certainly not a Bible in any language other than the “holy” language of Latin.
- Laymen cannot possibly understand the complex allegories and twisted theologies of the Roman church, or come to grips with the constant Papal decrees that reverse former Papal declarations and previous Roman theology which Catholics died defending.
- Allegorical teachers particularly scare people away from the Book of Revelation.

2. Post-millennial View:

- Popular during the post-reformation era.
- Holds that through preaching the gospel the whole world will be “Christianized” and brought to submission and purity.
- The Bride of Christ thereby being holy, pure, and washed will usher in the return of Christ.
- Christ returns **after** a “millennial” (not any specific or future one thousand year period as defined by them but rather an indefinite era) purification of the Body of Christ.

The Postmillennial View

The Millennium, a term meaning “thousand,” refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev 20:1–6). Some Christians believe the Millennium will be an age of blessedness on the earth. Some believe the Millennium is the present church age—a period of indefinite length, or that the Millennium is a way of referring to the eternal state.

The Bible’s only specific mention of the Millennium is in the book of Revelation (ch. 20). Interpreters differ greatly in their understanding of the Millennium and how it will occur. **Postmillennialists expect Christ’s visible return after the Millennium.** They look for God to use the church’s teaching and preaching to usher in a lengthy period (some interpret the thousand years literally, others symbolically) of peace and righteousness before Christ’s return. Postmillennialists usually adopt either the “Historical” or “Preterist” view of Revelation as a whole.

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3. Amillennial view:

- Denies that there will be a literal, bodily, personal return of Jesus Christ on earth before the millennial age begins and that rather, by His “spiritual” presence, a kingdom will be instituted over which He will reign.
- Popular after the Roman church came into power.
- All prophecies concerning the Kingdom of God are being fulfilled now by the church “spiritually.”

¹Nelson’s complete book of Bible maps and charts : Old and New Testaments. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Satan is conceived as being bound after the crucifixion.
- The eternal state immediately follows the second coming of Christ.
- **Allegorical/Spiritualized view of Scripture primarily.**

The Amillennial View

Amillennialists interpret Christ's millennial reign in an ideal or spiritual sense. While believing in the Second Coming, they reject the idea of a literal thousand-year reign on earth. Some see Christ's reign as having begun during His earthly ministry or at the time of His resurrection. They cite Peter's declaration that Christ now rules from the right hand of God (Acts 2:33–36). Israel and the church are viewed as forming one people of God, and the kingdom promises to Israel are seen as applying to the church age, or to the eternal existence in the new heavens and the new earth. The Amillennial approach usually involves an "Idealist" view of Revelation as a whole. 2

4. Pre-millennial view:

- Holds that Christ will return to earth literally, bodily, and personally, before the millennial age begins.
- Only by His presence can a kingdom be instituted here on earth over which He will reign.
- Resurrected saints will reign with Christ upon His return.
- Plain/Literal interpretation of Scripture.

The Premillennial View

Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium. Interpreting Revelation 20 literally, they hold that Christ will reign on earth for a literal thousand years. Within this basic area of agreement, there are, nevertheless, a number of variant views—the most prevalent of which are the Premillennial-pretribulational and the Premillennial-posttribulational views.

The Premillennial/Pretribulational View:

Premillennial-pretribulational scholars argue that there are two different peoples of God—Israel and the church—with two different prophetic programs. According to this view, the church will be "raptured" prior to a seven-year Great Tribulation. Following the tribulation, Christ will return to establish a thousand-year millennial kingdom centered in Jerusalem and involving the reinstatement of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The millennial kingdom will end with a futile rebellion by the forces of evil, after which will come the final judgment and beginning of the eternal reign. 3

The Premillennial/Posttribulational View:

Premillennial/posttribulational scholars assert that Christ will return at the end of a seven-year Great Tribulation to establish a millennial kingdom. This kingdom will end with a rebellion by the forces of evil and the final judgment. This view often

²Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts : Old and New Testaments. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts : Old and New Testaments. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

interprets prophecy in a non-literal way and does not usually view Israel and the church as the objects of completely different divine historical plans. Rather, Israel and the church ultimately form one people of God. Premillennialists of both types adopt the “Futurist” approach to the book of Revelation. 4

- **First two centuries the church held a strict Premillennial view.**
 - Third century gave rise to the first antagonism to the Premillennial view.
 - **School of Alexandria**
 - Began the “spiritualizing” method of interpretation.
 - Brought a virtual end to the plain/literal style of interpretation in most biblical schools.
 - Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius – main figures responsible for this method.
 - Prevalent false systems (still found today) arose then:
 - **Gnosticism** – God can only be known by the select few that have certain abilities, callings, secret information (a select priesthood).
 - **Docetism** – denying even the reality of a human body to Jesus. Spiritualizing even His body, His ministry, and the entire earthly works of Christ.
 - Israel and Jews strongly removed from all biblical promises – they killed Christ!
 - **Millennialism** – rejected because it was considered “Jewish” in nature
 - Premillennial writers of the first 2 centuries were suppressed or censured.
 - **Emperor Constantine:**
 - Brings about union of a new non-Jewish church and the “eternal” state of Rome.
 - Roman empire seen as fulfillment of millennial reign.
 - Figurative reign of Christ embodied in Pope.
 - Church empowered, believers have no power.
 - **Augustine:**
 - Amillennialism is systematized under Augustine
 - Roman church derives its “kingdom on earth” doctrines.
 - Kingdom hierarchy gives rise to election of an eternal Papacy.
 - Peter was clearly **not** the first Pope of the Roman church as is the tradition of the Roman Catholic church.

⁴Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts : Old and New Testaments. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, never even indirectly refers to Peter's presence in the Roman church.

Summary of Four Interpretive Views on Revelation

Interpretive Approach	Basic Thesis
Preterist	All the events of Revelation were fulfilled during the period of the Roman Empire.
Historical	Revelation is a panorama of church history from the apostolic era until the consummation
Idealist	Revelation is not a representation of actual events, but is rather a symbolic depiction of the spiritual warfare between good and evil.
Futurist	Beginning with ch. 4 , Revelation describes the future events accompanying the end of the age.

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Do we really need to read/study/understand Revelation?

- The Father wanted us to know the exalted risen Christ.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His **servants**—things which must shortly (lit. suddenly, quickly) take place.

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His **servant (doulos) John**,

- An eye witness account
- Not a dream, not a vision, not an imagination or speculation.

2 who bore witness ⁶ to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

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.**

- TWICE the word **servant** appears in this passage. God's revelation was sent to his *servants* and it was sent through his *servant* John. **In Greek the word is *doulos* and in Hebrew *ebedh*.** Both are difficult fully to translate. The normal translation of *doulos* is *slave*. The real *servant* of God is, in fact, his *slave*. A servant can leave his service when he likes; he has stated hours of work and stated hours of freedom; he works for a wage; he has a mind of his own and can bargain as to when and for what he will give his labour. A slave can do none of these things; he is the absolute possession of his

⁵Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts : Old and New Testaments. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ The phrase, "bear record" (Greek *martureo*, also translated "testify" or "bear witness" or "bear testimony"), is highly characteristic of John, occurring forty-four times in his writings and only twenty-five times in all the rest of the New Testament. Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of the End Times* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1983), 35.

owner, with neither time nor will of his own. *Doulos* and *ebedh* bring out how absolutely we must surrender life to God. ⁷

- **There is a promised blessing to all those that:**

- 1. Read the words of this prophecy.**

a) John expects this book to be read in each of the seven churches mentioned (1:4) and elsewhere. Today the public reading of the Bible is an important part of worship that is often poorly done. ⁸

- 2. Hear the words of this prophecy**

a) **They that hear** (οἱ ἀκουοντες [*hoi akouontes*]). Present active plural articular participle of ἀκουω [*akouō*] (the audience). ⁹

- 3. Keep the words of this prophecy**

a) **And keep** (και τηρουντες [*kai tērountes*]). Present active participle of τηρεω [*tēreō*], a common Johannine word (1 John 2:4, etc.). Cf. Matt. 7:24. "The content of the Apocalypse is not merely prediction; moral counsel and religious instruction are the primary burdens of its pages" (Moffatt). ¹⁰

- **The Book that promises the most blessings is the least read, least heard, least studied of the New Testament.**

Matthew 7:24-27

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to **a wise man** who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

We may note that there are seven "**blesseds**" in the book of **Revelation**.

- (i) **(1:3)** There is the **blessed** we have just studied.
 - We may call it the blessedness of reading, hearing and obeying the Word of God.
- (ii) **(14:13)** **Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth .
 - We may call it the blessedness in heaven of Christ's friends on earth.

⁷ *The Revelation of John : Volume 1*. 2000, c1976 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Re 1:4). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

⁸ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Re 1:3.

⁹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Re 1:3.

¹⁰ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Re 1:3.

- (iii) **(16:15) Blessed** is he who is awake, keeping his garments .
 - We may call it the blessedness of the watchful pilgrim.
- (iv) **(19:9) Blessed** are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
 - We may call it the blessedness of the invited guests of God.
- (v) **(20:6) Blessed** is he who shares in the first resurrection .
 - We may call it the blessedness of the man whom death cannot touch.
- (vi) **(22:7) Blessed** is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book .
 - We may call it the blessedness of the wise reader of God's Word.
- (vii) **(22:14) Blessed** are those who do his commandments .
 - We may call it the blessedness of those who hear and obey. ¹¹

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,**



These **seven Spirits** are mentioned more than once in *Revelation* (3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
 Three main explanations have been offered of them.

¹¹ *The Revelation of John : Volume 1.* 2000, c1976 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Re 1:4). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

- The Jews talked of the “seven angels of the presence,” whom they beautifully called “the seven first white ones” (1 *Enoch* 90:21). They were what we call the archangels, and “they stand and enter before the glory of the Lord” (Tobit 12:15). Their names are not always the same but they are often called Uriel, Rafael, Raguel, Michael, Gabriel, Saiquael and Jeremiel. They had the care of the elements of the world—fire, air and water—and were the guardian angels of the nations. They were the most illustrious and the most intimate servants of God. **Some think that they are the seven Spirits mentioned here. But that cannot be; great as the angels were, they were still created beings.**
- (i) The second explanation connects them with the famous passage in **Isaiah 11:2**; as the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, has it: ¹²

Isaiah 11:2

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 of the **fear of the Lord**.

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

We are:

- “seated with Him in heavenly places” – (Eph 2:6)
- “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.” (1 Peter 2:9)
- “reign with Him” – (Rev 20:6) (2 Tim 2:12)
- “kings and priests to His God and Father” (Rev.1:6)

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.

And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Which team will you choose?

- How dedicated are you to that team?

¹² *The Revelation of John : Volume 1.* 2000, c1976 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Re 1:7). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.



- **We suspect John was the only Apostle to see Jesus pierced!**

John 19:34-37

34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken."

37 And again another Scripture says, **"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."**

Matthew 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and **then all the tribes of the earth will mourn**, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Zechariah 12:9-14

9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

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.**

11 In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

12 And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves;

13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves;

14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

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.”

- **PANTOKRATŌR** (παντοκράτωρ , (3841)), almighty, or ruler of all (*pas*, all, *krateō*, to hold, or to have strength), is used of God only, and is found, in the Epistles, only in **2 Cor. 6:18**, where the title is suggestive in connection with the context; elsewhere only in the Apocalypse, nine times. In one place, 9:6, the A.V. has “omnipotent,” R.V., “(the Lord our God,) the Almighty.”
 - The word is introduced in the Sept. as a translation of “Lord (or God) of hosts,” e.g., Jer. 5:14 and Amos 4:13. ¹³
- **Jesus is saying that He is the Lord God Almighty!**
- That He existed:
 - Before all eternity
 - During all eternity
 - Throughout all the rest of eternity

A.V. *Authorized Version (King James)*, 1611

R.V. *Revised Version*, 1881—1885

Sept. *Septuagint*

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

¹³ Vine, W., & Bruce, F. (1981; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *Vine's Expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words* (2:48). Old Tappan NJ: Revell.

The Abomination of Desolation

