

John’s Calling To Prophecy About The End Times

I. Review – Overview of the book of Revelation

(Revelation 1:1-3 NASB) “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. 3 Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

- a. This book is entitled “The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The main theme and purpose of this book is to unveil the glory of Jesus. The book of Revelation reveals the infinite power of Jesus through His leadership at the end of the age, and how He will fulfill the desires of His heart by preparing the nations for His glory to cover the whole earth. **The purpose of the Book of Revelation is to strengthen us to stand, encourage us to endure, and prepare us to prevail through the worldwide shaking.**
- b. The secondary theme of this book is related to “the things which must soon take place”. At the end of this age, Jesus will prepare His bride for glory, bring in a Great Harvest including the salvation of Israel, openly defeat Satan and the Antichrist empire, purge the earth of sin, and overthrow every evil governmental leader on earth through the Great Tribulation.
- c. Revelation is the only book God promises a special blessing to anyone who reads, hears, and keeps the prophecy, as well as a destructive curse for anyone who adds to or subtracts from it.
- d. The book of Revelation is not reserved for super saints or theologians only. Our confidence in studying this book comes not because we are “great learners”, but because **the Holy Spirit is The Best Teacher.**

Section One

- ❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION #1 Revelation 6:** The seal judgments prepare the nations for God’s glory.
- ❖ **ANGELIC EXPLANATION # 1 Revelation 7:** God gives divine protection to the saints from judgments.

Section Two

- ❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION #2 Revelation 8-9:** The trumpet judgments against the Antichrist empire.
- ❖ **ANGELIC EXPLANATION # 2 Revelation 10-11:** God gives direction by increased prophetic ministry.

Section Three

- ❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION #3 Revelation 11:15-19:** Jesus’ 2nd Coming & Rapture of the saints.
- ❖ **ANGELIC EXPLANATION # 3 Revelation 12-14:** God reveals Satan’s confrontation against the saints.

Section Four

- ❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION #4 Revelation 15-16:** The bowl judgments destroy evil infrastructures.
- ❖ **ANGELIC EXPLANATION # 4 Revelation 17-18:** God reveals the seduction of Harlot Babylon.

Section Five

- ❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION #5 Revelation 19-20:** Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- ❖ **ANGELIC EXPLANATION # 5 Revelation 21-22:** God reveals the restoration of all things.

II. Introducing John the Beloved of Patmos

(Revelation 1:1,9 NASB) “...He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John...9 I, John, your brother and fellow participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”

- a. The Apostle John wrote 5 of our New Testament Books (*The Gospel of John, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, and Revelation*). In his own Gospel account John refers to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” (*John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7*), speaking of his intimate friendship with Jesus. There were three disciples that were especially close to Jesus: Peter, James, and John (*Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37; 14:33; Luke 8:51*). While Jesus was on the cross, He even asked John to take care of his mother, Mary (*John 19:25-26*).
- b. John and His brother James, (the sons of thunder [*Mark 3:17*]), were the sons of a man named Zebedee and were fishermen (*Matthew 4:21-22*).
- c. Early Church fathers such as Tertullian testify that John was exiled to Patmos (a small Greek island off the west coast of Asia Minor [modern day Turkey]) around 94 A.D. after the emperor, Domitian, tried to boil John in oil (took place in Ephesus) for preaching the Gospel. Miraculously, John suffered no harm from being boiled in oil and the entire coliseum was converted to Christianity. On an occasion before being boiled in oil, John was also forced to drink poison, but did not suffer any harm either. I believe God spared John on many occasions because he had a messenger calling to prophesy about the coming King and His Kingdom. John’s testimony is a prophetic foreshadow of what many end-time messengers will face in the last days.

(Daniel 11:33 NASB) “And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.”

- d. Two Prominent leaders in the early church learned from John, Polycarp of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch.

III. Overview of John’s Calling To Prophesy About The End Times

- a. The First part of the book of Revelation is “John’s calling to prophesy about the end times”. This takes place in Chapter one of the Book of Revelation. *The first part of the book of Revelation is important because it lays out the nature of John’s calling and the significance of the message he was called to communicate.*
- b. John’s calling was to communicate “*everything that he saw*” (***Revelation 1:2***). In Revelation one, Jesus revealed glorious details about Himself that were meant to influence John as he communicated the message and how He communicated that message. *Jesus essentially was helping John to see with clarity “the things which must soon take place” so that John could interpret those “things” clearly for the sake of preparing and equipping the entire body of Christ.* This means, the strategic and specific truths Jesus reveals about Himself in Revelation One we’re not only important for John, but they find significance in our lives today.

(Revelation 1:2 NASB) “Who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw.”

- c. Jesus reveals Himself as the Son of Man, highlighting 52 distinct aspects of His eternal identity in Revelation One (14 Titles, 10 Attributes, 28 Descriptions). As we lay hold of these foundational truths about the Son of Man, we are progressively transformed to be like Him. The Book of Revelation can not just be seen through the lens of Jesus the savior, Jesus the provider, or Jesus the judge, our cultural lens, etc. but through the lens upon which He revealed Himself to John in Revelation One.

d. Outline of Revelation One

- i. The Prologue – *Revelation 1:1-3*
- ii. The Greeting from John, and Blessing from Jesus – *Revelation 1:4-6*
- iii. An Oracle Related To The Second Coming of Jesus – *Revelation 1:7-8*
- iv. John’s Vision of His Friend Jesus, the Son of Man, on Patmos – *Revelation 1:9-20*
 1. Jesus Sets the Stage for the End Time Drama – *Verses 9-10*
 2. Jesus Commands John To Write Down What He Sees – *Verse 11*
 3. The Revelation of the Glorious Son of Man – *Verses 12-16*
 4. John’s Weakness & Jesus’ Glory – *Verses 17-19*
 5. Jesus Interprets the Symbols – *Verse 20*

IV. Greeting from John, and Blessing from Jesus

(Revelation 1:4-6 NASB), “John to the seven churches that 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, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6 and He made us into a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

- a. John to the seven churches that are in Asia – This reaffirms the fact that the book of Revelation is not just for “super saints”, but for the Church. While it is directed to seven real historical churches, it is also for the global Church today. This brings up two points to consider 1) What is the “Church” 2) What should the Church do with this message.
 - i. What is the Church – I believe *Acts 2:42-47* gives a clear picture for what the healthy, growing Church should look like. Just because we call something “Church” doesn’t always mean it is that. Just because certain practices are rooted in tradition it doesn’t mean it’s automatically sacred. There are biblical foundations for the Church is and that should be a priority for us as end time believers.

(Acts 2:42-47 NASB) “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all the believers were together and had all things in common; 45 and they would sell their property and possessions and share them with all, to the extent that anyone had need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

- ii. What should the Church do with this message – The church should take *Revelation 1:3* very serious. The book of Revelation should be a normal text that is read, studied, talked about, and taught among the Church. The generation that sees the fulfillment of that which is spoken of in this book will be a generation that cherishes it’s truths even before their fulfillment.
- b. Seven Spirits before His throne – Throughout Revelation, John uses the number 7 to signify perfection or completeness when He sees “Seven Spirits”, it’s really a picture of the perfection of the Holy Spirit. *Isaiah 11:2* gives more definition to what the seven-fold spirit of God could be.

(Isaiah 11:2 NASB) “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

- c. The faithful witness – Jesus is the faithful representation of the Father to man, and man to the Father.

(John 17:25-26 NASB) “Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

(Hebrews 4:14-15 NASB) “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let’s hold firmly to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.”

- d. Firstborn of the dead – Jesus is the first in authority in the Kingdom of Heaven and is the first man with a glorified resurrected body. In Hebrew culture, the firstborn son inherited his father’s place as head of the family and received the father’s blessing and a double portion of the inheritance (***Deuteronomy 21:17***).
- e. Made us into a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – We are the Kingdom, meaning, we are those who inhabit and represent the Kingdom of God and it’s value system (***Matthew 5-7***). We also have a priestly ministry to the Father forever!

(1 Peter 2:9 NASB) “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”

V. An Oracle Related To The Second Coming of Jesus

(Revelation 1:7-8 NASB) “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

- a. He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him – The central reality of the book of Revelation is the fact that Jesus is literally coming back to rule the nations. Every eye will see Him when He returns. *His 2nd coming does not happen in a vacuum or as a secret*, Jesus will be seen by every person on the earth.
- b. Alpha and the Omega – The Greek alphabet begins with the letter alpha and ends with omega. What Jesus is saying is, I am the all encompassing one from the beginning to the end.

(Colossians 1:17 NASB) “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

- c. Who is and who was and who is to come – Jesus currently *IS* a real man on a real throne in a real place. Jesus *WAS* a man who descended from Heaven and walked the earth. If we can have confidence in these two realities, then we can have confidence that *He will come again*.

VI. Jesus Sets the Stage for the End Time Drama

(Revelation 1:9-10 NASB) “I, John, your brother and fellow participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet”

- a. Fellow participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus - Tribulation was not a distant reality for these first century believers. John was clearly in the midst of tribulation and writes to the 7 churches as though they too were experiencing tribulation. However, that’s not all they had in common. John was also a fellow participant *in the kingdom* and the *perseverance in Jesus* despite the tribulation.

John, and these 7 churches are a prophetic down payment of what the church at the end of the age will face and overcome.

- b. In the Spirit on the Lord's day – The Lord's day is not a reference to Sunday. The Roman Emperor Domitian instituted a Roman holiday called “the Lord's day” as a day of “Caesar worship”. On this day everyone who lived in the Roman Empire had to appear before stone statues of the Emperor and burn incense and declare, “Caesar is Lord”. This was a difficult day for believers who lived in the Roman Empire. If they refused to worship Caesar they were persecuted or killed (This is essentially why John was exiled to Patmos – They couldn't kill him). The fact that John gets caught up in the Spirit on “the Lord's day” (the most Antichrist day in culture at that time) is a significant statement of the true Lordship of Jesus and it sets the stage for end time drama that Jesus is about to show John.
- c. A loud voice like the sound of a trumpet – The primary usage of the Greek word for trumpet (*salpigx*) in the New Testament is related to the seven trumpets of Revelation or the 7th trumpet. The trumpet was also used as a war cry or commanding instrument to prepare for battle. The fact that John hears Jesus like a trumpet means there was a commanding tone to His voice.

(1 Corinthians 14:7-8 NASB) “Yet even lifeless instruments, whether flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? 8 For if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”

VII. Jesus Commands John To Write Down What He Sees

(Revelation 1:11 NASB) “...Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

- a. Jesus commands John to write everything that He sees and send to body of believers in each of those 7 cities. Once again, the Revelation of Jesus is FOR the Church!

VIII. The Revelation of the Glorious Son of Man

(Revelation 1:12-16 NASB) “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And after turning I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and wrapped around the chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze when it has been heated to a glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”

- a. I turned – It is profoundly significant that John actually turned to see the voice that was speaking to Him instead of immediately run and hide. We should have this approach to the book of Revelation, we should be curious and eager see respond rightly to the trumpeting voice of Jesus and seek more understanding rather than try to avoid it like the church so often does.
- b. In the middle of the lampstands – Jesus is intimately involved the church. He is the one who manifests himself in the midst of the assembly of believers.
- c. Son of man – John see's Jesus standing in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands and refers to him with the title “son of man”. About 500 B.C. the prophet Daniel, had a vision of the Messiah coming on heavenly clouds to rule nations as the “Son of Man”. John identifies Jesus as Daniels “Son of Man” who the Jews had been longing for throughout the centuries. Only 3 people in the New Testament refer to Jesus as the “Son of Man”; Jesus (83 times), Stephen (1 time), John (2 times). *Everything that John describes about His appearance is significant and should be looked at through the lens of Jesus as the glorious Son of Man.*

(Daniel 7:13-14 NASB) “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, honor, and a kingdom, So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

- d. A robe reaching to his feet...golden sash wrapped around his chest – A robe is a very “priestly” description of Jesus. This is a reference to the Son of Man being our great High Priest. He is unlike any other human and is the perfect representation of mankind to God. The golden sash around his chest is a reference to His kingship (or royalty), purity, and superiority (***Gen 13:2; 41:42; Matthew 2:11; 2 Samuel 12:30; Esther 4:11; 8:15***).
- e. Head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow – This is a reference to His infinite wisdom and righteousness (***Job 12:12-13; Proverbs 16:31; Proverbs 20:28-29***).
- f. Eyes were like a flame of fire – John describes Jesus’ eyes by their warmth and ability to captivate attention. Jesus sees everything with a refining fiery gaze. The fire in His eyes removes all that hinders love and produces righteousness within those that stare into His eyes.

(Isaiah 64:1-5 NASB) “Oh, that You would tear open the heavens and come down, That the mountains would quake at Your presence— 2 As fire kindles brushwood, as fire causes water to boil— To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence! 3 When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence. 4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of one who waits for Him. 5 You meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways.”

- g. His feet were like burnished bronze when it has been heated to a glow in a furnace – The appearance of His feet was white hot, shining in radiance. Bronze or brass is often associated with judgment (The brazen altar) in scripture. Bronze is better at resisting the heat of fire than gold or silver, which could also be a reference to His endurance too. *Though his judgments seem severe, they are the least severe means He uses in his perfect patience to get the most amount of people to repent.*
- h. His voice was like the sound of many waters – like raging waters that drowns out all other voices. Near a waterfall or raging sea, it is hard to hear anything other than that of the rushing water.
- i. In His right hand He held seven stars – The seven stars are the angels or messengers of the seven churches (***Revelation 1:20***). With His right hand He tenderly holds the messengers in His hand. As the bridegroom He holds His bride close to Him.

(Song 2:6 NASB) “His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me.”

- j. Out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword – His words are like a sharp two-edged sword that is effective at cutting. His word is effective at exposing all things before him. The truth of His word will always expose the lies of the enemy.

(Hebrews 4:12-13 NASB) “For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we must answer.”

- k. His face was shining like the sun in its strength – This is His dazzling appearance that radiates the glory and brilliance of the Father.

(Hebrews 1:3 NASB) “And He [Jesus] is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature...”

IX. John's Weakness & Jesus' Glory

(Revelation 1:17-19 NASB) “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”

- a. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man – Though John was close to Jesus before His resurrection, the appearance of the Son of Man had John entirely undone. This fresh revelation of Jesus was important for John, because in order to grasp the breadth of the “things which will take place after these things” He had to embrace a true revelation of Jesus that was beyond His current understanding and experience. *Believers today cannot just focus on one aspect of Jesus (that we're comfortable with) if we are to embrace the realities of the book of Revelation, we have to see Him as He truly is and be undone by Him.*
- b. He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades - Jesus then comforts His friend John, and reminds Him that He is the all encompassing one who is in control and has overcome and defeated death. In simple terms, it's like Jesus is saying, “John, I know this is crazy and you didn't expect this, but it's really me and I am who I said I was”.
- c. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things – Jesus tells John again to write all that he has seen in this heavenly vision and everything he's about to see. Jesus just keeps affirming John's “messenger calling”. Jesus will affirm our calling as end time messengers to our family, friends, and sphere of influence.

X. Jesus Interprets the Symbols

(Revelation 1:20 NASB) “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

- a. Jesus interprets the signs that John saw. He takes what was once a mystery and makes it obvious and comprehensible. Jesus uses the symbols in Revelation to communicate more with fewer words. He does not want to keep His people “in the dark” about His end time realities.

XI. The 52 Distinct Aspects of His Eternal Identity in Revelation 1

14 Titles - Jesus (*1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2*); Christ (*1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2*); Faithful Witness (*1:4*); Firstborn from the Dead (*1:4*); Ruler over the Kings of the Earth (*1:4*); Him Who Loved Us (*1:5*); Lord (*1:10*); Alpha (*1:11*); Omega (*Rev. 1:11*); First (*1:11, 17*); Last (*1:11, 17*); Son of Man (*1:13*); He who Lives and was Dead (*1:18*); Alive Forevermore (*1:18*).

10 Attributes - Blood (*1:5*); Voice (*1:10, 12, 15*); Feet (*1:13, 15, 17*); Chest (*1:13*); Head (*1:14*); Hair (*1:14*); Eyes (*1:14*); Right Hand (*1:16, 17, 20*); Mouth (*1:16*); Countenance (*1:16*).

28 Descriptions - His revelation (*1:1*); His servants (*1:1 x2*); He sent and signified (*1:1, 11*); His angels (*1:1*); His testimony (*1:2, 9*); He loved us (*1:5*); He washed us from our sins in His own blood (*1:5*); He made us kings and priests (*1:6*); His God (*1:6*); His Father (*1:6*); He is coming with clouds (*1:7*); Every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him (*1:7*); All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him (*1:7*); His tribulation (*1:9*); His kingdom (*1:9*); His patience (*1:9*); His Day (*1:10*); His appearance behind John (*1:10*); He commissions to write and send (*1:11, 19*); He's in the midst of the seven lampstands (*1:13*); He's clothed with a garment down to the feet (*1:13*); He's girded about the chest with a golden band (*1:13*); He holds the seven stars in His right hand (*1:16, 20*); Out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword (*1:16*); His appearance is deathly terrifying (*1:17*); He laid His right hand saying “Do not be afraid” (*1:17*); He has the keys of Hell and Death (*1:18*); He reveals mysteries (*1:20*).

Questions For Discussion

1. What was something that stuck out to you in this teaching?
2. How does this teaching mobilize you to pray? (*1 Peter 4:7 NASB*) ***“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer”***
3. Did this teaching bring clarity to a thought or question you had related to the end times?