



Revelation

Session 1

1:1-8

Neighbor Nudge



- What's one of your favorite story genres?

Revelation 1:1-3



Revelation:

- truth unknown is now revealed (vs. 1).
- about Jesus and from Jesus (vs. 1).
- to show Jesus' servants things that must soon take place (vs. 1).

Revelation 1:1-3



- What things must soon take place?
 - *John answers later throughout the book.*
- How soon will these things happen?
 - *John doesn't answer at all.*

Revelation 1:1-3



- Author: John, the disciple of Jesus (vs. 1).
- John was an eyewitness of Jesus (vs. 2).
- John bore witness by telling others what he saw Jesus do (vs. 2).
- The Romans tried to boil John to death for bearing witness about Jesus, but God miraculously saved John from death. God still had kingdom work for John to do (like writing Revelation). This history lesson shows that God is more powerful than the Roman Empire.

Revelation 1:1-3



- John was a prophet (22:6).
- In John's time, the early church didn't have the New Testament. One way God spoke to the early church was through prophets. Prophets were messengers from God. They prophesied by speaking God's word in the church gathering (1 Cor. 14:26-32) and by writing prophecy (1:3).

Revelation 1:1-3



- What is prophecy?

Revelation 1:1-3



- *What is prophecy?*

Prophecy is forthtelling = speaking God's word (1 Cor. 14:26-32).

One form of forthtelling was oracles. “It took the form of a word of God spoken to the church, under the inspiration of the Spirit, in the name of God or the risen Christ, so that the ‘I’ of the oracle was the divine person addressing the church through the prophet”. Oracles are in the beginning (Rev. 1:8), the letter to the churches (Rev. 2-3), and the ending (Rev. 22:12-13).

Prophecy is also foretelling, predicting the future (1:1,3).

Revelation 1:1-3



- “John must normally have been active as a prophet in the churches to which he writes. The seven messages to the churches reveal detailed knowledge of each local situation . . . John was no stranger to these churches but had exercised a prophetic ministry in them and knew them well.” (Rev. 2-3)

Revelation 1:1-8



- What kind of book is Revelation (1:11; 22:10)?

Revelation 1:1-8



- *What kind of book is Revelation?* (vs. 11)

Prophetic (1:3).

Apocalyptic: end of the world (1:7).

Letter (1:4). “Grace **to** you and peace **from** . . .”
was the common letter greeting in John’s time.

Revelation 1:1-8



- Since Christians have many disagreements about Revelation, is the book worth studying?

Revelation 1:1-8



- *Since Christians have many disagreements about Revelation, is the book worth studying?*

The person who reads Revelation is blessed (vs. 3).

The person who listens to Revelation is blessed (vs. 3).

The person who lives out Revelation is blessed (vs. 3).

- In John's time, Revelation was read to people since many people were illiterate.

Revelation 1:1-8



- What world does John take his reader to?

Revelation 1:1-8



What world does John take his reader to?

- Revelation expands the reader's world in two ways:
 - (1.) space: into heaven (Rev. 1:4)
 - (2.) time: into the future (Rev. 1:7)
- In other words, Revelation opens the reader's world to ***divine transcendence***.
- transcend = rise above limits (in Revelation, limits are space and time).

Revelation 1:1-8



“The bounds which Roman power and ideology set to the readers’ world are broken open and that world is seen as open to the greater purpose of its transcendent Creator and Lord. It is not that the here-and-now are left behind in an escape into heaven (space) or the eschatological (last things) future, but that the here-and-now look quite different when they are ***opened to transcendence.***”

Revelation 1:1-8



“The world seen from this transcendent perspective, in apocalyptic vision, is a kind of new symbolic world into which John’s readers are taken as his artistry creates it for them. ***But really it is not another world.*** It is John’s readers’ concrete, day-to-day world seen in heavenly (space) and eschatological (future last things) perspective.”

Revelation 1:1-8



Life Change

- Despite all the disagreements, study Revelation for the blessing.
- Use Revelation to open your world into God's transcendence.

Revelation



Session 2

1:4-20

Neighbor Nudge



- Tell a story when you weren't ready for something.

Revelation 1:4-8



- Why does John only write to seven churches?
 - “Numbers carry symbolic significance in Revelation, and the number seven represents completeness or fullness. John writes to seven important and strategic historical churches in Asia, and these seven also represent all the other churches in Asia and likely the universal church as well.”

Revelation 1:4-8



- “Grace *to* you and peace. . .”
was the common letter greeting in John’s time (vs. 4).
- Who do grace and peace come from?

Revelation 1:4-8



- Who do grace and peace come from?
 - From “him who is and who was and who is to come” (vs. 4). This is God the Father, who lives forever and sits on His throne (Rev. 4:9-11).
 - From “the seven spirits who are before His throne”. This is most likely the sevenfold Holy Spirit. Seven likely means “the full and complete work of God’s Spirit as well as the Spirit’s connection to the seven churches.”
 - From “Jesus Christ” (vs. 5). Jesus is a faithful witness by always pointing people to God. Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. He defeated death, and because He was resurrected, we will be resurrected too (1 Cor. 15:20). Jesus is the ruler of kings on earth.

Revelation 1:4-8



- Who do grace and peace come from?
 - Grace and peace come from the Trinity: God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son (Jesus).

Revelation 1:4-8



- What has Jesus done for us?
 - He loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood (vs. 5). Jesus shows His love for us when He died for us on the cross.
 - He made us a kingdom (vs. 6). God is our king, and we are His servants.
 - He made us priests to God the Father (vs. 6). As priests, we have presence with God because He lives in us.

Revelation 1:4-8



- How should we respond to all Jesus has done for us?
 - Give him glory and dominion forever and ever (vs. 6)
 - Giving Jesus glory and dominion looks like making Jesus king of our lives and being His servants (Rev. 1:1).

Revelation 1:4-8



- Who is coming with the clouds? (vs. 7)
 - John is still talking about Jesus (vs. 5)
 - “As he (Jesus) 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 of the end of the age?’
 - And Jesus answered them. . . ‘Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.’ (Matt. 24:3-4; 30)
 - **Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man.**
 - “Clouds are a common Old Testament symbol for God’s glorious presence.”

Revelation 1:4-8



- **What will Jesus' return look like?**
 - **Jesus' return is unknown.** “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:36-37).
 - **Jesus' return is imminent,** meaning it could happen soon (1:1). Christians have believed this since John's time. “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (22:20).

Revelation 1:4-8



- **What will Jesus' return look like?**

(Acts 1:11)

- **Jesus' return will be bodily.** He will come back in his resurrected, perfect, human body.

(vs. 7)

- **Jesus' return will be visible.** Everyone will see him. . . even the dead. Roman soldiers, who crucified Jesus and have been dead for thousands of years, will see Him. Every tribe, even on the most remote of all ocean islands, will see Him.

Revelation 1:4-8



- What will Jesus' return look like?

(vs. 7)

- **Jesus' return will cause mourning.** Many unsaved people will mourn because they know Jesus has come to judge them (Rev. 20:11-15).
- If Jesus returned today, would you mourn?

Revelation 1:4-8



(vs. 8)

- God calls Himself. . .
 - The Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
 - the one who is (present), was (past), and is to come (future).
 - the Almighty
- These names reveal that God is. . .
 - eternal (no beginning and no end).
 - completely in control of all history.
 - more powerful than any Roman emperor.

Revelation 1:9-11



(vs. 9)

- Tribulation is when the kings of this world persecute God's kingdom.
- After trying to boil John alive, the Romans exiled John to the island of Patmos. "Most likely the Roman authorities viewed him as a political threat and exiled him in hopes of hindering the church's influence in Asia Minor." John and the churches are experiencing tribulation together.
- In Jesus, John and the churches find God's kingdom and patient endurance in the midst of tribulation.

Revelation 1:9-11



(vv. 10-11)

- “John is said to be ‘in the Spirit’ four times in Revelation, and on each occasion he receives a heavenly vision (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).”
- In John’s visions, he hears God speak and sees things that God wants him to see.
- The Lord’s Day was Sunday, the first day of the week.
- Voice like a trumpet: trumpets are a sign of the end times. (Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).

Revelation 1:12-20



(vv. 12-13)

- John sees seven golden lampstands, which are the seven churches.
- John sees someone “like a son of man” among the lampstands.
- Jesus called himself the son of man (Matt. 24:3-4; 30). John sees Jesus.

Revelation 1:12-20

- What does Jesus look like?



(vv. 13-15a)

- Clothing of long robe, golden sash (likely means king and/or priest)
- White Hair (likely means wisdom)
- Eyes like fire (likely means judgement)
- Feet like burnished bronze (likely means purity)

Revelation 1:12-20



• What does Jesus look like?

(vs. 15a-16)

- Voice like roaring waters (likely means strength)
- Right hand held seven stars (likely commands angels)
- Mouth and sword (likely means truth and judgment)
- Face like the sun (likely means glory)

Revelation 1:12-20



- Why does John fall down like he's dead?

(vv. 17-18)

- Because he's afraid. He should be. He's a sinner, and he's just seen Jesus, the perfect Son of God!
- But Jesus commands John not to fear. **John can see Jesus and not be afraid of Him.**
- Jesus died, is alive, and holds the keys of Death and Hades (realm of the dead, not hell).

Revelation 1:12-20



BIG Idea

- Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready?

Revelation 1:12-20



Life Change

- Be ready for Jesus' soon return (Matt. 24:44)
- Will you mourn Jesus' return? (Rev. 1:7)
- Do you long for Jesus' return? (Rev. 22:20)

Revelation



Session 3

2:1-7

Neighbor Nudge



- **What's something you know really well?**
(Examples: Jurassic Park, soccer, Tik Tok challenges, animals, etc.)
- **What's something you don't know well but you want to?**

Revelation 1:12-20

- What does Jesus look like?



(vv. 13-15a)

- Clothing of long robe, golden sash (likely means king and/or priest)
- White Hair (likely means wisdom)
- Eyes like fire (likely means judgement)
- Feet like burnished bronze (likely means purity)

Revelation 1:12-20



- What does Jesus look like?

(vs. 15a-16)

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Revelation 1:12-20



- Why does John fall down like he's dead?

(vv. 17-18)

- **The Jesus John sees in his vision is very different from the Jesus John saw when Jesus was on earth.** John is afraid of this different Jesus. He's so afraid, that he falls down like he's dead! Jesus' glory is no longer hidden from John's eyes. John, a sinner, sees Jesus for who He truly is: the perfect Son of God!

Revelation 1:12-20



- Should John be afraid of Jesus?

(vv. 17-18)

- Jesus died, is alive, and holds the keys of Death and Hades (realm of the dead, not hell). When Jesus died and rose again, He defeated sin, Satan, and death so that humanity might be with God. This is why Jesus commands John not to fear! **Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, John can see Jesus and not be afraid of Him!**

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - To: **the angel** of the church in Ephesus

Why is the letter being written to an angel? Do churches have angels? Does Bethany have an angel?

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 1)



- A letter
 - To: **the angel** of the church in Ephesus
 - In Revelation, “angel” = heavenly being, not humans
 - The angel could be a guardian angel (Daniel 10:13-21; Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15).
 - The angel identifies with the church, serves the church, and represents the church before God (Rev 8:3-4; 19:10; 22:9).

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter

- To: the angel of the **church in Ephesus**
- Ephesus was the Roman capital in Asia Minor.
- Over 250,000 people lived in the city.
- Ephesus was a cosmopolitan seaport city.

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - To: the angel of the **church in Ephesus**
 - The temple of Artemis (the Roman mother goddess) was in Ephesus. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Thousands of priests and priestesses were at the temple. Artemis worship was a booming business (Acts 19:23-40).

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 1)



- A letter
 - To: the angel of the **church in Ephesus**
 - “Emperor worship was also a dominant influence in Ephesus, which was the leading center of the imperial cult in Asia Minor. A temple to Emperor Domitian (likely the emperor when Revelation was written) was constructed in AD 89/90, featuring a giant statue of an emperor (either Domitian or Titus) that stood over twenty-five feet tall.”
 - **The Christians of Ephesus faced enormous social and financial pressure to participate in the worship of the emperor.”**

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - From: he who holds the seven stars in his right hand. . .
- **What does it mean that Jesus holds the seven stars (angels) in His right hand?**

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 1)

- Stars = angels (1:20)
- Jesus holding the stars (angels) in His right hand shows that He controls them.



Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - From: he. . . who walks among the seven golden lampstands.
- **What are the seven golden lampstands?**

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- Lampstands = churches (1:20)
- The lampstand as a symbol of the church comes from Zechariah's vision of faithful Israel (God's people) as a menorah or lampstand **reflecting the light of God's presence in the temple** (Zechariah 4:2-11).
- **The church shines God's light in a dark world.**

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - From: he. . . who walks among the seven golden lampstands.
- **What does it mean that Jesus walks among the seven golden lampstands (churches)?**
 - **Jesus is present with the church. He lives within our hearts.**

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 1)

- A letter
 - From: he. . . who walks among the seven golden lampstands.
- **What are the lampstands' (the church's) source of light?**
 - **Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12).**
 - **We are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16).**
 - **We have light because Jesus walks with us (Rev 2:1).**

○ **The moon isn't a light. It reflects the light of the sun.**

○ **In the same way, the church is like the moon. We don't have our own light. We are the light of the world when we reflect Jesus' light.**



Revelation 2:1-7

(vv. 2-4)



- **What is the church in Ephesus doing well?**

Their works:

- **Toil/hard work.**
- **Patient endurance.** Here, patient endurance means to keep shining Jesus' light even when it's hard (vs. 3)
- **Test people who say they have a message from God.** The church in Ephesus tested traveling messengers who claimed to be apostles (people sent from God) by comparing God's Word with what these apostles said. The church found traveling messengers to be false. **This church knows God's Word well.**

Revelation 2:1-7

(vv. 2-4)



- **What is the church in Ephesus not doing well?**
 - Though they know truth, they are not loving well. Not loving well can look like not loving God and people.
 - God wants the church to know truth and love God/people.
 - Love is sacrificing yourself for the good of others (John 3:16).

Revelation 2:1-7

(vv. 2-4)



- **How can knowing truth make it hard to love God/people?**
 - Knowledge can make us feel more superior than others. When you know something that someone else doesn't, it can be easy to think, "I'm better than they are." When we think this way, we aren't loving people, and therefore, not loving God (1 Corinthians 8:1-3).

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 5)

- “Remembering how God’s Spirit once worked in their hearts producing genuine love could lead to a change of attitude and behavior (repentance). True repentance is connected in this instance with doing the works they did at first- **acts of love accompanying their passion for truth.**”

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 5)



- **What does Jesus mean when He says that, if the church does not repent, He will come and remove their lampstand from their place?**
 - Removal of the lampstand = God's judgment
 - God's judgment is "the immediate danger of the church coming under the influence of the surrounding pagan culture and losing their identity as a church. This is not (ironically) because they became lax in their pursuit of truth but because they had forfeited love in the process."

Revelation 2:1-7



“Without love the congregation ceases to be a church.”

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 6)



- **What is the church in Ephesus doing well?**

They hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which Jesus also hates.

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 6)



Nicolaitans:

- “Group of false teachers. . . who are trying to redefine the faith to allow Christians to fit in with (and perhaps profit from) the surrounding culture with its idolatry, immorality, deceit, and false worship.”

Revelation 2:1-7



(vs. 7)

- “Since every church is charged to ‘hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**,’ it’s likely that each church was to focus on its own specific message but also to hear what Christ says to the other churches.”

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 7)



How does a Christian conquer?

- Conquer means to beat someone/something in battle. Christians are in a spiritual war against Satan and his demons (Ephesians 6:12). We need this spiritual war mentality: following Jesus is a fight against Satan and his demons.

Revelation 2:1-7

(vs. 7)



What is the reward to the conqueror?

- Eating from the tree of life.
- “Those who overcome will be allowed to eat from the tree of life first created for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden but withheld because of their sin (Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24). In the final paradise of God, the people of God will be allowed to eat from the tree of life, symbolic of eternal life (Rev. 22:2, 14).

Revelation 2:1-7



BIG IDEA:

**God wants the church to know truth
and to love God/people.**

Revelation 2:1-7



Life Change:

- Know God's truth.
- Be on guard against false teachers.
- Love God/people.