

LESSON 1 & 2

Introduction and Revelation 1–3

Taught by Dr. J. Scott Duvall · Follow along with the video and fill in the blanks

Introduction and Revelation 1

Revelation is a very strange book!

Two common responses: 1.

2.

A promising third way

What is the context of the book?

“Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. (1:4–5)”

Important questions to keep asking:

- Who wrote the book? When was it written? Why was it written?
- What was the situation when it was written?
- How does Revelation communicate its message?
- How should we interpret the book? How is the book organized?

Danger of ignoring the context

Who wrote the book?

The author simply identifies himself as “John” (1:1, 4, 9; also 22:8–9) — John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, and the author of the Gospel of John.

He shares three things in common with his readers (v. 9):

When and why was it written?

- Two choices for the date: early date (Nero) or late date (Domitian)

Revelation answers the most basic of all questions:

Revelation creates a transforming vision of spiritual reality.

How does Revelation communicate its message? (1:1–3, 10–11)

A prophetic-apocalyptic letter.

- 1. A letter to seven churches and beyond (1:10–11)
- 2. A prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18–19) — predicts God’s plans for the future and proclaims God’s truth in the present
- 3. An apocalypse (1:1) — picture language that gives hope to people living through a crisis; real but rarely literal

How should we interpret the book?

- 1. We must take seriously the message to the original readers (22:18–19).
- 2. We must take the picture language seriously but not always literally.

Revelation communicates at several levels: vision (what John saw), text (the words on the page), referent (what it refers to in real life), rhetorical (the impact on the hearer).

- 3. Focus on the main theological message of each vision; resist the temptation to know every detail with certainty.

With each section ask: What is the big idea, the main thing?

How is the book organized? (1:19)

“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. (1:19)”

Expect repeating and overlapping themes, growing in intensity. Revelation spirals forward. Three series of judgments and three interludes (7:1–17; 10:1–11:13; 12:1–14:20).

Outline: 1:1–8 Introduction · 1:9–20 John’s vision of the risen Christ · 2–3 The seven churches · 4–5 The heavenly throne room · 6:1–8:1 Seals · 7:1–17 Interlude 1 · 8:2–11:19 Trumpets · 10:1–11:13 Interlude 2 · 12–14 Interlude 3 · 15–16 Bowls · 17:1–19:5 The destruction of Babylon · 19:6–20:15 The final victory · 21:1–22:5 The new creation · 22:6–21 Conclusion

Session 2: The Churches — Revelation 2–3

John receives the vision while exiled to Patmos (1:9–11). Seven churches represent all churches, and each letter is Jesus’s evaluation of the church.

Three main sources of pressure/persecution: 1.

2.

3.

Revelation speaks to Christians facing pressure and persecution as well as those compromising and selling out to avoid trouble.

The same pattern in each letter

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- Command to John to write · Description of Jesus · Commendation of good works
 - Accusation related to sin · Exhortation and warning OR encouragement
 - Admonition to listen to the Spirit · Promise to the overcomers

Highlights from each letter

2:1–7 Ephesus

2:8–11 Smyrna

2:12–17 Pergamum

2:18–29 Thyatira

3:1–6 Sardis

3:7–13 Philadelphia

3:14–22 Laodicea

Two important realities

1. “Tribulation”

2. “Overcome”
