

Wednesday Night Adult Bible Study

Revelation 1:1-8: Exulting in Christ as We Reflect His Image

| Key Background Information for the Book of Revelation | |
|---|--|
| Author | John, The Beloved Disciple |
| Date | Roughly AD 90 during the reign of Domitian |
| Genre | Apocalyptic Prophecy within a Letter |
| Audience | The Seven Churches of Asia |
| Provenance | Patmos in Exile |

Answering Some Important Questions

What are we reading?

¹ *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,* ² *who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.* (Revelation 1:1-2 ESV)

- **Apocalypse:** Reveals that which is hidden—namely the spiritual realm of existence undiscernible through human wisdom.
- **Prophecy:** Foretelling and forth-telling—Describing future events in order to speak to the present.
- **Letter:** There is a specific audience with a specific context that speaks to the Church at large.

Revelation generally speaks of future events that at times reflects/sheds light on past events and this current age—namely the cross and its impact on the church.

Overarching Story: On Earth as it is in Heaven and The Greater Exodus

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10 ESV)

One of the common themes throughout the book is the folly of putting one's confidence in the wealth, pleasures, and power structures of this world. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, the church proves to be susceptible to these same temptations and needs to be reminded often that this world is not our home. Its hope not our hope. Its pleasures not our pleasures. Revelation testifies of a greater hope, a richer joy, and a better home with Christ our King.

Why study it?

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. (Revelation 1:3)

Joy is promised to churches who read it and are transformed by its message. While Revelation often speaks of future events, each vision is meant to affect the way we live today. The purpose is not to satisfy curiosity, but to conform us more into the image of Christ by the power of the Spirit.

Revelation speaks powerfully to churches living in:

- Cultures captivated by sex and money (the pleasures of this world).
- Places filled with false teachings.
- Times marked by political turmoil and injustice.
- Seasons of suffering and despair.

Dangers to Avoid (Svigel)

1. False teaching
2. My way or the Highway
3. Who Knows so Who Cares
4. This-is-that Syndrome
5. The Dating Game
6. End Times Obsession
7. Fearful Fretting

Seeing the Lord

⁴ 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 kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. 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." (Revelation 1:4-8 ESV)

"seven spirits" = The Holy Spirit

It could either be a reference to the perfection and fullness of deity of the Holy Spirit or a reference to Isaiah's Sevenfold Spirit of the Lord who rests upon the Messiah or both.

And the Spirit of the LORD¹ shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom² and understanding³, the Spirit of counsel⁴ and might⁵, the Spirit of knowledge⁶ and the fear of the LORD⁷. (Isaiah 11:2 ESV)

Who Jesus is:

Jesus is the faithful witness.

- The perfect revelation of the Father. John continues the idea of Christ being one with the Father.
- The perfect lamb of God who was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- The perfect model set forth for believers to look toward and imitate.

Jesus is the firstborn of the dead.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ESV)

Jesus is the sovereign king of Kings.

Glorying in the Work of Christ:

Jesus loves us.

Jesus has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests.

Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead.

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10 ESV)

- He will comfort the repentant.
- He will destroy the wicked.

Seven Applications to the Book of Revelation:

1. **Believe the Gospel.**
2. **Replicate Christ's witness.**
3. **Hope in Christ's resurrection.**
4. **Rest in Christ's Sovereign Rule.**
5. **Live out Christ's salvation in the church and the world as God's Kingdom of priests.**
6. **Exalt and exult in Jesus Christ.**
7. **Evangelize the lost.**

Believing in the Trinity

We believe in one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons.

The Father is God.

The Son is God.

The Spirit is God.

The Father is not the Son.

The Son is not the Spirit.

The Spirit is not the Father.

"Kingdom here refers not just to a place, but in parallel with priests, to an action." – G.K. Beale