

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH VICTORIOUS

A Survey of the Book of Revelation
by Chris Reeves
- Part 1 -

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Style: “*The revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1:1). This book, like Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, is apocalyptic in nature (Gr. *apokalupsis* = uncover, unveil, reveal). It was delivered or “signified” (ASV) to John in signs, symbols, figures, and visions which he “saw” (1:1,2,11,19; etc.). Apocalyptic literature encourages and comforts the afflicted.
- B. Recipients: “*His servants*” (1:1,4,11; 22:6,16,21). NT Christians were experiencing persecution at the end of the first century and they needed a message of comfort and consolation (1:9; 2:9-10,13; 6:9-11; 7:14; 11:7; 12:17; 13:15; 15:2; 16:6; 18:24; 20:4).
- C. Author: “*His servant John*” (1:1,4,9; 22:8-9). John, the apostle, was the author. His message is from God (1:2), a prophecy (1:3; 22:7,10,18), revealed in the Spirit (1:10; 2:7; 4:2).
- D. Time: “*Things which must shortly come to pass*” (1:1; 22:6,7,10,12,20). John also wrote, “*the time is at hand*” (1:3; 22:10). The book deals with past events surrounding persecuted Christians, c. A.D. 95-96 (Rev. 1-20), and future events in the judgment day (Rev. 21-22).
- E. Purpose: “*Blessed is he that reads ... they that hear ...and keep the things*” (1:3; 22:7,14). This revelation was meant to be a practical admonition to comfort persecuted Christians and encourage them to remain faithful in their obedience to Christ. It was not meant to be a book of hidden meanings or a book of strange and curious events in the future.
- F. Theme: Overcoming with the Lamb (2:7,11,etc; 5:5; 12:11; 15:2; 17:14; 20:5-6; 21:7).
- G. Outline: Introduction (Rev. 1), **SEVEN** Churches (Rev. 2-3), Intermediate Visions (Rev. 4-5), **SEVEN** Seals (Rev. 6-8), **SEVEN** Trumpets (Rev. 8-11), More Intermediate Visions (Rev. 12-14), **SEVEN** Bowls of Wrath (Rev. 15-20), and the Final Outcome (Rev. 21-22).

II. THE CHURCH’S LIFE IN CHRIST (REVELATION 1 - 3).

The NT church at the end of the first century was severely persecuted by Rome. These persecuted Christians needed reassurance and confidence. God (1:8) and Jesus (1:5-6) reassured these persecuted Christians by reminding them that they are in control. Revelation 1 introduces a triumphant, majestic, glorified, and radiant Christ (1:12-18) to a persecuted church. Jesus provided assurance (1:17-18) to his suffering saints. (Note **THE LORD’S DAY** in 1:10. Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord!)

- A. Christ the Triumphant Ruler (Revelation 1).
 - 1. Christ communicates with his church (1:1-3).
 - 2. Christ cares for his church (1:4-8).
 - 3. Christ comforts his church (1:9-20).

Because of systematic and widespread persecution from Rome, some Christians were forgetting their life in Christ and becoming like the world around them. These Christians were threatened with cold-heartedness, compromise, corruption, and complacency. They needed a reminder that Christ is the spiritual life of the local church; he is in their midst; he knows all (1:13,20; 2:1,23). Before Jesus judges the sinful world (Revelation 6-20; see 19:15), he will first judge his own sinful people (Revelation 2-3; see 1:16; 2:5,12,16,22-23; 3:3). In each of the seven letters, Jesus reminded the local churches of three

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things: 1) the position HE holds (salutation, identification), 2) the place THEY have (commendation, condemnation, counsel), and 3) the prize BOTH share (call to hear, promise, reward).

B. Christ the All-Knowing Judge (Revelation 2 and 3).

1. "I know" ... Ephesus: the lost love church (2:1-7).
2. "I know" ... Smyrna: the poor rich church (2:8-11).
3. "I know" ... Pergamum: the courageous compromising church (2:12-17).
4. "I know" ... Thyatira: the grossly tolerant church (1:18-29).
5. "I know" ... Sardis: the living dead church (3:1-6).
6. "I know" ... Philadelphia: the open door church (3:7-13).
7. "I know" ... Laodicea: the rich poor church (3:14-22).

III. THE CHURCH'S SECURITY THROUGH CHRIST (REVELATION 4 - 8).

The Roman vengeance and persecution upon NT Christians, at this point, would cause Christians to doubt God's plan. Is God in control? Has God lost to Domitian? These persecuted Christians needed to know if they were safe and secure. They were safe and secure because the Almighty God (4:8,11) and the Saving Jesus (5:5,12,13; see 6:1) are in control. Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord! Revelation 4:1 - 8:5 introduces a worthy Christ to a persecuted church. He will judge the world of sinners (6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 16-17; 8:1) and he will secure his saints. First, there is security in heaven because God is sovereign (Revelation 4 - 5). Second, there is security on earth because Christians are sealed (Revelation 6:1 - 8:5).

A. Christ the Worthy Lamb - Security in Heaven (4-5).

1. Because a reigning God is on his throne and in control (4:1-11; note that praise increases).
2. Because a redeeming Lamb is beside the throne and in control (5:1-14; praise increases).

B. Christ the Wrathful Lamb - Security on Earth (6-7; 8:1-5).

1. Because the sinners are judged (6:1-17; 8:1-5).
 - a) The first seal opened – powerful military conquest (6:1-2).
 - b) The second seal opened – painful persecution and bloodshed (6:3-4).
 - c) The third seal opened – severe economic hardship and poverty (6:5-6).
 - d) The fourth seal opened – punishment through death, famine, and wild beasts (6:7-8).
 - e) The fifth seal opened – souls of faithful martyrs cry out (6:9-11; see 20:4-5).
 - f) The sixth seal opened – partial destruction and wrath upon sinners (6:12-17)
 - g) The seventh seal opened – seven trumpets and a divine response to prayers (8:1-5).
2. Because the saints are sealed (7) – an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal.
 - a) The saints safe and sealed on earth (7:1-8; see 6:17; 9:4; 14:1).
 - b) The saints saved and serving in heaven (7:9-17; see 22:3-4).

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. Christians serve a triumphant (2 Cor. 2:14) and comforting Christ (2 Cor. 1:4-5).
- B. Christians in local churches need to remain pure and faithful; Jesus knows all (Heb. 4:13).
- C. Christians are safe and secure because God is in control (Psa. 99:1), he knows his own (2 Tim. 2:19), and he will vindicate his saints (Rom. 12:19).
- D. If you want to be victorious, you need to respond to Jesus' blood in baptism (Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14), remain faithful (2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 7:14-17), and pray to God often (5:8; 8:3).