

# THE REVELATION TO JOHN

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Introductory outline of Revelation

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  - a. Introduction (1:1-8)
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### B. Comments on the value of Revelation

1. Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Thoughtful Bible students agree almost universally that we are living near the end of the age, and that at any moment the outline of prophetic events preserved for us in Scripture will begin its course of fulfillment. The world will then rush rapidly through all of the scenes of history which God has written in advance . . . The book of Revelation is the book for the present hour.*
2. Mark Hitchcock, *Revelation is an important book to study if for no other reason that it is the capstone of God's self-revelation to man . . . it is also important because it reveals and reaffirms many of the great doctrines of Scripture . . . One final reason to study Revelation is that it's the only book of the Bible that contains a special blessing for those who read it and keep the things written in it (Revelation 1:3).*
3. Charles Ryrie, *The book of Revelation is especially significant because it concerns "things which must soon take place." We would not know many of these things if the book of Revelation were not in the Bible . . . John was commanded not to seal the book (22:10), and those who read it are promised a special blessing (1:3). Apparently, therefore, the book was expected to be understandable and helpful to those who read it. It is an apocalypse (literally, a revelation), designed not to mystify but to clarify.*
4. J. B. Smith, *This is pre-eminently a book for a troubled age, for an age in which the darkness deepens, fear spreads over all mankind, and monstrous powers, godless and evil, appear on the stage of history (as they appear in this book).*

### C. Comments on the Prologue

1. John Walvoord, *The prologue presents concisely the basic facts underlying the entire book: its subjects, purpose, and angelic and human channels. It is most important to observe that the book was primarily intended to give a practical lesson to those who read and heed its contents.*
2. Thomas Constable, *The first chapter of Revelation contains a prologue to the book that is similar to the ones in John 1:1-18, the prologue to John's Gospel, and 1 John 1:1-4, the prologue to John's first epistle . . . This prologue has the effect of showing that Jesus Christ is the culminating figure in human history (cf. Heb. 1), and it prepares the reader for the revelation of His future acts that constitute the bulk of this book.*

### D. Keys to proper interpretation of Revelation.

1. Mark Hitchcock identifies three keys to help readers understand the book's meaning.
2. Consider the following:
  - a) Key 1: *The Lord meant for us to understand Revelation.*
    - 1) The word *revelation* means to *uncover* or *unveil*.
    - 2) Mark Hitchcock, . . . *the purpose of the book is not to hide the truth from us or make it confusing, but for Jesus Christ to uncover or take the lid off the future so we can know about the end times.*
    - 3) God promises a blessing in Revelation 1:3 for those who study this book, *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.*

- b) Key 2: . . . realize that most of what is in the book is not new information.
- 1) Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The majority of things found in the first twenty chapters of Revelation are found elsewhere in the Old Testament. Only the last two chapters deal with things totally new. If this is true, what is the importance of the book of Revelation? The Old Testament prophecies are scattered through the books of Moses and the various prophets and Writings. It would have been impossible to develop these prophecies into any chronological sequence of events. The value of the book of Revelation is not that it provides a lot of new information, but rather that it takes the scattered Old Testament prophecies and puts them into chronological order so that the sequence of events may be determined.*
  - 2) Mark Hitchcock, *Revelation contains 404 verses, and 278 of them allude back to the Old Testament. Revelation has no direct quotations from the Old Testament, but contains a total of 550 allusions or references (which appear in 278 verses) back to the Old Testament. So a significant portion of Revelation brings together content from the Old Testament into a comprehensive sequence of events.*
- c) Key 3: . . . correctly interpret the symbols in the book.
- 1) Mark Hitchcock, *Some say that the presence of so many symbols means that the book cannot be understood at all . . . The other extreme is unchecked speculation and sensationalism that manipulates all the symbols so they represent certain people or events of our time - in other words, the reader makes the text mean whatever he wants.*
  - 2) Two steps for interpreting symbols.
    - a) They represent something literal.
      - 1] Paul Benware, *It is the task of the interpreter to investigate this figurative language to discover what literal truth is there.*
      - 2] Mark Hitchcock, *Symbols are not just symbols of nothing. They aren't meaningless. They aren't just symbols of symbols. They refer to something that is literal.*
    - b) All symbols in Revelation are explained in the book or in other books of the Bible.
      - 1] Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The meaning of symbols will not be determined by speculation.*
      - 2] Always check the context for proper interpretation.
      - 3] Note Revelation 1:20, *As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.*
      - 4] J. B. Smith, *Therefore the conclusion many be draw n that symbols occurring in the book are either explained in the text or m ay be understoof from their use in previous Scriptures. The inference follows that whatever is not thus explained is to be taken as literal.*
  - 3) Concerning numbers and time periods in Revelation.
    - a) Are numbers literal, symbolic or a mixture of the two?
    - b) As noted in Revelation 1:20, the numbers were used literally to represent seven angels and seven churches.
    - c) Mark Hitchcock, . . . *it is best to take the numbers at face value unless there is some clear indication to the contrary, or taking the number literally makes no sense.*
    - d) John Walvoord, *Everywhere there is a number with a time indicator in Revelation, such as days, months and years, one finds nothing in the text which would compel the reader to understand this to by anything other than a conventional use of numbers.*

<b><i>THE THINGS PAST, REVELATION, 1:1-20</i></b>
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A. Introduction (1:1-8)

The importance of this book is evident in the opening verses. The Revelation is from Jesus Christ to the apostle John who is to record what he will see. A blessing is promised all who read the book. The book is addressed to seven churches in Asia whom John begins to encourage in 1:4-8. The purpose of encouragement in the face of persecution is evident in the introduction as John reminds the readers of Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, 1:5, who will one day return for his own, 1:7.

1. The prologue (1:1-3), *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. 3 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.*
  - a. The subject of Revelation - *The revelation of Jesus Christ.*
    - 1) According to Revelation 1:1, the revelation was given by the Father through the Son.
      - a) John Walvoord, *The word "revelation" is a translation of the Greek apokalypsis, meaning "an unveiling" or "a disclosure." From this word comes the English "apocalypse."*
      - b) Matthew 11:27, *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*
      - c) John 1:18, *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*
      - d) Warren Wiersbe, *John's prophecy is primarily the revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of future events. You must not divorce the Person from the prophecy, for without the Person there could be no fulfillment of the prophecy.*
    - 2) Robert Vacendak, *The book contains the word of God as well as the testimony of (or about) Jesus Christ in His role as Judge of the churches (chaps. 2-3), of the inhabitants of planet earth (chaps. 6-19), and of the lost of all the ages (chap. 20). In the subsequent chapters (21-22), the effects of His judgments are seen in the new heavens and new earth.*
    - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Revelation is an open book in which God reveals His plans and purposes to His church. When Daniel finished writing his prophecy, he was instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book" (Dan. 12:4); but John was given opposite instructions: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:10). Why? Since Calvary, the Resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, God has ushered in the "last days" (Heb. 1:1-2) and is fulfilling His hidden purposes in this world.*
  - b. The timing of Revelation - *the things that must soon take place . . . the time is near*
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *The idea behind the Greek words translated soon (en tachei) is probably that the events to be revealed could happen at any time without delay.*
    - 2) Revelation 22:6, *And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."*
    - 3) Merrill Tenney, *The phrase translated 'shortly' (Greek: en tachei) means 'without delay,' indicating that the judgments of which the book speaks may begin at any time.*
    - 4) Robert Thomas, . . . *for the first time the events predicted by Daniel and foreseen by Christ stood in readiness to be fulfilled [cf. Dan. 2:28-29, 45]. Therefore, John could speak of them as imminent, but earlier prophets could not.*
    - 5) Robert Mounce, *The Greek word translated time [v. 3] . . . describes a period of time rather than a point in time . . . Near is the translation of the Greek word eggus, meaning at hand, imminent. The fulfillment could begin at any time, not that it definitely would begin soon.*
    - 6) Mark Hitchcock, *These events are near in the sense that they are the next events on God's prophetic calendar . . . The imminency of these events, emphasized in Revelation from its commencement to its close, calls each generation to possess an attitude of expectancy and readiness.*
    - 7) Adrian Rogers, *We are always living on the edge of eternity. And we are to be living on 'ready.'*
  - c. The delivery of Revelation - *God gave him . . . by sending his angel to his servant John who bore witness . . . to all that he saw*
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *The chain of communication was from God the Father, to Jesus, to an angel, to John, to Christians . . . This is the first of some 67 references to angels (messengers) in Revelation.*
    - 2) The writer John gave faithful testimony of the revelatory communication of what he saw and heard.
    - 3) John Walvoord, *The angel messenger is not named but some believe he was Gabriel, who brought messages to Daniel, Mary, and Zechariah (cf. Dan. 8:16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:26-31).*
    - 4) Christians are the recipients of the transmission of truth.
    - 5) Warren Wiersbe, *The book came from God to John, no matter what the various means of communication were; and it was all inspired by the Spirit.*

- 6) Grant Osborne, *The phrase “made it known” contains the idea of revealing via signs or symbols. It likely refers to the symbols used in the visions to depict the imminent events that will lead to the end. So Christ will show John and the churches the symbols that will signify God’s actions in present and future and bring world history to its God-intended conclusion . . . John tells his readers that these visions constitute “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus.” There are two implicit sentences here emphasizing the heavenly origin of the visions—God has spoken his word, and Jesus has testified through these divinely inspired pictures to the churches.*
- d. A blessing from God - *blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it*
- 1) Thomas Constable, *This is the first of seven blessings that John mentioned in Revelation (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14; cf. Luke 11:28).*
  - 2) Arno Gaebelein, *The blessing is promised to all His people who give attention to the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
  - 3) G. R. Beasley-Murray, *A ‘revelation’ of the end of history is given not for the satisfaction of curiosity, but to inspire living in accordance with the reality unveiled.*
  - 4) John Walvoord, *The prologue concludes with a blessing on each individual who reads the book as well as on those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it. The implication is that a reader will read this message aloud to an audience. Not only is there a blessing for the reader and the hearers, but there is also a blessing for those who respond in obedience.*
  - 5) Warren Wiersbe, *God’s people were going through intense persecution and they needed encouragement. As they heard this book, its message would give them strength and hope. But even more, its message would help them examine their own lives (and each local assembly) to determine those areas needing correction. They were not only to hear the Word, but they were also to keep it—that is, guard it as a treasure and practice what it said. The blessing would come, not just by hearing, but even more so by doing (see James 1:22–25).*
  - 6) Grant Osborne, *These visions are not cute stories or imaginative fictions meant to entertain. This is a prophetic book of comfort (to the saved) and warning (to the unsaved) that calls the saints to accountability. Moreover, it is not enough just to “hear” these truths; until one “keeps” or obeys them, the Christian is disobedient to God and headed for judgment.*
2. A blessing on those who are addressed (1:4–6)
- a. John addresses seven Asian churches (4a), ***John to the seven churches that are in Asia:***
- 1) Notes
    - a) On John the writer
      - 1] Charles Ryrie, *The Hebrew idioms in the book, the authority of the author in relation the churches, the use of distinctively Johannine terms such as ‘logos’ and ‘Lamb of God,’ and the corroboration of Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, and Clement all affirm that the apostle John was the author of the book.*
      - 2] Merrill Tenney, *He [John] must have been well known in the Asian churches and have been regarded as one of their teachers, perhaps the most outstanding leader.*
    - b) On the address to actual churches
      - 1] Charles Ryrie, *The fact that John specifically addressed the seven local churches in Asia Minor prevents anyone from saying that the book is simply a piece of poetic idealism.*
      - 2] Merrill Tenney, *The reality of the destination prevents regarding Revelation simply as a piece of poetic idealism, with no reference to place or to time. While it may be intended for the church of the entire age, it is sufficiently concrete in its outlook and purpose so that it has a positive application to an existing situation.*
    - c) On the literary style of Revelation, Thomas Constable, *I prefer to think of it as an epistle containing prophecy, much of which is apocalyptic.*
  - 2) Identification of the seven churches
    - a) Ephesus (2:1-7)
    - b) Smyrna (2:8-11)
    - c) Pergamum (2:12-17)
    - d) Thyatira (2:18-29)
    - e) Sardis (3:1-6)
    - f) Philadelphia (3:7-13)
    - g) Laodicea (3:14-22)

### 3) Location

- a) They were in the Roman province of Asia in what is now the southwest corner of Turkey.
- b) Kendall Easley, *Christianity first came to Asia through the evangelizing ministry of Paul, around A.D. 55. Note Acts 19:10, This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*
- c) Grant Osborne, *It is possible they were chosen because these cities lay on the major Roman roads through the province, and they were intended to be representative of the rest of the churches. The cities are addressed in the geographical order by which a courier could drop off copies of the book traveling on these Roman roads. Each letter addresses the historical situation and needs of each church in turn. At the same time, they are intended to typify the problems of all churches.*



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- b. A blessing on those addressed (1:4b–5a), ***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, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.***

#### 1) The content of the blessing

- a) The Apostle John proclaims *grace and peace* to the churches.
- b) John Walvoord, *The words grace and peace concisely summarize both a Christian's standing before God and his experience. "Grace" speaks of God's attitude toward believers; "peace" speaks both of their standing with God and their experience of divine peace.*
- c) Kendall Easley, *Grace and peace to you had become a standard Christian greeting by the time John wrote. Grace ("unconditional and undeserved kindness") is the great privilege of the Christian age. The Book of Revelation begins and ends with grace (see 22:21), as do all thirteen letters of Paul, but the word grace occurs nowhere else in Revelation. Peace (wholeness and well-being) was the great privilege of the Old Testament age (Num. 6:26), in Hebrew, shalom. Christians share in all the blessings God has to offer.*
- d) Merrill Tenney, *The greeting, "grace and peace," is a combination found frequently in the epistles of Paul. Probably it does not reflect "Pauline influence" here so much as it does the general church usage which Paul followed in an earlier day, and which he doubtless introduced in the new Christian communities that he founded.*

#### 2) The source of grace and peace is the triune God.

- a) God the Father
  - 1] He is described as *him who is and who was and who is to come.*
  - 2] Charles Ryrie, *The Father eternally existed and always will exist (the phrase "who is and who was and who is to come: occurs also in 1:8, 4:8; 11:17; 16:5).*

- 3] Thomas Constable, *This description stresses God's eternity and the continuity of His sovereign dealings with humankind.*
  - 4] Kendell Easley, *In changing, perilous times, Christians take heart that the God they serve transcends time.*
  - 5] Grant Osborne, *God is given a unique title, "the one who is and was and is to come." This is a paraphrase of the divine name "Yahweh," defined in Exodus 3:14–15 as "I am who I am." It occurs four more times in the book (Rev 1:8; 4:8; 12:17; 16:5), and means that God is sovereign over past, present, and future; he is Lord over history and guides the affairs of mortal humanity according to his will . . . It seems the powers of evil, in particular the Roman Empire, are actually in control. This title corrects that erroneous conclusion, saying in effect, "The God who controlled the past and is in charge of the future is actually sovereign over the present situation, even though it may not seem like it.*
- b) The Holy Spirit
- 1] John Walvoord, *The seven spirits probably refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. 11:2–3; Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), though it is an unusual way to refer to the third Person of the Trinity.*
  - 2] Thomas Constable, *The seven Spirits who are before God's throne may refer to the seven angels of the seven churches (chs. 2–3) or to seven principal angelic messengers (cf. v. 20; 8:2, 6; 15:1; 1 Kings 22:19–21; Heb. 1:14) . . . Another popular possible view is that the phrase refers to the Holy Spirit in His fullness (cf. 5:6; Isa. 11:2–3; Zech. 4:2–7). If so, this title fills out a reference to the Trinity in this sentence (cf. 3:1, 4:5; and 5:6).*
  - 3] Michael Kuykendall, *His [John's] emphasis on the Trinity [in Revelation] exceeds any other NT document. The Spirit plays major roles as the one sent by the Father and Son to be their eyes in the world; to indwell, discipline, and disciple believers to witness for Christ; and to lead in worship. Ultimately, the Spirit joins the Father and Son in delivering end-time judgment on unbelievers and experiencing the fellowship of eternal bliss with believers.*
  - 4] Kendell Easley, *This unique phrase—the seven spirits before his throne—occurs only in Revelation and probably refers to the Holy Spirit,*
  - 5] Grant Osborne, *The use of "seven" probably stems from Isaiah 11:2 in the Septuagint (which adds a seventh virtue, "godliness," to the six in the Hebrew Bible) and Zechariah 4:2, 10 (which has seven lamps as the "eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth"). In Zechariah 4:6 the "LORD Almighty" says these things take place "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." In Revelation 5:6 this "sevenfold Spirit" has "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth," a further allusion to Zechariah 4:6. In light of this background, it is best to translate, "the sevenfold (or perfect) Holy Spirit."*
- c) Jesus Christ
- 1] Charles Ryrie, *Christ is designated as (1) the faithful Witness (summarizing His life on earth, cf. John 7:7; 8:18; 1 Tim. 6:13), (2) the Firstborn from the dead (His resurrection), and (3) the Rule of the kings of the earth, which refers to His future reign on earth.*
  - 2] Warren Wiersbe, . . . *Jesus Christ is seen in His threefold office as Prophet (faithful Witness), Priest (First-begotten from the dead), and King (Prince of the kings of the earth).*
  - 3] Robert Thomas, . . . *the origination of all three expressions from Psalm 89 reflects a major authorial intent to direct attention to the fulfillment of the promises made to David regarding an eternal kingdom in 2 Samuel 7.*
  - 4] Kendell Easley, *He is the faithful witness, a reference to Jesus' work as a Prophet, revealing God's Word both during his earthly ministry and in the present book. Next he is the firstborn from the dead, a reminder of his death and resurrection. Perhaps we may think of Jesus' work as Priest here; he is the one now in heaven on behalf of his people . . . Finally, he is the ruler of the kings of the earth, an obvious reference to his sovereign role as King, in contrast to the Roman emperors who thought they were in control.*
  - 5] Merrill Tenney, *These three titles relate also to the general structure of Revelation. "The faithful witness" describes Christ's relation to the churches, whom He warns faithfully of their sins and to whom He gives some of His greatest promises. "The firstborn of the dead" describes His role as the arbiter of destiny, opening the seals and effecting redemption because He died and rose again to ascend the throne of authority. "Ruler of the kings of the earth" is His title as He puts all enemies under His feet and asserts His lasting sway over the world. These titles summarize His entire position in the present period of time.*

- c. A dedication to Jesus Christ (5b-6), *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.*
- 1) Notes
    - a) Charles Ryrie, *The book is dedicated to Christ, who was its Author and about whom it speaks.*
    - b) Warren Wiersbe, . . . *of the three Persons of the Trinity, it is to Jesus Christ alone that this book is dedicated. The reason? Because of what He has done for His people.*
  - 2) John ascribes three things to Jesus.
    - a) He *loves us*
      - 1] His love is present and continuing.
      - 2] Kendell Easley, *The verb love is a form that could be translated “keeps on loving.”*
      - 3] Warren Wiersbe, *This parallels the emphasis in John’s Gospel.*
      - 4] Grant Osborne, *The first aspect worthy of praise is Christ’s love. This emphasizes his ongoing love rooted in his past loving sacrifice on the cross, his present love for his followers, and his future love in defeating the cosmic powers on our behalf.*
    - b) He *has freed us from our sins by his blood*
      - 1] Charles Ryrie, *Blood is the evidence of His death, which is the basis for our cleansing.*
      - 2] Warren Wiersbe, *This parallels the message of John’s epistles (see 1 John 1:5ff).*
      - 3] Grant Osborne, *Sin, as in Romans 6, is an invading army that seeks to enslave us, but the blood of Christ has liberated us.*
    - c) He *made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father*
      - 1] John Walvoord, *Believers are now a kingdom and priests with the purpose now and forever of serving God.*
      - 2] Charles Ryrie, *“Kingdom” views believers corporately and anticipates our association with Christ in His future reign (5:9-10), whereas “priests” sees them individually ministering to our Lord forever.*
      - 3] Warren Wiersbe, *As a grand climax, Christ has made us a kingdom of priests, and this is the emphasis of Revelation. Today, Jesus Christ is a Priest-King like Melchizedek (Heb. 7), and we are seated with Him on His throne (Eph. 2:1–10).*
      - 4] Kendell Easley, *An important Old Testament designation for the Israelites after their exodus from Egypt, kingdom and priests (Exod. 19:6), is now transferred to “us.”*
      - 5] Grant Osborne, *The people of God are kingdom not only as being part of the realm in which God rules but also of ruling with Christ in it—in other words, we are both kingdom citizens and royalty within it, a frequent emphasis in the book (see 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).*
  - 3) A call of praise to Jesus
    - a) John Walvoord, *This prompted John to express a benediction of praise and worship culminating with Amen (lit. so be it).*
    - b) Grant Osborne, *The natural response of his followers to this wondrous list of Christ’s loving gifts to them can only be high praise: “to him be glory and power forever.” The attribution of glory and power occurs also in 5:13 and 7:12, and centers on Christ’s dominion and authority over his created world.*
  - 4) Comments
    - a) Warren Wiersbe, *In His love, God called Israel to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:1–6), but the Jews failed God and their kingdom was taken from them (Matt. 21:43). Today, God’s people (the church) are His kings and priests (1 Peter 2:1–10), exercising spiritual authority and serving God in this world.*
    - b) Kendell Easley, *As any author might dedicate a book to one specially interested or to whom he owes a debt of gratitude, so John inscribes his dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ whose redemptive work is the foundation and subject of the book.*
    - c) Grant Osborne, *The great victory over the cosmic powers and the basis of our salvation is Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross, as seen here and in 5:5–6 . . . Our victory depends entirely on our submission and reliance on him, but in him that triumph is completely certain. Thus Christ alone has the glory because he alone is truly sovereign and majestic over this world.*

3. The theme (1:7), *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.*
  - a. Notes
    - 1) Charles Ryrie, *Verse 7 is the text, theme, or keynote of the book and is a reference to Christ's second coming.*
    - 2) Hall Harris, *The theme of the book is the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over all enemies and the establishment of His earthly kingdom.*
    - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *The overriding theme of the Book of Revelation is the return of Jesus Christ to defeat all evil and to establish His reign.*
    - 4) Merrill Tenney, *"He cometh with the clouds" alludes to Daniel 7:13: "There came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man," who received the kingdom from God.*
    - 5) Kendell Easley, *The Second Coming will be with the clouds—representing the majesty of the presence of God (Ps. 104:3).*
  - b. The time
    - 1) It is after the Tribulation.
    - 2) Matthew 24:29-30, *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 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.*
  - c. The event
    - 1) every eye will see him even those who pierced him
      - a) Zechariah 12:10, *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.*
      - b) Tim LaHaye believes every eye means everyone, even those who have died. Note, Matthew 26:64, *Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."*
      - c) John Walvoord, *Though the literal executioners and rejectors of Christ are now dead and will not be resurrected until after the Millennium, the godly remnant of Israel "will look on [Him], the One they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10).*
      - d) Warren Wiersbe, *The event described in Revelation 1:7 will be witnessed by the whole world, and especially by a repentant nation of Israel (see Dan. 7:13; Zech. 12:10–12). It will be public, not secret (Matt. 24:30–31), and will climax the Tribulation period described in Revelation 6–19.*
      - e) Grant Osborne, *The conversion of the nations and the judgment of the nations develop side by side throughout the visions. It is likely that this verse introduces the two paths the nations will take throughout the book . . . Many among the nations will turn to Christ and find forgiveness . . . the majority among the nations who turn against God and his offer of salvation . . .*
    - 2) all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him
      - a) Charles Ryrie, *"Tribes" is not limited to Israel but includes all the peoples of the earth*
      - b) Thomas Constable, *Representatives from all the tribes of the earth then will mourn over Him, because at that time the earth will be in rebellion against Him (cf. Matt. 24:30). These tribes represent all human beings, not just Jews.*
    - 3) The means by which all will see Him
      - a) There are two reasonable answers to how everyone will see Jesus when He comes.
      - b) Mark Hitchcock, *First, it could be that Jesus will reflect His glory or even the image of His coming around the earth. His adiance could circumscribe the earth so that all will see Him . . . Some suggest that the second coming will be gradual, transpiring over a period of time, possible as long as 24 hours.*
      - c) John Walvoord, *Taken as a whole, the second coming of Christ is a majestic event, not instantaneous like the rapture, but extending over many hours. This perhaps explains why everyone can see it, because in the course of a day, the earth will rotate and the entire world will be able to see the approach of Christ accompanied by the hosts of heeaven, which will descend to the earth in the are of the mount of Olives (Zec. 14:4).*

- 4) The affirmation
  - a) Thomas Constable, *“So it is to be.” Amen provides firm assurance that the coming of Christ will happen as prophesied in this verse.*
  - b) Mark Hitchcock, *While we can’t be certain about the exact details of how Christ’s return will happen, we can be sure it will happen, and that when it does, every eye will see Him.*
  
4. The divine confirmation (1:8), ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”***
  - a. Some believe the speaker in verse 8 is God the Father but others, Jesus Christ.
  - b. Charles Ryrie, *It is probably God verifying the contents of this prophecy. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, signifying the completeness of God. He is the Lord God, eternally existing, and all-powerful.*
  - c. Mark Hitchcock, *Some red-letter translations record these words in red, indicating that they are the words of Jesus (NASB, ESV, NKJV). It this is correct, it’s a clear statement of the full deity of Christ.*
  - d. John Walvoord, *Because the last book of the Bible is primarily concerned with the revelation of Jesus Christ and His glory at the time of the Second Coming, it is fitting that these eight verses of introduction should introduce Christ as the eternal glorious God.*
  - e. Warren Wiersbe, *God the Father is called “Alpha and Omega” in Revelation 1:8 and 21:6; but the name also is applied to His Son (Rev. 1:11; 22:13). This is a strong argument for the deity of Christ. Likewise, the title “the first and the last” goes back to Isaiah (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12–13) and is another proof that Jesus is God.*
  
5. Conclusion
  - a. Thomas Constable, *This whole introduction (1:1–8) points to the main event of the following revelation: the return of Jesus Christ at His second coming (19:11–16). It also presents the triune God, who is and who was and who is to come, as Lord of time (past, present, and future), faithful to His promises, and powerful enough to bring these prophecies to pass.*
  - b. Merrill Tenney, *In summary, then, the book of Revelation is a disclosure of Christ and of His relation to the world process of redemption, extending beyond the day in which it was written. It is given especially for the benefit of Christ’s servants, that they may be prepared for the strange events ahead of them, and that they may understand God’s purpose for them.*