

# The Book of Revelation

When God Speaks

Chapter 1:1-8

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

If God were to speak to you from heaven's throne what do you think He would say? What would be on His mind? Exactly what would He want to talk about? And consider this: what if it was the last time He would speak, His final word, what is it He would want us to know? Well I'm glad to tell you we don't have to wonder because God has given us an answer. We call it the book of Revelation, God's great unveiling concerning His favorite subject: **the Lord Jesus Christ.**

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

In 404 verses with 285 Old Testament citations and as many as 550 Old Testament allusions we discover not a closed book but an open book, one to be studied not shunned, read and not rejected. Daniel 12:4 said “shut up and seal the book until the time of the end” but Revelation 22:10 says “seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.” Revelation is to be explored, examined and embraced, for in it we discover a marvelous message whose theme is the theme of the Bible: the greatness and the glory of Jesus. From 1:1 to 22:21 the apocalypse is from Jesus and about Jesus. As He is the focus of the Bible, so He is the focus of this book.

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation 1:1-2 (CSB)

The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw.

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation 1:3-4 (CSB)

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.

4 John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation 1:5-6 (CSB)

and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has set us free 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.

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation 1:7-8 (CSB)

Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
and every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him.  
And all the tribes of the earth  
will mourn over him.  
So it is to be. Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

When God Speaks....

1. Long for the blessing that comes from obedience (vs. 1-3)



# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

- Revelation is the only book in the Bible that directly promises a blessing to its recipients (v.3).
- This word from heaven is intended to bless, comfort and encourage God's people to be faithful in the midst of trials and difficulties.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

**The revelation** – apokalupsis – title of the book, meaning to “disclose, unveil, uncover, reveal.” This is its only occurrence in the book. It is God pulling back the curtain in order to show us something previously hidden and unknown. An apocalypse is highly symbolic, but the symbols stand for real truth and real things. What is the source and theme of this great unveiling?

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

**What must soon take place** – (7 times in Revelation) emphasizes imminency, expectancy, it could happen soon. Hebrews 1:2 teaches it is the last days. 1 John 2:18 says it is the last hour. James 5:8 says “the coming of the Lord is at hand.” James 5:9 – “Behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

“**By sending his angel**” – Angels (67 times; ¼ of the total in Scripture are in Revelation). Signified means to sign-i-fy, to show by sign and symbol, vision and revelation.

John the apostle is described as:

1) **His servant** (doulos)

2) **Who testified** (one who sees, speaks, and even suffers [true of John]) A. The Bible is faultless (“word of God,” 1:2, 9; 3:8, 10; 6:9; 12:11; 17:17; 19:9; 20:4) B. The witness is faithful (“**whatever he saw**”), nothing is withheld.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

“**Blessed**” (makarios; cf. Matthew 5 and the Beatitudes) First of seven beatitudes or blessings that appear in the book (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14)

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

## The Beatitudes in Revelation

The book of Revelation includes seven beatitudes, or “blessings” (cf. Matt. 5:3–12; Luke 6:20–23). The beatitudes in 1:3 and 22:7 promise a blessing for faithfully appropriating the book (i.e., reading the prophecy aloud or obeying its message). Every other beatitude promises an eschatological blessing at the final consummation: experiencing the presence of God (implied in 14:13), being prepared for Christ’s return (16:15), receiving an invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb (19:9), sharing in the first resurrection and remaining untouched by the second death (20:6), and enjoying the privilege of eating from the tree of life and entering the eternal city (22:14). The beatitudes, much like the promises to the victors in Revelation 2–3, summarize the challenges and rewards of overcoming.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 1:3 (CSB)

**Blessed** is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 14:13 (CSB)

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write: **Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so they will rest from their labors, since their works follow them.”



# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 16:15 (CSB)

“Look, I am coming like a thief. **Blessed** is the one who is alert and remains clothed so that he may not go around naked and people see his shame.”

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 19:9 (CSB)

Then he said to me, “Write: **Blessed** are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!” He also said to me, “These words of God are true.”

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 20:6 (CSB)

**Blessed** and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 22:7 (CSB)

“Look, I am coming soon! **Blessed** is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

Revelation 22:14 (CSB)

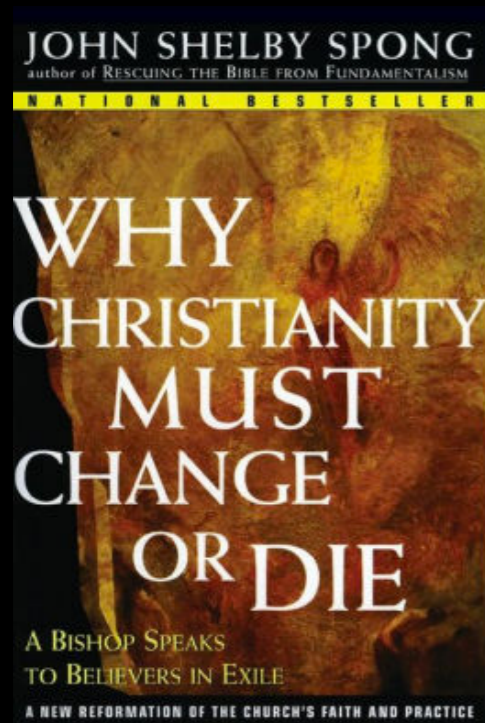
“**Blessed** are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

“**the one who reads aloud** (cont)” – public reading was sacred and special; few could afford even a portion of Holy Scripture. It was also one of the tests of canonicity.

“**The words of this prophecy**” - (7 times in Revelation) John knew this revelation to be the very Word of God. It was a revelation from Jesus Christ. It was a word of prophecy. It came from the one true God. It was therefore infallible and inerrant (Without any errors and incapable of leading one astray).

# John the Disciple vs. John Shelby Spong



How different is the attitude of John the disciple to that of another John, the Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong who says, “There is no God external to life ... The Bible is not the word of God in any literal or verbal sense. It never has been!

The Gospels are not inerrant works, divinely authored... All evangelical and missionary activities designed to convert the heathen are expressions of our sense of superiority and our hostility toward those who are different... I would choose to loathe rather than worship a deity who required the sacrifice of his son.” (John Spong,

Why Christianity Must Change or Die.)

# 1. Long for the blessing that come from obedience (vs. 1-3)

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

**Those** (plural) **hear** (pre. tense) and **keep** (pre. tense)

- What we hear we must heed.
- What we believe we must live.

Why? Because the time (karios), the season, epoch, era is near, imminent.

Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”



# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

## Revelation 1:4-6 (CSB)

John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has set us free 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.

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

When God Speaks....

1. Long for the blessing that comes from obedience (vs. 1-3)
2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

- God loves the church. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:25). Though she may become sick and even unfaithful, God's interest in her never fails.
- 7 churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) all in the vicinity of Ephesus, 7 (54 times in Revelation) emphasizes fullness, perfection, completion. These 7, literal, historical churches in and around Ephesus are representative of the church universal and various local churches throughout history.
- **Grace** (unmerited favor) and **peace** (God's blessing of wholeness and well-being).
- From whom do these blessings flow? Answer: Our Triune God, and notice what we learn about each member...

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### The Father is perfect in His person.

1:4 Him who is and who was and who is to come.

- This title is only in Revelation (cf. 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). It is a paraphrase of the I AM of Exodus 3:14 He is the God of the present, past and future! (cf. Heb. 13:8); title always begins in the present tense!
- Counters a pagan formula to Zeus of that day: “Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus will be.”
- William Mounce, “An uncertain future calls for one who by virtue of His eternal existence exercises sovereign control over the course of history.”

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### **The Spirit is perfect in His presence. 1:4**

**Seven** (perfection, completeness, or fullness) cf. Isa. 11:2; Zech. 4:1-6! Not angels as some argue, but the perfect Holy Spirit. (There were 7 archangels in Jewish literature).

**Before the throne** – the Spirit who energizes and equips the churches for service is the Spirit who proceeds from the very throne of God. We are indeed made sufficient for every assignment, every challenge, for the God who lives in us (1 Cor. 6:19) is the God who is before the throne! The one who is in heaven is the one who is in us!

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### **Who are the 7 Spirits of Revelation 1:4?**

Revelation presents the Holy Spirit as one person (3:6, 13; cf. Eph. 4:4), but he also appears as “seven spirits” (cf. Rev. 3:1; 4:5; etc.), representing perfection, and as “seven torches of fire” (4:5) and “seven eyes” (5:6) to express his omnipresence and omniscience.

Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2463.

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### Who are the 7 Spirits of Revelation 1:4?

There are two possible meanings: 1) a reference to Isaiah's prophecy concerning the 7-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2); or 2) more likely, it is a reference to the lampstand with 7 lamps (a menorah) in Zechariah—also a description of the Holy Spirit (See note on 4:5; 5:6; Zech. 4:1–10). In either case, 7 is the number of completeness, so John is identifying the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1992.

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### **The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6**

Son is placed last in this greeting for emphasis; the focus is on Him. There are five tremendous truths concerning what He does for us that are highlighted and explained.

a. Perfect in His revelation (1:5) – **the faithful witness** – the reliable, credible, trustworthy testifier. By his perfect life in the past He showed us the character of God (John 1:18). By his present activity among the churches He shows us the concern of God. When you see Jesus you see God (John 14:9). He and His Father are one (John 10:30). He is the faithful witness, perfect in His revelation.



## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6

b. Perfect in His resurrection (1:5) – **The Firstborn from the Dead.** Jesus did what no person has ever done: He died, rose from the dead, and stayed alive. However, He is not the only one who will do this, He is simply the firstborn, the first of a new order, the pledge and promise of our resurrection! (cf. 1 Cor. 6:14). Firstborn is messianic and Davidic (cf. Ps. 89:27 – “And I will make Him [Messiah] my Firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”) Jesus is first in time but also in importance as God’s firstborn over death. Jesus himself puts it in perspective in Revelation 1:18 when He says, “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6

c. Perfect in His rule (1:5) – **ruler of the kings of the earth** is a recurring theme in Revelation (11:15; 17:15; 19:16).

- Kings of the earth could be 1) earthly rulers, 2) Satan and his subjects or 3) believers. Probably 1 and 2 are in view.
- Revelation 19:16 brings this aspect into focus. No thing is over Jesus, all things are under Jesus.

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6

d. Perfect in His redemption (1:5) • **Loves us**. He loves us continually now and forever.

- **Has set us free** - loosed once and for all. • Loosed is best translation and views sin as a chain. Some have the word washed, views sin as a stain.

- He has loosed us from sins penalty -> justification. He is loosing us from sins power -> sanctification. He will loose us from sins presence -> glorification.

## 2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)

### The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6

e. Perfect in His reign (1:6) – Bloodfreed sinners now flood His kingdom. To be forgiven would be enough, oh, but He does so much more.

- Revelation 1:6 is an echo of of Exodus 19:6 (CSB) **and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.** These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.” John declares our induction into Christ’s kingdom as priests (serve). All believers are now (**made**) a **kingdom** and **priests** (cf. 1 Peter 2:5). We reign with Him, have free access to Him and serve for Him.
- Such a glorious salvation can result only in worship, praise and adoration: glory and dominion forever Amen!

## **2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)**

**The Son is perfect in His provision. 1:5-6**

**Fairest Lord Jesus (4th stanza)**

“Beautiful Savior!  
Lord of the nations!  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, Praise, adoration,  
now and forevermore be Thine! Amen.”

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

When God Speaks....

1. Long for the blessing that comes from obedience (vs. 1-3)
2. Listen to the message from the Triune God (vs. 4-6)
3. Look for the coming of the Lord (vs. 7-8)

# When God Speaks - Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation 1:7-8 (CSB)

Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
and every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him.  
And all the tribes of the earth  
will mourn over him.  
So it is to be. Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

### 3. Look for the coming of the Lord (vs. 7-8)

#### His coming will be seen. 1:7

His coming will be seen. 1:7 **Look** (25 times in Revelation) – a call to attention. “Look here!” “Behold” “Listen up!” **He is coming** – a Messianic title (cf. Matt. 11:2-3; John 3:31) With **clouds** – literal yes; theologically symbolizes the presence of God (Israel in wilderness, law given at Sinai, the tabernacle and temple, the ascension [Acts 1:9]). Daniel 7:13 and Matthew 24:30 also tells us Christ will return with clouds. **Every eye will see Him** – it will be supernatural, historical, visible and universal.



### **3. Look for the coming of the Lord (vs. 7-8)**

#### **His coming will bring sorrow. 1:7**

1:7 John combines two significant Old Testament Messianic prophecies: Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. - All will see Him coming with the clouds is Daniel 7:13 - They who pierced him is Zechariah 12:10

- In that day Israel will see its Messiah whom it crucified. Many will repent and be saved (Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:25-26; Rev. 7).

### 3. Look for the coming of the Lord (vs. 7-8)

#### **His coming will bring sorrow. 1:7**

- In that day all the tribes of the earth will also mourn. Some will repent, others will simply lament. Mourn literally means “to cut” and was often associated with pagan worship (cf. 1 Kings 18:28) [MacArthur].
- It is a signed, sealed and settled destiny: “Even so. Amen.”
- Jew and Gentile alike worldwide will understand in that day our sin nailed to a cross the Lord of Glory.

### 3. Look for the coming of the Lord (vs. 7-8)

#### His coming will be in strength. 1:8

Four of the many marvelous names of God are mentioned in verse 8 as something of a guarantee that these things will come to pass.

**Alpha & Omega** (A & Z) – emphasizes God's omniscience. The Beginning and the End – emphasizes God's infinity.

**The one who is and who was and who is to come** – emphasizes God's eternity.

**The Almighty** – a title which appears only 10 times in Scripture, 9 in Revelation and once in an Old Testament citation in 2 Cor. 6:18, emphasizes God's sovereignty.

# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

**Daniel 2:28–29** But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. Your dream and the visions that came into your mind as you lay in bed were these: **29**Your Majesty, while you were in your bed, thoughts came to your mind about what will happen in the future. The revealer of mysteries has let you know what will happen.

**Daniel 2:45** - You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation reliable.”

# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:4** John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

Exodus 3:14 God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.”

Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I am the Lord, the first and with the last—I am he.”

# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood,

Psalm 130:8 And he will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Psalm 89:27 I will also make him my firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth.

Isaiah 40:2 “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and announce to her that her time of hard service is over, her iniquity has been pardoned, and she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:6** and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Exodus 19:6 and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.”

Isaiah 61:6 But you will be called the Lord’s priests; they will speak of you as ministers of our God; you will eat the wealth of the nations, and you will boast in their riches.

# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:7** Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.

**Daniel 7:13** I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him.

**Zechariah 12:10** “Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at me whom they pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for him as one weeps for a firstborn.

**Zechariah 12:12** The land will mourn, every family by itself: the family of David’s house by itself and their women by themselves; the family of Nathan’s house by itself and their women by themselves;

**Zechariah 12:14** all the remaining families, every family by itself, and their women by themselves.



# Old Testament Connections

**Revelation 1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Amos 3:13 Listen and testify against the house of Jacob—this is the declaration of the Lord God, the God of Armies.

Amos 4:13 He is here: the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, the one who makes the dawn out of darkness and strides on the heights of the earth. The Lord, the God of Armies, is his name.

Exodus 3:14 God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.”

Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I am the Lord, the first and with the last—I am he.”