

# I.

# Why we need the Book of Revelation

## Revelation 1: 1-9



What have been your impressions of this Book?



Revelation 1: 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.



Blessing for obedience is the key in verse 3, glory is the goal, verse 6, and hardship the context in verse 9 (Gatiss)



### BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Read Revelation 1: 1-9

**1. What sort of Book is Revelation?**  
What should we expect?

**2. What is the historical context of the original readers, and the author?**

Verse 4

Verse 9

Why the “seven” Churches? (verse 4)

### THE MAJESTIC GOD

Read Revelation 1: 4-8

**3. What is said of God in these verses?**

**4. What do verses 5-6 mean in practice?**



### **Main Point and Purpose**

*John is told to write a prophetic, revelatory, letter to seven churches, for their blessing (if obeyed) in the midst of hardship, and for the glory of Christ.*

### **Details**

**1-3** The introduction to the whole book, which is an unveiling or revelation (Greek: *apokalypsis*) of hidden things, given by God to Jesus Christ and then for the benefit of God’s servants shown via an angel to the Apostle John, who testifies that he has written it all down.

(God→Jesus→Angel→John→us)  
Verse 3 pronounces a blessing on those who read aloud this book to the churches, and on those who hear and obey. Note that the book is called both a revelation and a prophecy: it both unveils things previously hidden and speaks God’s word to the current situation. Both revelation and prophecy *can* also have reference to the future, although neither means *just* a word about the future. The future is in mind to some extent, however, as it says the time for these things to start happening (but not necessarily finish) is close, motivating readers to keep what is written here and persevere in obedience. The purpose of the book is not merely to tantalise curious minds but to promote obedience to God (see 22:7). **4-5** Revelation is also a letter and begins as many other New Testament letters do by announcing the sender and the recipients, with an opening blessing or greeting (“grace and peace”). This blessing comes not from “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (as in Ephesians 1:2 for instance) but from “the one who is, who was, and who is to come”, a distinct title for God emphasising his

**5. What was the early Church to do with this Book? (verse 3) & what should we do with this Book, even if it is hard going?**

**6. Is this Book any different to any other Bible Book?**

**7. How does John's view of God in verses 4-8 encourage us in hardship, uncertainty, and suffering?**

**8. How should we best encourage Christians going through times of persecution?**

THINK &  
APPLY

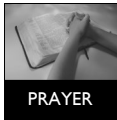
Read Revelation 1:9

**How should we prepare ourselves for such circumstances?**



**Resources for further study**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Poythress, V | The Returning King P&R 2000  |
| Gatiss L.    | Revelation Notes from St. Helens Bishopgate<br>Central Bible Focus |
| Barnet P.    | Apocalypse Now and Then  |



PRAYER

Praise God for the challenges raised Pray for others in your group  
by God's word through this study



FAMILY  
DISCUSSION

How do we apply this passage in our daily life?

eternity. It also comes from the "seven spirits" or sevenfold spirit which is a slightly enigmatic and potentially confusing reference to the Holy Spirit. It's background is probably Isaiah 11:2 (the Messiah is endowed with the Spirit of the LORD, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and godly fear = 7 fold); and also Zechariah 4:2-7 where the seven lamps of verse 2 are identified with the one Spirit of God in verse 7. To complete the Trinitarian reference, the blessing of grace and peace also comes from Jesus Christ, who himself was a witness to the truth (like John in verse 2), was first to be raised from the dead, and rules over all earthly kings. 5-8 There then follows a doxology (giving of praise and glory) especially to Christ who loves his people, has freed them, and who has given his saved people the privileged status of being a kingdom of priests (see Exodus 19:6). All this is demonstrated and achieved through his death – it is "by his blood". This reminder of the gospel encourages the seven churches to victory through perseverance, suffering, and faithful witness themselves – and reminds them to give all credit for their salvation to God. Their afflicted lover-saviour is coming back soon, in an obvious and open way, to be received by those who formerly mourned over his death. This alludes to Zechariah 12:9-14 where, as judgment comes on the world, Israel are granted repentance and all tribes mourn for God, who was pierced. This shows that the wailing is probably not the hopeless anguish of the unbelieving world in the face of impending judgment, but the sobriety of penitent sinners awaiting their saviour. They mourn for Jesus, not themselves or their sin. But they will see him! (St Helen's Notes)

**PRAISE GOD** that He is the eternal, one God, three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

**CONFESS TO GOD** that our view of Him, is way too small.

**PRAY** to overcome the temptation not to bear a clear testimony to Jesus in hard times.

**PRAY ALSO** for those Christians undergoing persecution.



READ AHEAD

Next Week:  
Revelations I: 9-20  
The Majestic King