

The King is Coming. Again. Soon. – An Introduction to Revelation

Revelation 1

MPS Jesus is the Sovereign King who is coming again, and who calls Christians to live with priority and urgency to make Him known in all the world.

OBJ Every person can understand a faithful response to Revelation by three questions.

A REVELATION AND BLESSING Revelation 1:1-3

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, ²who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³Blessed 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.

MOVIE A Beautiful Mind (2001), starring Russell Crowe, is a movie set in the mid-20th Century that told the story of famed mathematician and Nobel Prize winner John Nash. In the movie, Nash begins to suffer from paranoid schizophrenia while doing secret work in cryptography. At times in the movie, the cinematography will show his work on a large board and provide a glimpse of what he is seeing, with numbers, letters, and characters moving all around the screen, some emboldened, and others raising from the board.

I believe this is how many Christians perceive approaching the book of Revelation. There is no doubt that Revelation is complex and unique, and presents unique challenges, but it is not only for the theological elites. As a matter of record, some theological elites didn't want to touch it. Revelation is the only book John Calvin never wrote a commentary on. But as we will see, Revelation was written for the church. Any shroud of confusion that surrounds it is not the intent nor design of the author, but rather what arises from misconceptions or the mishandling of the text. [I love how a pastor friend stated it; to understand Revelation, you need to put down the newspaper headlines and take up the Old Testament.](#)

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Revelation is a divine revealing.¹ “The word means the uncovering of something hidden, the making known of what we could not find out for ourselves. It makes plain that the book it introduces is not a book of human wisdom, nor for that matter a discussion of philosophical or theological problems. It is revelation. It is a setting forth of what God has made known. This revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which could mean either that the revelation was made by Jesus Christ or that it was made about him or that it belongs to him. In one way or another all three are true.”² God has not hidden something for us to find but reveals something for us to believe.

Revelation bears witness to testify to Jesus Christ. Revelation culminates the Scriptures, bringing together the Testaments, the Old Testament unveiled in light of the New Testament; “278 or its 404 verses allude to the Old Testament Scriptures.”³ Three types of genres are employed. It is prophecy, implementing both Old Testament prophecy in foretelling what is to come and New Testament prophecy in forthtelling what has been revealed. It is epistle, a letter written to people and churches in an historic setting. And it is apocalyptic, symbolic writing designed to unmask what would otherwise remain hidden. [The combination of three genres make Revelation unique and provide the key for interpreting and understanding.](#)

¹ Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 53. Morris writes, “We should not understand prophecy to mean ‘prediction’. The word does allow for prediction (and there is certainly a liberal element of prediction in this book), but basically it points to divine origin.”

² Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 51.

³ MacArthur, John. [Because the Time Is Near](#). (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), p 7.



Revelation holds blessing for the reader and hearer. John begins by declaring what the Revelation is intended to produce, God's blessing in the believer's life. And this blessing is known as the reader and hearer heed what it revealed. The opening verses conclude with a reference to chronology, but with a sense of priority and urgency in response to the message. "The Lord God has determined them and he will speedily bring them to pass. But this refers to his time, not ours, to the quality of the time rather than the quantity. With him one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Pet. 3:8)."⁴ God is revealing something that those who hear and believe might live in light of this knowledge. "He does not wish merely to stimulate interest but to influence action. Scripture is a guide to conduct as well as the source of doctrine."⁵ Biblical scholar George Ladd describes it in this way, "It is true that the early church lived in expectancy of the return of the Lord, and it is the nature of biblical prophecy to make it possible for every generation to live in expectancy of the end. To relax and say "where is the promise of his coming?" is to become a scoffer of divine truth. The "biblical" attitude is "take heed, watch, for you do not know when the time will come" (Mark 13:33)."⁶ Revelation warns as it invites, to believe what we hear about eternity so to impact the way we live here and now. [The person who wants to receive God's blessing will hear and heed His revelation in Jesus Christ for eternity and live according to it now.](#)

I have titled this series, "The King is Coming. Again. Soon." The King is Coming states the doctrinal conviction that the One who came, Jesus, is King and is coming again. He who came from heaven, bore our sin on the cross, was buried and raised on the third day, and ascended as King is coming again to culminate the full measure of His victory over sin, death, and Satan. We obey because He has conquered sin and empowered us to walk with Him. "Soon" emphasizes the priority of His second Coming in how we live today, as we await His coming. Urgency is not about being anxious. Anxiety about the times comes from a lack of faith, or disobedience.

APPL **WHAT does Revelation call us to give *Priority & Urgency* to in our life?** Christians give priority to the Word of God in our lives, and urgency to live in obedience by faith today. Ask yourself: **How do I give priority to God's Word in my life? Do you seek the Lord in His Word as your source and strength for life, to know and trust Him, to understand His Will and leading from His Word? Or, do you just ask Him to make you feel better about what you choose to do? How do you respond when Word confronts reality of life? When was last time, because of priority, you said "No", or even "Yes" to Lord, regardless of consequences. Do you lead, teach, and follow as a family to seek His Will in all our ways? Do your kids understand that obeying Jesus is our priority, in our decisions, our schedule, and the way we live our life?**

Revelation begins with a blessing for Christians who obey the Lord with priority and urgency; not who say "this is important, but another time", or "we'll get to it later". Priority means first in all, and at all times, in our doctrinal convictions we live life centered on Jesus because of the gospel. Urgency means it matters now, not just one day when, so we take every opportunity to share our hope in Jesus as King. [Today's invitation for every person is to hear and heed; trust in Jesus and walk by faith in Him for the fullness of life, for all eternity.](#)

TRANS Next, we are introduced to the letter's authors, and God's glory in His plan and our participation.

A DIVINE AUTHOR AND HUMAN KINGDOM Revelation 1:4-8

⁴John 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, ⁵and 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 ⁶and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Behold, 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."

⁴ Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 52.

⁵ Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 53.

⁶ George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 22–23.



Revelation is written as a letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor. These are not the only churches in the world at that time, but representative of and intended for all churches of all time. John introduces his letter in the name of the Triune God; “*him who is and who was and who is to come*” refers to God the Father, “*the seven spirits*” is the Holy Spirit, and Jesus set forth as Eternal King. And our Triune God who loves us and has freed us joins us to His divine purpose for His people, making us a kingdom of priests to God on earth. Christians, God’s people, bear witness to that which has been revealed; that Jesus will return, and all will see and give an account to Him. And we know this because the Triune God who is eternal as the Alpha and Omega, is the origin and the culmination of all history. [The Triune God has given His revelation that His glory might be known and made us His kingdom of priests to bear witness on earth to all people of His love and freedom in Jesus Christ.](#)

TRANS John sees the voice speaking to Him.

A VISION OF GLORY WORTHY OF OUR WORSHIP Revelation 1:9-20

⁹I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰As 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.

John acknowledges the reality of this world in light of our new status with God, that we are His kingdom but in a world of tribulation where we are patiently enduring. He records that he was on the isle of Patmos, in political exile for preaching the gospel, when he received the vision. He describes this vision he received by beginning with a voice like a trumpet, commanding him to write what he sees to send to the seven churches. When he turns to see the voice he sees seven golden lampstands. In the middle of the lampstands is one who is striking in appearance, clothed in royal regalia, crowned with white hair of glorious wisdom, eyes like flames of fire, feet of burnished bronze refined by a furnace, and a voice like roaring waters. He held seven stars in his hand, a two-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face too brilliant to for eyes to gaze upon. John immediately fell down in worship. But Jesus lifted him up, removed his fear, revealed the glory of His nature and being, and authority, and commanded him to write. [Jesus brought a message for His church. But first, He drew near to His messenger.](#)

John’s description is not a literal rendering, but more of an effectual one. We are not to think of this description as an actual depiction, but rather a rendering of the effect of Jesus’ eternal glorious rule and reign. The splendor of His glory is overwhelming, of which none can stand before Him, but also of which none who trust in Him will be crushed or destroyed. [John’s first response to Jesus is worship, the effect of overwhelming glory, that strikes fear but turns to joy and gladness.](#)

Of all the ways Revelation has been perceived, approached, and interpreted, this is how John introduces it for us. God’s message is unveiled to see our Triune God for who He is, and because we see Him in exalted glory, to see all else that is in its rightful way. We are invited to behold the glory of King Jesus in His enthroned glory, the Sovereign One who rules and reigns over all things. We are invited to trust and worship Him, as we hear and heed His message. We are sent to declare the glory of His Kingdom to all people that those from every nation, tribe and tongue would come and bow down before Him in glorious worship of His Name. Though we live in the reality of this sin-stained world where we must patiently endure many



hurts and hardships, we serve the Sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lords who rules and reigns over all things. Revelation invites us to respond to King Jesus as He alone is worthy.

OBJ How are we to respond to Revelation? Three questions form our faithful response to Jesus' Revelation.

Question 1: Will you hear God's revelation and heed it as your invitation to trust in Jesus?

Christian and non-Christian alike are called to faith in Jesus Christ as the Sovereign King who has come and freed us and is coming again to take us home. Guard yourself that you do not hear this message to be entertained, nor amused, nor only enlightened, but to be illumined by the Spirit with the light of life and brought into the Kingdom of God to serve and worship Him in this world. The Spirit calls you today to hear and heed, to repent and walk in His righteousness.

Question 2: How will you prioritize God's revelation for your life today and live with urgency to tell all people of our Triune God's eternal truth, "The King is Coming. Again. Soon."

God does not reveal Himself merely to inform, but to be obeyed. His message is not one to put away for one day when you may need it, but to align your whole life to Him through it now. God is calling every person to action for His Kingdom, of which every Christian is a priest now. **Is there any area of your life that you know is not aligned, where you are not living according to the truth of God's Word, any part that is not fully surrendered to Him?** Priority and urgency to obey is the key to God's blessing and the strength of heart in Him.

Question 3: Are you worshiping the Triune God in the glory of His majesty so that His revelation fills your heart and commands your life?

God reveals Himself to fill us up before He sends us out! We are priests of His Kingdom. He reveals Himself to us that He might know the One of whom we proclaim. He calls us to serve His glory by being filled to overwhelming praise and worship. **What are you most overwhelmed by? Are the trials and hardships of this world in which we are called to patiently endure overwhelming to crush you? Or is your heart being filled with an ever-increasing, more glorious vision of Jesus filling your heart that presses you to worship?**

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