

Day 1
August 19



Pray | For the Spirit to provide clarity in reading God's Word

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Nearly every book and commentary on Revelation begins like this: “Revelation is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to understand.” And for good reason – it’s filled with confusing language, images and seemingly endless symbols. But we can read and understand this book, especially its primary themes: judgment and wrath, hope, salvation, and the ultimate victory of Christ. Revelation was written as a letter to be distributed among seven churches within the Roman province of Asia. Its purpose was to encourage believers to remain strong in their faith despite increasing hostility and persecution against Christians by the Roman Empire. While we may not understand every image and symbol in Revelation, we can still be encouraged by John’s vision of our glorious Lord and his ultimate triumph over Satan.



Read | Revelation 1:1-11



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Revelation can be a difficult book to read, especially for those who are relatively new to reading the Bible. What is your experience with reading Revelation? What is most challenging about it?

Verse 1 begins with the phrase, “The revelation of Jesus Christ.” This could mean a revelation from Jesus; a revelation about Jesus; or even that Jesus himself is the revelation. What does this mean to you? How has Jesus revealed himself to you?

In verse 9, John relates to his audience by calling out their shared suffering and endurance in the name of Jesus. Why do you think he introduces himself in this way? Has there been a time when you’ve been encouraged, or encouraged others, through a shared experience?

Day 2
August 20



Pray | For everyone to recognize Jesus as fully man and fully God

THE REVELATION OF JESUS' IDENTITY

John's vision of Jesus in Revelation 1 draws from several Old Testament images of God. He begins by describing not what he saw but what he heard – the authoritative voice of Jesus “like a trumpet,” which is also how God's voice is described in Exodus 19:16. This voice tells John to write down all he sees, reminiscent of the Lord's command to the Old Testament prophets (see Jer. 30:2, Dan. 12:4). When John turns to look, what he sees is rooted in images from the book of Daniel. Most importantly, Jesus is portrayed as both the Son of Man (a title Jesus uses for himself often in the New Testament) and the Ancient of Days (an Old Testament name for God) from Daniel's account. Jesus is not just the exalted Son of Man; his identity is interwoven with God's, affirming the deity of Christ.



Read | Revelation 1:12-18, Daniel 7:9-10 and 13-14



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Why is it important we understand that Jesus is God before we try to understand the book of Revelation? Pay particular attention to Daniel 7:13-14 when considering your answer.

Compare the images of Jesus in Revelation 1 with the descriptions in Daniel 7. Why was it important for John to connect Jesus to the Old Testament in his descriptions of him? How does this add to your understanding of the Story of God in the Bible overall?

Consider the descriptions of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-18: his ‘eyes blazing like fire,’ his face ‘like the sun,’ even the image of him placing his hand on John in comfort. Which of the images is most meaningful to you? Why?

Day 3

August 21



Pray | Give your words of praise and adoration to Jesus

THE REVELATION OF JESUS' GLORY

John's admission of being completely undone when he saw Jesus probably sounds familiar to you. Ezekiel and Daniel, like John, fell to the ground when they saw God's glory. The three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration fell facedown when they heard the voice of God in Matthew 17:6. Imagine an encounter so incredible that it knocks you flat on your face – so amazing that you don't even fall to your knees first, you go completely prostrate! This is what it is to behold the unbearable brightness and beauty, the awesome majesty of our God. John desperately grasps for words to describe what cannot be described. But even if John's words are inadequate to portray Jesus' glory, they are more than sufficient to lead us into worship of him!



Read | Revelation 1:12-16, Ezekiel 1:27-28, Daniel 7:9



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Close your eyes for a few minutes and imagine seeing God on his throne. Put yourself in the scene and think about how you might respond to encountering God. What are your physical and emotional reactions? What do your responses say about your relationship with God?

One interpretation of the description of Jesus' eyes as 'blazing fire' is that his eyes have penetrating insight. What would Jesus see in you right now with that insight? Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you recognize the things in your life that you need healing from or that you need to give to him.

We may never have a vision like John's, but we can see the glory of Jesus in his words, in his sacrifice on the cross, and in his work in our world today. Are you undone at the presence of Jesus in your life? Take some time to think and pray about your response.

Day 4
August 22



Pray | For courage to share the hope of the gospel with others

THE REVELATION OF JESUS' POWER OVER TIME AND DEATH

When Jesus says he is 'the first and the last,' he declares he is the ruler over time. Jesus is 'the first' because he has existed eternally, before time even began. He is 'the last' because he will always exist, long after the end comes and time is no more. Our lives are held in the hands of a God who sees the beginning and end and everything in between, all together at once. Jesus also says he holds the 'keys of death and Hades.' In this world, death is inevitable. But we were not created to die; we were created to live forever as God's image-bearing, glory-unveiling agents on earth. Jesus gave his life to eradicate death – in its physical and spiritual forms – once and for all. Jesus' victory over death is a message of hope we can share with our family, our neighbors, and the world.



Read | Revelation 1:17-18, 1 John 1:1-4, Romans 6:8-10



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Because he has power over time, Jesus stands outside of it, without beginning or end. How might Jesus' power over time give you comfort and hope today?

Even though we know we have eternal life in Christ, we still grieve over death. Yet we do not grieve like those without hope. How does Jesus' power over death shape the way you view death and talk about it with others? Consider listening to the song, "I Will Rise" by Chris Tomlin while you ponder this question.

How do John's words in 1 John 1:1-4, and Paul in Romans 6:8-10, add to your understanding of Jesus' power over time and death?

Day 5
August 23



Pray | To trust in Jesus' promise to be with you

THE REVELATION OF JESUS' PRESENCE WITH US

As we have traced Revelation 1 this week, we have seen Jesus' glory and power. We have seen that he is God in the flesh, and he stands over time and death. Jesus also reveals his presence with us – that he walks among his churches (v.13) and provides comfort for his people (v. 17). However, Jesus' presence is much more than mere comfort; his presence is the raw, unbridled, limitless power of God. Jesus tells us we can go into the world and make disciples without fear because the supreme ruler of the universe is with us. God the Son stepped into history on the greatest mission trip of all time, willingly going to the cross to die for us and reconcile us to himself. We have a glorious Savior who has promised to make all things new, and we get to join his mission and rest in his power to accomplish it. So, what are we waiting for?



Read | Revelation 1:12-20, Matthew 28:16-20



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Think back to the beginning of this week and what your perceptions were of Revelation before studying the verses in Revelation 1. How has the way you view this powerful book changed over the last few days? Thank God for the power of his Word as you close this time in prayer.

Jesus tells John to write about what he has seen, to share what Jesus has already revealed and is about to reveal to him. He gives each of us the same mission, to share with 'all nations' what Jesus has revealed. How has his presence, power, and glory motivated you to be on mission for him?

The message of salvation provides hope and light in what can be a very dark and frightening world. If you are in need of this hope in your life, but you're not sure how to access it, take the time to meet with a pastor or close Christian friend about how to accept the gift of salvation.

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