

## 1. The Gospel From Patmos (1Q 2019—Revelation)

**Biblical material:** Rev. 1:1–8; John 14:1–3; Deut. 29:29; John 14:29; Rom. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; Dan. 7:13, 14.

### Quotes

- The Book of Revelation is about the gospel. The gospel is its central theme. Above all it is speaking of the coming kingdom of God through the victory of Christ at Calvary. *Graeme Goldsworthy*
- Why was the book of Revelation written? It was not written primarily, let me assure you, in order that people might be able to work out the date of the end of the world! That is a very grievous misunderstanding of that book. The book of Revelation was written in order that God’s people who were passing through terrible persecutions and terrible adversity might be able to go on rejoicing. It is a book that showed them the ultimate victory of the Lord over Satan and all the other forces of evil. They were to rejoice. *Martyn Lloyd-Jones*
- One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death, disease, and sin . . . Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees . . . this is a universe at war. *C.S. Lewis*

### Questions

Why is it important to study Revelation in the first place? What is the focus of the book? What would you say to someone who complained that Revelation was “too confusing”? How can we make the themes of Revelation relevant for today? What does Revelation say about God, and how do we make sure this is not a negative picture?

### Bible summary

Rev. 1:1–8 is the key to Revelation. It begins with identifying both the author and the subject—Jesus. It then points to the future in the context of Jesus’ promise to return. John 14:1–3 details the very words of Jesus in making this promise to return. Deut. 29:29 says the secret things of God are revealed to us. In John 14:29 FBV Jesus tells his disciples, “I’ve explained this to you now before it happens so that when it does happen you will be convinced.” Paul writes to the believers in Rome to encourage them, Rom. 1:7. Phil. 3:20 FBV reminds us that “our homeland is heaven, and we’re waiting for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from there too.” Dan. 7:13, 14 talks about the coming of the Son of man.

### Comment

It’s entirely appropriate that the first aspect in our study of Revelation is the gospel. John says very clearly that this is the Revelation of Jesus Christ—which means it’s from him and it’s about him. In all that we study this quarter, let’s never forget that vital perspective: for it’s all about Jesus, and how he brings about the end.

For John, exiled to lonely Patmos, this must have been doubly exciting. He had changed from being a “son of thunder” to “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Now as the very

last of the Twelve, John must have wondered what was going on. He and all his fellow disciples must have wondered when Jesus was going to finish what he had started. Even at the ascension, they asked Jesus if this was the time he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. They had many such Messianic hopes. But one by one they met their end, and still Jesus had not returned. It would have been only natural for John to have been asking along with others in Revelation, “How long, O Lord?”

The answer comes from Jesus himself. He comes as this dramatic end-time figure, the Alpha and the Omega, and gives John this final message. What an experience! What encouragement! Grabbing for a scroll and a pen, John sets about recording what Jesus and the angels tell him. Carried off in vision, he sees for himself the drama unfolding, the prophetic view extending down through history, until it reaches its amazing climax. In the end John sees New Jerusalem descending out of heaven. He hears the many promises—most of all that God will be with them and be their God! He begins to understand that he has been privileged to see what no one else has seen before—the final drama of the ages!

Revelation begins with the highlight—by explaining where all this is leading. The prime focus is on the return of Jesus, That’s where the book begins, and that’s where it ends. So as believers in Christ’s return, this should immediately catch our attention as a book that is of great interest to us.

Let’s see Revelation anew, looking through John’s eyes as if we are seeing and hearing it for the first time. Let’s meet Jesus, the central character and listen to all he has to say to us. And most of all, let us worship at his feet, this amazing God who came to earth to show us what he is really like, to win us back to love and trust, and to heal us from the pain and hurt of sin, making us into his beloved children. May we spend this precious time this quarter, not so much with the beasts and all the imagery, but “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.”

### **Ellen White Comments**

Those who have accepted unpopular truth have always been obliged to make great sacrifices. Persecution has fallen heavily upon some. We have the lives of the apostles as our ensamples; but above all we have the life of Christ our great Exemplar presented before us. The beloved disciple tells us he was banished to the isle of Patmos, “For the word of God, for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” While on that desolate island, to his unspeakable joy, his dear Master and Lord stood before him, the very one with whom he had walked and talked when they were together in the world, upon whose bosom he had learned, whose great heart of love had beat beneath the pressure of his head, whose sufferings he had witnessed, and whose visage had been marred more than the sons of men. {ST, February 28, 1878 par. 17}

Our lesson for the present time is, How may we most clearly comprehend and present the gospel that Christ came in person to present to John on the Isle of Patmos,—the gospel that is termed “the revelation of Jesus Christ”? We are to present to our people a clear explanation of Revelation. We are to give them the word of God just as it is, with as few of our own explanations as possible. No one mind can do this work alone. Although we have in trust the grandest and most important truth ever presented to the world, we are only babes, as far as understanding truth in all its bearings is concerned. Christ is the great teacher, and that which He revealed to John, we are to tax our minds to understand and clearly to define. {CW 29.2}

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