

CHAPTER 6

REVELATION, PART I

Introduction, 1:1-8

Before going into the three main parts of Revelation, John describes the purpose and setting of the book. He also briefly introduces its main themes.

The book introduced, vv. 1-3

v. 1, ἀποκάλυψις *apokalupsis*, “uncovering”

Main theme: things shortly to be

ἐν τάχει *en tachei*, quickly, suddenly

Cf. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Dan 2:29 (uses μετά ταῦτα *meta tauta*, “after these things, as in Rev. 4:1)

God the Father first gave this revelation to the Son

Cf. John 5:20

He signified it (ἐσήμανεν *esemanen*), using signs or words

“His angel”; name not given

Some suggest Gabriel; cf. Dan 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26; Rev 22:16 (“my angel”)

Servant John; 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8

Apostles called servant, Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1

v. 2, John saw: Word of God

Testimony of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:9)

v. 3, Blessing on readers, hearers, keepers

Reader (sg.), hearers (pl.); suggests congregational reading

Time is at hand (near); cf. 22:10 (ἐγγύς *engus*), 20 (ταχύ *tachu*)

Introductory blessing and doxology, vv. 4-6

The blessing, vv. 4-5a

Epistolary form, v. 4a

“From . . . , to”

7 churches, v. 11; ch. 2-3; 22:16

Blessing perhaps reflects Trinity

Father—is, was, is to come; cf. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5

Holy Spirit—7 spirits

Son—Jesus Christ

7 spirits: 3:1; 4:5; 5:6

1) Powerful angels (8:2; perhaps in charge of churches)

2) Holy Spirit (7 = fullness; cf. 1+6 in Isa 11:2)

Christ: Faithful witness, 1:1
Firstborn of the dead, 1 Cor 15:20
Ruler of kings, 17:14; 19:16

The doxology to Christ, vv. 5b-6

Loves us

Loosed us

λύσαντι *lusanti* (loosed), **p**¹⁸ (London, 3rd-4th AD), Aleph, A, C [UBS {A}]

λούσαντι *lousanti* (washed), Byz, P, TR

Made us kingdom, priests

Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:5, 9

The glory and dominion to him

Prelude to the book, vv. 7-8

Christ's coming to establish his kingdom, v. 7

With clouds, Dan 7:13; Matt 24:30 (includes mourning)

Every eye, Mark 13:26

Pierced & mourn, Zech 12:10 (John 19:37)

God's affirmation, v. 8

Alpha and Omega

Cf. v. 17

God: 1:8; 21:6; Isa 44:6

Christ: (1:11); 22:13; cf. 1:17; 2:8

Cf. *TDNT* 1:1-2 comparing with Hebrew אמת *'emet*, "truth"

Aleph—first letter

Mem—middle letter

Tau—last letter

Note. Vv. 4-8 resemble an overture to an opera—a medley, a sample of songs used in the book.

I. Things that are past, 1:9-20

“The things you have seen”

—The vision of the risen Christ

John was instructed to write, first of all, the things which he had seen. This apparently refers to the vision just revealed to him of the risen and glorified Christ, the majestic king and God, about to conquer his enemies and judge the world. This section, with the attributes ascribed to Jesus, provides an excellent proof for the deity of Christ.

John's condition, vv. 9-10a

Exiled on Patmos

In the Spirit

In the Lord's day, ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ *en te kuriake hemera*

κυριακός *kuriakos*, adj. “belonging to the Lord”; used with Supper in 1 Cor 11:20

1) Sunday, Acts 20:7; early fathers' usage

2) Last days (biblical usage of similar forms; but doesn't fit context)

First message of Jesus, vv. 10b-11

Message of the voice of Christ: Write to the 7 churches

The vision described, vv. 12-16

v. 12, The 7 lampstands

Not menorah, but separate lampstands

Oil, Holy Spirit (cf. Zech 4)

vv. 13-15, Description of Christ

cf. the “Son of Man” and the “Ancient of Days” in Dan 7

Robe and sash

Righteousness and faithfulness, Isa 11:5

Head and hair	Wisdom, eternity, Dan 7:9
Eyes (and face, v. 16)	Omniscience
Feet	Judgment
Voice	Power

v. 16, 7 stars = 7 angels, v. 20

Sword, 2:12, 16; 19:15; 2 Thess 2:8; Isa 11:4 (Isa 49:2; Heb 4:12)

Second message of Jesus, vv. 17-20

v. 17a, John's reaction

cf. Dan 8:17; 10:9, 15; Ezek. 1:28

vv. 17b-20, Christ's explanation

vv. 17b-18, Self-description (amplified in churches section)

v. 19, Command to write: past, present, future

v. 20, Interpretation of figures

Stars = angels of 7 churches

Lampstands = 7 churches (note location on map)

Identity of angels, ἄγγελοι *angeloi*:

1) Angels

- Vast bulk of NT usage, in KJV translated "angel" 179 times, "messenger" 7 times (Matt 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; 2 Cor 12:7; Jas 2:25)
- Fits with emphasis of Revelation on angels, spiritual powers, etc.
- Possible that each church has particular angel responsible for its welfare; cf. Michael for Israel (Dan 10:21)

- Favored by Philip Mauro

2) Messengers (pastors)

- John directs the letters to them
- Messenger seems to be a representative of the church; unlikely for angels
- The messenger is to convey the message to the church
- No evidence that churches have “guardian angels” as such
- By A.D. 95, generally one teaching elder per church
- Favored by Trench, Hendriksen, Tenney

3) The church (in its “spiritual nature”)

- Favored by Ramsay, Plummer, Swete