The Revealing of the Glorified Christ

Revelation 1:1-20

Revelation is a book that exalts Jesus more than any other book; the entire book of Revelation is a vision of Jesus Christ sent to the persecuted, discouraged Christians of Asia Minor that they might know who is the Lord of the Church and what the Lord of the Church has planned for His Church.

Chapter one pictures Christ’s commitment to the Church as He is standing in the middle of the lampstands which represent the seven churches of Revelation (1:12-13, 20)

1. He loves His church … “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (1:5b).

2. He honors His Church… “He… has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen” (1:6).

3. He intercedes for His Church… “…I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man… and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches” (1:12-13,20); here, He ministers as our great high priest (Hebrews 2:17; 4:14).

4. He disciplines His Church… “His head and hair were like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters” (1:14-15); His motives are pure; His eyes penetrate the heart of every man seeing every sin; His feet are like bronze, red hot in a furnace as He stamps out the fire of God’s wrath; His voice is unmistakable, speaking through our conscience reminding us that we are to live holy lives.
5. He comforts His Church... “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore...” (1:17-18).

The Preface of the Revelation (1:1-3)

The character of the book...

1. The substance of the Revelation... “The Revelation of Jesus Christ...” (1:1a); this is His gospel.
2. The source of the Revelation... “which God gave to Him” (1:1b)
3. The showing of the Revelation... “to show His servants” (1:1c); to make public display of that which is revealed.
4. The scope of the Revelation... “things which must shortly take place” (1:1d); the word “shortly” (en tachēi) means the actions, when they occur will be sudden, not necessarily immediate; any judgments upon the seven churches will come suddenly; the return of the Lord for His Church will occur suddenly as well as the events of the Tribulation.
5. The sender of the Revelation... “He sent and signified by His angel” (1:1e);
6. The servant who received the Revelation... “to His servant John” (1:1f);

The communication of the Revelation...

From the Father
To Jesus Christ
To His angel
To John
To believers

The content of the Revelation...

1. The witness of John... “...who bore witness to the word of God...to all things that he saw” (1:2a, c); John bore witness of all that He wrote.
2. The work of Jesus... “...to the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:2b); this book is to exalt Jesus above all—especially above His enemies the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet who persecute His Church and seek to overcome Him.

The comfort of the Revelation...

1. The blessing of the book... “Blessed is He who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy...” (1:3a); The word “blessed” (makarios) is used by Jesus in the beatitudes and refers to one’s happiness (see Acts 26:2; Romans 14:22 where this word is translated “happy”); studying this book is going to make you a happy person; another word for “blessed” is in Ephesians 1:3 where we have “been blessed with every spiritual blessing;” the word for “blessed” is eulogeō, meaning “to speak well of;” “to show respect for;” God respects you; what a truth to cherish!

2. The basis of the blessing... “and keep those things which are written...” (1:3b).

3. The brevity of time... “for the time is near” (1:3c); the word “time” (kairos) refers to epochs, eras, or seasons; the next great epoch in God’s redemptive history is imminent; Christ’s return is the next event in history though it may be a long way off causing people to question whether He will ever come (Matthew 24:36-39; 2 Peter 3: 3,4).

The Penman of the Revelation (1:4-11)

The source of the writing... “John” (1:4a)

The sending of the Revelation... “To the seven churches which are in Asia” (1:4b); the seven churches were located in seven key cities with postal districts where information was disseminated; Revelation was written not only to criticize and commend these churches, but to use these churches to communicate the Revelation beyond these churches.

The salutation in the writing... “Grace to you and peace from...” (1:4-5):

1. The Father... “who is and who was and who is to come...” (1:4a); the Father is coming back in Jesus Christ which is proof of His deity.
2. The Holy Spirit... “and from the seven Spirits that are before His throne” (1:4b); the seven fold ministry of the Holy Spirit is found in Isaiah 11:2-3: the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the Lord.

The LXX has a different listing: wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord.

3. Jesus Christ... “and from Jesus Christ...” (1:5a)...

- He is Prophet... “the faithful witness” (1:5b); He is the only one to see God (John 1:18)
- He is Priest... “the first born from the dead” (1:5c; 1 Corinthians 15:23); the word “priest” (Latin, *pontifex*) is bridge-builder who spans the gap between man and God; His resurrection gives us access to God as He is our great high priest (Hebrews 5:5-11).
- He is King... ‘the ruler over the kings of the earth” (1:5d; Psalm 72, 89).

We have just been introduced to the Trinity as the Trinity greets the Church; the one Person set apart is Jesus Christ.

*The Savior of whom he writes (1:5e-6)...

1. His compassion... “who loved us...” (1:5d)... the text is present tense, “who loves us”, not past tense; it is typical to look at the past when we think of the love of God for He loved us while we were yet sinners (see Romans 5:8); in verse 10 of Romans 5 it says we were reconciled by His death, but more so, “having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life;” if He loved us enough as enemies to die for us, how much more does He love us now that we are His friends and members of His family.

2. His cleansing... “and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (1:5e; see Ephesians 1:7)

3. His concern... “made us kings and priests to His God and Father...”(1:6a); He did not just save us, He elevated us; He has given us royalty and priesthood; we have become true sons of God and heirs to the kingdom; “heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ” (Romans 8:17); literally the text
reads: “He has made us a kingdom of priests;” this promise was first made to Israel (Exodus 19:5-6); it is now applied to the Church (1 Peter 2:4-10).

4. His character... “to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever” (1:6b); all glory and all power and all influence belongs to Him for all eternity!

The substance of His writing (1:7-8)...

1. The coming of Christ (1:7)

- The marvel of it... “Behold...” (17a) The word “behold” (idou) is in the imperative mood meaning “to look now”; it speaks of an awesome moment for the Lord is coming and all on earth will look.

- The method of it... He is coming with the clouds...” (1:7b; see Acts 1:9-11).

- The multitude who see it... “every eye will see Him...” (1:7c); this is not the rapture where Christ comes in the clouds and the Church is caught up to meet him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18); but His return to the earth; no one will see the rapture as it happens “in a moment in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

- The mourning over Him... “And the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen” (1:7d; see Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26).

2. The contrasts between the Rapture and the Revelation

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<tr>
<th>Rapture</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caught up to meet Christ</td>
<td>Come with Christ</td>
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<td>(1 Thessalonians 4:17)</td>
<td>(Zechariah 14:4,5)</td>
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<td>In the air</td>
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<td>(1 Corinthians 15:52)</td>
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3. The character of Christ (1:8)
His Person... “I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord” (1:8a); in Revelation 21:5-7 this title is used of God the Father, the one who sits on the throne; the Father and the Son have the same titles which proves their equality.

His preeminence... “who is and who was and who is to come...” (1:8b); this speaks of His eternal nature, “whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2)

His plan... “who is to come” (1:8c); His plan is to return to earth in the future (Zechariah 14:4).

His power... “the Almighty” (1:8d); He has the power to do whatever He professes to do.

The suffering of the writer (1:9)...

1. His persecution... “I John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...” (1:9a)

2. His place of exile... “...was on the isle of Patmos...” (1:9b); an island in the Aegean Sea ten miles long and six miles wide, formed from volcanic rock; John was exiled by Emperor Domitian who first plunged him in boiling oil according to Hippolytus; he was persecuted and exiled for refusing to submit to Caesar worship; after the death of Domitian he was released to Ephesus—this according to Irenaeus, Clement, and Eusebius.

3. His purpose for exile... “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ”(1:9c).

The situation surrounding the Revelation (1:10-11)...

1. The means of the vision... “I was in the Spirit...” (1:10a)... “in spirit;” no definite article; this is no dream or vision; John was supernaturally transported into heaven.

2. The mention of the day... “...on the Lord’s Day...” (1:10a); the church always worshipped on Sunday (Acts 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2); it was the first day of the week or the day of resurrection (Matthew 28:1); the
church began on Pentecost (Acts 2) and Pentecost always fell on Sunday; it was determined from Passover week, on the 50th day after the “day of firstfruits” (Numbers 28:26) which was always on the Saturday of Passover week (Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 26:8-10); Sunday later became known as the “the Lord’s Day;” the earliest reference to the Lord’s Day was from Ignatius of Antioch (35-107) who wrote, “Christians are no longer living for the Sabbath, but for the Lord’s Day;” The Didache: The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles (c150) says: “On the Lord’s Day we meet and break bread;” it was Emperor Constantine who made Sunday the official day of worship for the Catholic Church.

3. The method of receiving the message... “a loud voice as of a trumpet” (1:10b); when God gave the Law orally from Sinai His voice was like that of a trumpet (Exodus 19:16); however God did not directly talk to Moses but through an angel (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19); (Hebrews 2:2)

4. The message he was to write... “what you see, write in a book” (1:11).

The Person of the Revelation—Jesus Christ (1:12-18)

His centrality among the churches... “I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like the Son of Man... (1:12-13); the seven lampstands are the seven churches (1:20); Jesus ought to be central to our churches; He should be the theme and the message of the Church.

The word “like” (homoion) conveys that John saw a representation of Jesus, not the real Jesus; what he saw was an image or a likeness of Jesus.

His clothing of that of the high priest... “Clothed with a garment down to His feet and girded about the chest with a golden band” (1:13); He is dressed like the high priest; Jesus is our high priest (Hebrews 3:1); the high priest on the Day of Atonement entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood on the altar of incense three times to make atonement for the sins of the people; Jesus not only made the one great sacrifice, “but He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

His countenance of glory...
1. “His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow” (1:14a)... this speaks of His eternal existence; He is the “everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6); He existed “from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

2. “His eyes like a flame of fire” (1:14b)... He sees all and nothing is hidden from His sight; the fire of His eyes penetrate the mind and heart of every man; He is looking for impurity; He is the Word of God (John 1:1) which is “living and powerful... and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4: 12-13)

3. “His feet were like brass, as if refined in the furnace” (1:15a)... This is a picture of His swiftness and strength; He is swift to bring discipline to the Church (Hebrews 12:3-11) and judgment to the world (Matthew 24:21-28).

4. “His voice as the sound of many waters” (1:15b)... His voice is not monotone, yet is soothing and beautiful to listen to even as is the sound of rushing water.

5. “He had in His right hand seven stars” (1:16a)... “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (1:20); the word “angels” refers to messengers or the pastors of the seven churches; He cares for those who communicate His Word!

6. “Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword” (1:16b)... from His mouth comes the word of God (see Hebrews 1:2; 4:12; Ephesians 6:16b).

7. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength” (1:16c)... a picture of the glorified Christ who was transfigured as “His face shone like the sun” (Matthew 17:2)

His comfort to His servant...

1. His affect on John... “I fell at his feet as dead” (1:17a)... This has nothing to do with being “slain in the Spirit;” when one encounters the presence of the living Christ he will fall face down before Him (Ezekiel 1:26-27; Daniel 10: 5, 8-9).

2. His attention toward John... “He laid His right hand on me...” (1:17b).
3. **His assurance to John... “Do not be afraid...” (1:17c).... Here is John laying flat out before the Risen Lord, perhaps shaking in his sandals and He receives words of comfort based on four things:**

- **His providence... “I am the First and the Last” (1:17d); eternally Jesus is in control.**

- **His presence... “I am He who lives” (1:18a); He is present with us now.**

- **His power... “and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen” (1:18b); He raised Himself from the dead (John 2:19-20); the Father raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:24; 7:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10); the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead (Romans 8:11); further evidence of the Trinity.**

- **His promise... “I have the keys of Hades and of Death” (1:18c); Hades; the place of the unseen; the intermediate abode of the dead (Luke 16:19-31); Jesus emptied the righteous section of Hades at His ascension (Ephesians 4:7-10); paradise and heaven are now the same place (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).**

**The Purpose of the Revelation (1:19-20)**

The vision... “Write the things which you have seen” (1:19a)... A reference to the glory of Christ among the churches (1:4-18)

The vice... “and the things which are” (1:19b)... The sins of the seven churches (2-3).

The victory... “and the things which will take place after this” (1:19c)... The time of the Tribulation is followed by the return of Christ, as well as His Millennial reign on earth, and the New Jerusalem where the saints of God will live with Him forevermore! (4-22). Amen!