THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER 1

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

1 This section of the first chapter is called the title and theme. The title is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Revelation apokalupsis (Greek) means “a disclosure of what previously had been concealed.” As seen in the introduction, apocalyptic writing is a literary style. Apocalypse does not mean the end of the earth. The title does not lend itself to the earth ending or to the Antichrist. The book then is a quest to apokalupsis – disclose what previously had been concealed – about Jesus Christ.

This becomes a vital point for proper interpretation. We have been trained to look for the exposure of the antichrist in the book of Revelation. Perhaps an important point is that the word antichrist is not used throughout the entire book of Revelation. Even though the only writer that wrote about antichrists in the entire Bible is the same writer who wrote the Revelation, the word antichrist is not in this book. The title and opening of the Revelation actually points to the fact that we will find the Revelation of Jesus Christ in this book. Indeed that is exactly what we do find.

The Revelation was given to Jesus Christ by God. The Greek word didomi (Strong’s #1325) translated as gave means “to supply, furnish, necessary things.” God the Father furnished John with the necessary things that John and we the church should know about Jesus Christ.

The theme is “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Again, we note that the Revelation does not concern itself with the end of our world. What the Revelation is actually written to tell its readers about are “things which must shortly come to pass.” It is contrary to the very theme and purpose of the book to say it is about the end of the world or for a future generation. The book begins with this thought – things which must shortly come to pass – and ends with this thought of things which must shortly come to pass (see Rev 1:1, 3; 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20).

The Greek word for “shortly” is tachos and means “a brief space of time.” All the following verses found in other New Testament books show the word means something to happen soon.

Act 12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly [tachos]. And his chains fell off from his hands.

Act 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly [tachos] out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

Act 25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly [tachos] thither.

The Revelation is given or sent and, as John calls it, signified. The Greek word is semaino (Strong’s #4591) meaning to give a sign, to signify, indicate; to make known.

The word is understood best if translated signs. The Revelation was given to us in signs. This is the style of apocalyptic writing. This means the events within the Revelation are not to be interpreted as literal. The events are mental pictures in signs and symbols. This is the apocalyptic literary style used not only in Revelation, but also used by the Old Testament prophets. From beginning to end, the Revelation is a book of signs. The signs are not a “secret code” given to only a few. Anyone can understand the Revelation by simply following the signs. As we will see, this is done by tracing down the sign in the scriptures. As it will be seen, the Revelation is the most Biblically interpreted book of the Bible. By allowing the Bible to interpret the Revelation, the interpretation becomes difficult to dispute and argue.

John says that God sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. This angel, and the seven angels of the churches, become key players in the Revelation. They are continuously talking with John and showing John vision after vision. A fact impossible to disregard when truly studying
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the Revelation is that the angels of Revelation are obviously more than “celestial” beings. It is obvious they are ministries who are messengers of God. This will be developed more later.

Revelation 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

2 First, John gave witness to the word of God. Of course Jesus Christ is the Word, but John is also telling us how to interpret the Revelation. As mentioned previously (Introduction), when the Word of God is used to interpret the Revelation, the interpretation becomes difficult to dispute. John declares that he will bear record of the Word of God. The record John will bear will be according to the Word of God. This is vital for proper interpretation.

Second, John gave witness or testimony of Jesus Christ. Again, John is not giving a record of Antichrist or the end of the earth. John specifically says he is to bear record of the testimony of Jesus Christ. The primary difference in the approach to interpretation of the Revelation may well lie in this point. Does one interpret from the position of eschatology or from the position of Christology? Will John be telling of the end of the earth (eschatology), or will John bear record concerning the testimony of Jesus Christ (Christology)?

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

3 John now writes Blessed is he .... This is the first of of seven “beatitudes” (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). These blessings are for three categories of believers. The first category is Blessed is he that readeth. We see a special blessing for reading the prophecy. Interestingly, the Book of Revelation is a blessing. I am not certain it is seen that way today. To John’s readers (the seven churches), this was a blessing.

The second category is Blessed is he that .... hear the words of this prophecy. In the days of the first-century church, the people would come together corporately. The word of God was read aloud to the congregation. It was actually a liturgical setting. Everyone did not possess at least one of various translations. The Word of God and letters from the apostles that went to the churches were tediously copied and rewritten by hand ever so carefully so as not to miss a letter or a word or a

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“Again, these messages by their very terms go beyond the local assemblies mentioned. It can be seen that Ephesus (2:1-7), though a local church in the apostle’s day, is typical of the first century church as a whole; Smyrna (2:8-11) characterizes the church under persecution, e.g. from A.D. c.100-316; Pergamum (2:12-17), ‘where Satan’s throne is’ (2:13; cp. 2:14-15, and notes, is suggestive of the church mixing with the world, e.g. in the Middle Ages; Thyatira (2:18-29) reveals how evil progresses in the church and idolatry is practiced; Sardis (3:1-6) is representative of the church as dead, yet still having a minority of godly men and women, as during the Reformation; Philadelphia (3:7-13) shows revival and a state of spiritual advance; and Laodicea (3:14-19) is illustrative of the final state of apostasy which the visible church will experience.”

Many have asked, “How did Scofield determine this? Where does the Bible say that the Revelation covers history or even church history?” John surely did not. John’s prophecy in the Revelation was concerned with things which must shortly come to pass (v. 1) and that the time is at hand (v. 3). Scofield’s doctrine ends with the age of a puny, defeated, lukewarm church – Laodicea. A questions would be, “What happened to the church that Jesus would build against which the gates of hell could not prevail (Mat 16:18)? What happened to the Bride Jesus would present unto Himself without spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:27)?” The church that Jesus builds is not weak, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2Co 5:10).

John opened his writing and said, “Grace be unto you, and peace.” Then he revealed the Godhead in the rest of this verse. The Revelation is absolutely Trinitarian (trinity – Father, Son, Holy Spirit). There is no place for a “Jesus Only” doctrine in the Revelation. John says this is from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.

John first spoke of him which is, and which was, and which is to come. God the Father bids His children grace and peace because He can assure them He IS. Father is our always present help in time of trouble. He has proven this because He WAS. His record shows He has always delivered His own. He also is the Father WHICH IS TO COME. He will always be there for us.

Next, John writes about the blessing of grace and peace from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.

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his throne. What did John mean by “seven Spirits”? Isn’t there only one Spirit? The term “seven spirits of God” is used four times in the Revelation (2:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). So, we will be looking at the thought several times. However, we do our first “allusion quotation” or “allusion link.”

What that means is John gives reference to events and characters and Scriptures in the Old Testament. It may not be a perfect quotation, but close enough that anyone will know that the writer is linking to an Old Testament passage. No one who has ever read the Old Testament can read the Revelation and not see the allusions and links and similarities which the Old Testament and the Revelation enjoy.

Merrill C. Tenny writes in his book entitled Interpreting Revelation,

“...a count of the significant allusions which are traceable both by verbal resemblance and by contextual connection to the Hebrew canon number three hundred and forty-eight. Of these approximately ninety-five are repeated, so that the actual number of different Old Testament passages that are mentioned are nearly two hundred and fifty, or an average of more than ten for each chapter in Revelation.”

That is amazing! The Old Testament is the key to the interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

The book, Commentary of the Apocalypse by Swete states that out of 404 verses of the Revelation, 278 refer to the Old Testament. Again, we easily see the necessity of the Old Testament as a reference for interpretation of the Revelation.

Without this understanding, a person trying to interpret Revelation will come up with all sorts of ideas. It could look like a weird fairy tale. Allowing the Scriptures to interpret the Scriptures is the only sure way to avoid deception and false doctrine. As already stated, it becomes extremely difficult to argue with an interpretation that is from the Scripture itself.

What is the thought of the “seven spirits of God?” The “allusion link” is from Isaiah 11:2.

Isa 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD

Of course John is speaking about the Spirit of God. The Spirit of the Lord comes to (1) anoint;

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2 Merrill C. Tenny, Interpreting Revelation, page 101
3 Swete, Commentary of the Apocalypse, page 135
bring (2) wisdom; (3) understanding; (4) counsel; (5) might; (6) knowledge; and (7) fear of the Lord.

The number seven is extremely important in the Revelation. In the King James Version, we find the number “seven” (hepta) fifty four times and “seventh” five times. The Hebrew / Jewish people thought in 7’s much as we think in 10’s. It’s considered the number of fullness and completion. There are the seven days of creation; the seven Spirits of God; the seven sprinklings of the blood; seven flames of fire from the lampstand; seven kingdom parables of Matthew 13; seven “better” things in Hebrews; the seven churches of Revelation; seven angels, seven seals; seven trumpets; and seven vials, etc.

Revelation 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

5. The next member of the Godhead from which John brings the blessing and greeting of grace and peace is Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness. Jesus said,

Joh 18:37 Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

The primary issue which Jesus came to give witness of is that He was born to be king! Jesus is king. He is the faithful witness.

Jesus Christ is the first begotten of the dead. The Apostle Paul said, “the firstborn from the dead” (Col 1:18). Others were and have been resuscitated from the dead – Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, widow’s son, etc., but these were not born from the dead. They would face death again. Jesus would never face death again. He is the first begotten of the dead.

The first begotten means there will be more raised like Jesus, who was the firstborn of many brethren. Because of His being the firstbegotten of the dead, He has a place of preeminence in all things. Colossians 1:18 says, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

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Jesus Christ is the prince of the kings of the earth. Jesus is not our savior waiting for a future world disaster to establish His kingdom. Jesus is the prince of the kings of the earth. He is the universal king now! He does not need a tribulation. He does not need a rapture. He became king when He was raised from the dead. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mat 28:18 NIV). There will never be a day when He is given “all-er” authority. He has it now.

David Chilton in his book The Days Of Vengeance records, “.... the early church was not aware of this escapist teaching. Instead, it taught the Biblical doctrine of Christ’s Lordship—that He is Lord of all, ‘Ruler of the kings of the earth.’ It was this that guaranteed their persecution, torture, and death at the hands of the State. And it was also this that guaranteed their ultimate victory. Because Jesus is universal Lord, all opposition to His rule is doomed to failure, and will be crushed. Because Christ is King of kings, Christians are assured of two things: warfare to the death against all would-be-gods; and the complete triumph of the Christian faith over all its enemies.”

Interpretation of the Revelation is determined by how we see Christ. That vision is either as the King now expanding his kingdom, or as Jesus that will one day be King, but not King yet.

When John thinks about Jesus as King he cannot help but send forth praise. John said, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

John’s emphasis is not only our redemption. John’s emphasis is also our kingship. The Kingdom has begun! We are now ruling with Christ (Eph 2:6; Col 1:13). He has made us kings.

John states that the followers of Jesus Christ are now kings and priests. The NIV version says “has made us to be a kingdom and priests.” No matter how one says it, we are now in His Kingdom, and Jesus is the King. We do not have problems with that verse and statement until we begin to add two and two. If we are in the kingdom of God, then that would mean that the kingdom has already begun. That would mean the “millennium” has begun. It is here that lines are drawn and opinions defended. The bottom line is

4 David Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 64
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the answer to this question, “Are we kings and priests?”

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

7, 8 John warns the nations, and especially Judah, that he cometh with clouds! A look at this coming with clouds will help us understand what is being stated. We have little understanding of the “coming with clouds.” It is an allusion link and when understood begins to open the Revelation.

Coming with clouds is a favorite Biblical imagery for the Lord coming in judgment. Following is a list of several of His comings (plural) (Exo 13:21; Exo 14:20, 24; 19:9, 16; Psa 18:7-14; 104:3; Isa 37:7-8; Mat 24:30; Mar 14:62-64; Act 2:19-21).

The principle of the cloud was well known to the readers and hearers of John’s day. Notice that it was when Jesus told the high priest that He would come in the clouds of heaven that the high priest rent his clothes and said they needed no further witness (Mar 14:62-64).

MAR 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

The cloud is symbolic of protecting the people of God (wilderness) and destroying the enemies of God. The high priest knew what the cloud meant. To him, it was blasphemy in the highest degree. First, he thought it was blasphemy that Jesus proclaimed Himself as God, and second, that the cloud was coming to destroy the religious system of Judah.

The cloud is an imagery and “allusion link” from both the Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament, it is always associated with the destruction of that generation to which Jesus spoke. John spoke of that destruction here in Revelation this way: “...every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” The generation which pierced Him did indeed experience the cloud! The traditional view of the Revelation is the “end of the world.” If that were accurate, then how could those who pierced him

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 1 see the coming? Over and over again Christ warned the evil and adulterous generation to which he was born. Following are several passages proving this. It would do us well to read them. We need to remind ourselves of the violence that Christ warned would come upon that generation. It was that generation that pierced him and that generation did indeed quickly experience these events of Revelation.

Mat 12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Mat 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Mat 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Mat 12:45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Mat 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Mat 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Mat 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Mat 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Mar 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Mar 13:30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Luk 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

Luk 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zac which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

Luk 17:25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.
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Luk 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.
Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Over and over, Jesus warned that generation. We are today programmed to think futuristically. Every eye of that generation was taught to look for the destruction of Jerusalem. James Glasgow writes in his book The Apocalypse Translated and Expounded saying,

“‘Every eye, and those who pierced Him, shall see Him.’
-- The subject of the text is ‘the people of the land,’ viz, Judea; and it would be a direct misinterpretation, as well as false logic, to strain a term beyond its subject, by applying it to the final judgment of all. That all men shall see Him, we learn from other scriptures [2 Cor. v. 10]; but we must deal faithfully with the text, and not force any word in order to make out a case. Truth never requires this. That the land of Judea, in this prophetic sense, is the subject, is evident from Zech. xii. 10; from which the words are taken, both here and in John xix. 37.

‘Those who pierced Him’ are obviously those who had a hand in His death. The text declares they shall see Him, employing for seeing the verb optomai, already noticed, as not limited to ocular seeing. Though those who pierced Him saw not His person after His ascension, yet they saw His power bringing judgment on them, and making His cause prevail in spite of their persecution, and they speedily saw their kingdom terminated.”

Christ also says in verse 7, “all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” Every nation had residents living in them that were Jewish (Act 2:9-11). Because of this, every nation had Jewish synagogues. This would immediately affect all kindreds of the earth. Plus, every nation that will not submit to the King will experience what Judah experienced. He, Christ, is the world power. That generation experienced the cloud in the years of A.D. 66-73. Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and laid desolate in A.D. 70.

From the time of Jesus until now, every nation that has attempted to rule with a one-world government has been brought to nothing. The Roman Empire was the last one-world government. If Scriptures are interpreted properly, that one-world government is now in the lake of fire (Rev 19:20) and will never be released. All kindreds of the earth shall wail when nations attempt to conquer the world, they are overthrow

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 1 for the Kingdom of Christ will never end (Dan 7:13-14). Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

John gives another “allusion link” from Isaiah 44:6:

Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Alpha and Omega are the alphabetic equivalent of our A and Z. The Lord begins the writing and ends the writing. The Lord is the beginning of all and the ending of all. The Lord is the king which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. This allusion will be referred to again shortly.

VISION I: THE SON OF MAN IN THE CANDLESTICKS

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

9 This is the third time that John used his name in this first chapter (v. 1, 4, 9). He will use it twice more at the end of the book (21:2; 22:8). In verse one, he was John to whom God sent the angel which brought John the Revelation. In verse 4, he was John who is writing this Revelation to the seven churches. Here he was John who also is your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom.

John’s writings stand in contrast to today’s traditional, evangelical teachings. John says he and his companions are in three positions: (1) in tribulation, (2) in the kingdom, and (3) in the patience of Jesus Christ. John said that he and his companions were in the tribulation. John says that not only is he in tribulation, but also that he is a companion in tribulation with his readers. There was tribulation at the time of John’s writing of the Revelation. We have been taught tribulation means atom bombs, nuclear warfare, and global destruction. Does it?

I have a question. Why would Father make that generation go through tribulation, but “rapture” a future generation from tribulation? Would that be fair to remove us, but cause them to go through horror?

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3 James Glasgow, The Apocalypse Translated and Expounded, p. 126-127
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John said he was in the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the A.D. 60’s. The Revelation was written, without objection, in the first century. This would mean the kingdom of Jesus Christ was already established when John wrote, for he was in the kingdom.

We are taught a “double-minded” teaching. We are taught to think and say Jesus is King and Lord and that all authority has been given unto Him and that all things are under His feet. At the same time we are taught to think and say that Christ’s kingdom is not yet, that He will get all authority when the millennium comes, and when Satan is cast into the bottomless pit.

Is Jesus Christ king or not? Is the kingdom in existence or not? These are crucial decisions necessary for proper Bible doctrine. Again, the Christological or eschatological interpretive positions determine one’s beliefs.

John wanted his readers to understand they were in the tribulation and in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. They must remain in patience. John tells his people this is the tribulation, so that means this is the kingdom.

John tells his companions that he was in the isle that is called Patmos. Probably John was exiled to Patmos as a prisoner of the state. History has it that the state had a penal colony on this island that worked the copper mines. It would have been because of his apostolic activity that John was exiled to this island where he received and wrote the Revelation. It is interesting why John says he was on Patmos. John says he was there for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, John did not see that he was there because Caesar exiled him there. There is always a deeper reason for seemingly tough times that we go through. Most commentators will teach that John was punished because of his stand for the Word and his testimony. I am sure this is correct, but also I see that John knew he was there for a far greater reason. He was there to receive the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

We need to see the sovereignty of God in what would normally be seen as a disaster. What is the Lord attempting to tell us in our times of exile? Why are we really in our Patmos? For what are we in exile? John knew he was in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

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We never know who will benefit from our Patmos experience years later.

Before leaving this thought of John on Patmos Island, it is necessary to remember its part in deciding the date of the Revelation writing. This will be explained in depth at the end of the chapter under Contemporary Theological View(s). For now simply note that if the Revelation was written in 95 A.D. then John would have been at least 85 years of age working in copper mines. If written in 65 A.D. then John would be around 55 years of age. While being exiled to work mines at the age of 85 is not impossible, it is very improbable. Being exiled at age 55 and expected to work copper mines is however probable.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

10 The book of Revelation is easily divided into four great visions. These four great visions have numerous smaller visions sub-headed under the four great visions. Each of the four great visions are designated by John being in the Spirit. For example, as we will shortly see, the first great vision of Christ given in chapter 1 is of Jesus Christ in the midst of the seven candlesticks, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, feet like unto fine brass, voice as the sound of many waters, etc. This vision that is Jesus Christ will dominate chapters 1, 2, and 3. This vision will include seven letters written to seven angels at seven churches. The great vision is the Son of man with the sub or inner visions being the seven letters.

Each of the four great visions will begin with John entering the spirit. Each great vision will give a different aspect of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Each of the four great visions is separate and initiated by John’s statement: “... in the Spirit.” John leaves the natural and enters the Spirit to receive the great visions. Each great vision paints a picture of the Christ. This gives us the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Following are the locations of John’s leaving the natural and entering the great vision (Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day . . .
Revelation 4:2 And immediately I was in the spirit . . .
Revelation 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit . . .
Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit . . .
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These four times are the only times that the term in the spirit is used. A specific revelation is given after each use. The second great revelation is given to Christ as the Lamb slain. We are given a picture of a Lamb with seven eyes and seven horns in the midst of the throne. The third great revelation is the King of kings riding on the white horse. Again we have a picture of him from head to toe. The fourth great revelation is Christ revealed through his wife the church descending out of heaven. This easily divides the Revelation and begins our understanding of this great book.

Here (1:10), we are introduced to the first great vision of Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Immediately the vision began. The presence of Christ was both heard and seen to such magnitude that John fell as if dead (1:17). This establishes a constant order throughout the Revelation. John will first hear and then will see.

Let's investigate the thought of in the Spirit. This phrase is prophetic language stating that John was receiving revelation from another dimension other than the natural. John is receiving information in the Spirit (see Mat 22:43; 2Sa 23:2; Eze 2:2; 2Pe 1:21; Num 11:25).

In the Spirit is not a dimension that John remains in continually. He will enter the Spirit realm four different times throughout the Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). This establishes four great visions and four distinct revelations of Jesus Christ. Yet, this is all one Revelation of one Christ. It is not the book of Revelations (plural). It is the book of Revelation. To totally understand the Christ, we must understand these four aspects of Him. A person – man – can be a believer, husband, a father, and an employee. By understanding these four aspects of that man, we have a revelation about that man. All four are vital for a true picture of him. One or even two parts of the picture will only give a partial and even distorted picture.

If the Son of man is understood in the candlesticks, if the Lamb is understood on the throne, if the conquering King is understood as He rides through the nations, and if the Husband of the Lamb’s wife is understood as a loving, healing and giving husband, then a Revelation of Jesus Christ is comprehended.

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John fell out. Often we experience the presence of the Lord and “fall out” as John did in verse 17. We lie there a few minutes, then get up seldom receiving the revelation we could receive. When we submit to the “falling out” as we experience his presence, there should be something spoken to us by the Spirit while in the Spirit. People often question what the “falling out” is about. If we are only “falling out,” then “falling out” is not worth much. However, if we “fall out” for the purpose of hearing from the Spirit, then it is necessary and desirous. When one does “fall out,” they should expect to hear revelation.

John also adds that this encounter with the Spirit happened on the Lord’s day. This is projected most often as meaning Sunday, or the first day of the week. Though it may well have been a Sunday that John received this vision, John is referring to something much larger than a Sunday. He is referring to the “day of the Lord” called here the Lord’s day. No place in Scripture does the phrase “the Lord’s day” refer to Sunday. The first day of the week is the Biblical reference to our Sunday. What John refers to here is the day of the Lord.

The phrase “day of the Lord” is used 23 times in the King James Version (Isa 2:12; 13:6; 9; Jer 46:10; Eze 13:5; 30:3; Joe 1:15; Joe 2:1; 2:11, 31; 3:14; Amo 5:18 (twice); 20; Oba 1:15; Zep 1:7, 14 [twice]; Zec 14:1; Mal 4:5; Act 2:20; 1Co 5:5; 2Co 1:14; 1Th 5:2; 2Pe 3:10). Following are a few of these verses.

Joe 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

Isa 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Isa 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Act 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

As one can obviously see, it is a time about which the prophets of both Old and New Testaments prophesied. Many of the previous references are “allusion links” that John will use.
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throughout this Revelation. The day is explained in two dimensions. It is the end of the age (world) for Judaism. It is also the smashing of nations that will not bow to the King. It is the day of the Lord.

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

11 As noted earlier, John first heard and then saw. He heard the voice, and then saw the first great vision. The voice first identified Himself. I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (see notes 1:8). This is none other than the King and Lord Jesus Christ.

John is instructed to write in a book what he is shown and to send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. We will make note now and give more information later concerning these churches. These were literal churches – real churches. Specifically, these were literal cities. This is necessary to state because of the Futurist interpretation. This type teaching projects that these are not literal churches, but symbolic churches which represent an era in the church age. They begin with Ephesus and end with Laodicea, which is to be the lukewarm, powerless church age that the Lord must “rapture” (see discussion 1:4).

John was given the destination for this Revelation. Honestly, it was not written to us any more than 1 Corinthians was written to us. This is not to say we do not receive from the Revelation which was written to those churches. We receive from the book of 1 Corinthians, though it was specifically written to the people at the church at Corinth. Jesus Christ instructed John to send this writing to the seven churches which are in Asia. This would simply mean that what was written herein was very relevant to them.

Revelation 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks

12 Translating the Greek word luchnia as candlesticks is not an adequate translation. Lampstand is a much better translation and is what modern translations use. When we think of a candlestick, we think of a stand that holds wax candles. The lampstand did not function with wax. It functioned with oil. Wicks ran into the bulbs of the golden candlestick drawing oil to a flame giving light.

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 1

The golden lampstand was one of the pieces of furniture of the tabernacle of Moses and is also found in the temple that Solomon built. The Lord went into great detail describing the lampstand to Moses (Exodus 25:31-40).

Exodus 25:37 tells us there are seven lamps (lights) on the lampstand. John saw seven golden lampstands. In verse 20, John is given the interpretation of these lampstands. They are the seven churches to which John is instructed to write this Revelation. The fact is one like unto the Son of man is found in the midst of the churches.

The lampstand (candlestick) of the Old Testament is fulfilled by the church in the New Testament. Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world” (Mat 5:14). He said, “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat 5:15, 16). A church is for good works which are to light a city and area.

Revelation 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

13 The Revelation is of Jesus Christ. This great vision is of the Son of man. The fact John wants us to realize is that Christ and the Son of man are one in the same. John simply says, “Son of man,” and then goes on to his next allusion clothed with a garment down to the foot.

To those privy of what the Son of man means, an immediate and tremendous insight is gained. That is all John needed to say. This is the use of the implied word. The written word is Son of man. The implied word is all that is associated with the Son of man. That is the way apocalyptic literature is supposed to work. With one mental picture, an entire message is proclaimed. John’s readers and hearers understood this. To others (especially modern readers and hearers), the term Son of man means little and is read over as though it is of no importance. However, the vision on which we are now focusing is of the Son of man.

The phrase “Son of man” is used in 192 Scriptures. It always refers to one who is or has the appearance of a human being – humanity. It always refers to one born of a woman. What we now see is that it is also a direct reference to the
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Messiah (Christ) and to His final triumph as Redeemer and Judge.

Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of man only when speaking of himself as the Christ. The Son of man is an allusion link to Daniel 7:13-14.

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Dan 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

NIV - Dan 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Dan 7:14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13 speaks of the ascension of Jesus Christ in the cloud (Acts 1:9) as He came to the Ancient of Days. We will see a vivid picture of this event in Revelation chapter 5. At the ascension of Jesus Christ, “there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:14). Jesus Christ has been given dominion and the kingdom. That happened at the Ascension. He has been given all people, nations, and languages, and they should now serve Him. The dominion of Jesus Christ is an everlasting dominion and shall not pass away or ever be destroyed. This is the individual John sees the Church gathered around.

To the Pharisees, Jesus said:

Mat 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.
Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

To the high priest Jesus said:

Mat 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

To His disciples, Jesus said:

Revelation 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.
Revelation 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;
Revelation 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

* The New Naves Topical Bible, page 968
Revelation 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

13-15 We now are given a description of His vestment and physical appearance. The thought of brilliance will dominate the description John gave. John attempts to portray, as best he can, the glory of God. The golden girdle, white head, white hair, flaming eyes, shining polished feet like fine brass all bring forth the brilliance of the Son of man as the sun shineth in strength! His dress would also indicate a special attire, perhaps as the high priest would dress.

These are allusions meant to point to God and allusions of an individual from heaven. The head and hairs allude to Daniel 7:9. His eyes and feet allude to the one from heaven in Daniel 10:6. His golden girdle (actually a belt) is an allusion to the garments of the high priest in Exodus 39:9-20.

The voice as the sound of many waters speaks of the intimidating, piercing loudness of the voice of the Son of man. The allusion is to the awesome voice of the Lord consistently taught in Scriptures (see Eze 3:12-13; 10:1-5; 2 Sam 5:24; 2 Kings 7:5-7). By reading Psalm 29:3-9, which speaks of the voice of the Lord upon the waters and over many waters, we see an allusion link to which John points. “The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.”

Out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword. The allusion quotation is Isaiah 11:4. Isaiah referred to Him as smiting the earth. Jesus will use this same sword allusion to speak to a church (2:16). Remember, this portrait shows the Son of man walking in the midst of His churches. Jesus is on the offense. Jesus is speaking to His churches, not to the earth or to the world. He has in his right hand seven stars that, as we will see shortly, are angels sent to the churches. We are being given a portrait of how the church should see Him – the Son of man.

Revelation 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

17 John fell at his feet as dead when he saw Jesus. The effect of the presence of God upon John was normal for this situation. When Jesus is seen as the Son of man, a weakness follows. Daniel said, “I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands” (Dan 10:9, 10). The true Revelation of Jesus Christ in His church is an awesome, fearful Revelation. When one grasps this portrait of Jesus, it is not for self they fear. As we will see in chapters 2 and 3, it is for those who do not see the Son of man in this portrayal for whom we should fear.

This fear John experiences is not the unhealthy spirit of fear (2 Tim 1:7), rather this is the healthy attitude toward the Son of man. When seen correctly, the Son of man will lay his right hand upon us and say “Fear not.” Take special notice of Acts 9:31.

Act 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

The church that multiplied, was edified, and moved in the comfort of the Holy Ghost also walked in the fear of the Lord.

The Son of man says “I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” The allusion quotation is from Isaiah 44:6.

The word for Lord in Isaiah 44:6 is Yehovah in the Hebrew. We say it as Jehovah. Jehovah sat upon the throne in the Old Testament. Jehovah was the Redeemer and the Lord of hosts in the Old Testament. Jehovah was the first and the last in the Old Testament. Now the Son of man says, “I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” We are not witnesses of Jehovah. We are witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

One of the Roman Emperors claimed to have died and to have risen again. However, he died again. Jesus said, I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. No Caesar, no emperor, no one has power and dominion over Jesus Christ.

Note that it is the Son of man who has the keys of hell and of death. He, and He alone, has
command over life and death. Only Jesus Christ has this authority. He has complete dominion and is unequalled. His name is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:21). Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Jesus Christ, the Son of man has absolute dominion. With that authority, Jesus Christ gives John his commission.

Revelation 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

19, 20 John is instructed to write. Then John is instructed what to write. He is to write things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. As we will see, the Revelation will deal with things that are. That will deal with the seven churches (chapters 1-3). Also we will see things which shall be hereafter. Hereafter was from the time that John wrote until eternity. There are also some events that have not fully taken place as of yet (at least as far as I can see). However, for the book of Revelation to make sense, the hereafter must deal with some things that would “shortly come to pass” (1:1) and must “come quickly” (22:12, 20). In fact, at least some the things which shall be hereafter must happen soon enough that “they also which pierced him” will be alive to witness (1:7).

The Revelation cannot be a book only for a generation millenniums away. It is about events that are and hereafter.

20 The word mystery means a secret. Contextually here and in all the New Testament, it is a secret that is revealed to us by God.

The seven stars are revealed as the angels of the seven churches. The seven candlesticks are the seven churches. It is no longer a secret.

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However, it remains a mystery to those who do not understand. In chapters 2 and 3, the mysteries are revealed to the angel ministries at the churches, who are to reveal the mysteries to the church.

The thought of the angels of the seven churches explodes numerous thoughts by imagery into our minds. This is exactly what the Lord desired to do. Angels are the messengers of God sent to minister to the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:14). They are the warring host of heaven (Luke 2:13; 1 Chr 12:2) created by Jesus Christ (Col 1:16). They worship God (Heb 1:6). They are obedient (Ps 103:20). They are mighty (Ps 103:20). They are holy (Mat 25:31). They are innumerable (Luk 2:13). They guard (Gen 3:24). They are often the medium of revelation to prophets (2Ki 1:15). Angels will be with Christ at His coming (Mat 25:31).

The Strong’s Concordance definition of this Greek word aggelos (angel) is “messenger.” Tracing it to its primary root ago, it means “to lead; bring; drive; go; induce.” As we will see in chapters 2 and 3, each church has its very own angel assigned to it. “To the angel of the church at...” The letter is actually sent to the churches (1:4, 11), but addressed to angels (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). It will become the angel’s responsibility to correct each church situation.

We will discuss the angels further when we enter chapters 2 and 3. For now, we will simply say that it is likely that each angel represents the leader or overseer. It will become more and more apparent that it is the ministry responsible for a local congregation. Remember the primary definition for the angel is messenger.

As already noted, the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches. It is in the midst of these that the Son of man walks. It is through his church that the Jesus Christ the Son of man is revealed.

Contemporary Theological View(s)

1. The Date

Today’s theology must reject that the Revelation was written prior to A.D. 70. It holds that the Revelation was not written until A.D. 95 or 96. This late date removes the Revelation from being the prophetic word that both declares the

<sup>7</sup> Chilton, The Days of Vengeance, page 82
composition of six letters, each syllable containing three letters; and worthy of credit. For it has in itself the predicted number, and is (TEITAN, the first syllable being written with the two Greek vowels not, however, make any boast over this [coincidence]. Teitan too, by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule:(5) I will [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen number  six  hundred  and  sixty-six;  and  it  is  a  very  probable allegation regarding it. Then also Lateinos (LATEINOS) has the Evanthas (EUANQAS) contains the required number, but I make no account of the fear of God, and zeal for the truth: for the name names containing the number of that name that I say this, but on among them shall the coming man bear. It is not through a want of the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. For if there are many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as we will record the context of what Irenaeus said. It is necessary to read the context and the sentence and thus allow every person to determine if this is what Irenaeus was actually attempting to say.

The context of the paragraph is a discussion of the mark of the beast and calculating whom this person is. The number is calculable, which may well be why no one quotes the context. The Greeks used a “number / letter” system that was used to “figure” a number which was also the name. This is what John is instructing his readers about in Revelation 13:18. “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.” This counting system will be discussed in chapter 13. If you read the quote, you will notice that Irenaeus will give some literal names as possibilities for this number. The following is the entire context, which is never quoted by those referring to Irenaeus. Most likely you will not read it through because it will become drudgery before one finishes. However, it is necessary to see the context to make a decision as to the credibility of Irenaeus in establishing something so important as the date of the writing of the Revelation.

“It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. For if there are many names found possessing this number, it will be asked which among them shall the coming man bear. It is not through a want of names containing the number of that name that I say this, but on account of the fear of God, and zeal for the truth: for the name Evanthas (EUANQAS) contains the required number, but I make no allegation regarding it. Then also Lateinos (LATEINOS) has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule:(5) I will not, however, make any boast over this [coincidence]. Teitan too, (TEITAN, the first syllable being written with the two Greek vowels e and i), among all the names which are found among us, is rather worthy of credit. For it has in itself the predicted number, and is composed of six letters, each syllable containing three letters; and

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 1 [the word itself] is ancient, and removed from ordinary use; for among our kings we find none bearing this name Titan, nor have any of the idols which are worshipped in public among the Greeks and barbarians this appellation. Among many persons, too, this name is accounted divine, so that even the sun is termed ‘Titan’ by those who do now possess [the rule]. This word, too, contains a certain outward appearance of vengeance, and of one inflicting merited punishment because he (Antichrist) pretends that he vindicates the oppressed.(6) And besides this, it is an ancient name, one worthy of credit, of royal dignity, and still further, a name belonging to a tyrant. Inasmuch, then, as this name ‘Titan’ has so much to recommend it, there is a strong degree of probability, that from among the many [names suggested], we infer, that perchance he who is to come shall be called ‘Titan.’ We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign.”

Irenaeus names three possibilities who could be the “Antichrist” and finally settles on “Titan,” but then contradicts himself and says he does not want to take the risk of positive identification. Obviously, Irenaeus was not very familiar with John’s work. Had he been familiar with it, Irenaeus would know that John never referred to this 666 in association with the person of the Antichrist. John’s thoughts of the Antichrist were as follows: first, antichrists are plural; second, they had already come; and, third, were already identified (1Jo 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2Jo 1:7).

Obviously Irenaeus, though preaching and teaching against heresies, was himself projecting one. He was definitely in error concerning “Titan.” It seems his attempt is to move the date of the vision of John close enough to indicate that his prediction about “Titan” would be heard and observed. It is, and has been, this way in every generation. This is recognized easily by observing our day. In our own time, people from Hitler to Gorbachev to Hussein have been suggested as the “Antichrist.” Those who made such statements proved themselves fools and false teachers. Tomorrow they will project and name another to be “Antichrist.” This simply proves they are not familiar with Biblical teachings. It seems every generation attempts to make “Antichrist” singular and to draw the “Antichrist” from one’s own day when John says they are many and have already come.

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8 Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V. xxx, 3
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It must be noted that Irenaeus, and of all the ancient writers, only Irenaeus, makes any mention of anything that could be construed as a late date for the Revelation. If one will notice, commentators and teachers quote Irenaeus only to get that date for the Revelation. They never quote what Irenaeus actually said. This is for a number of reasons. One reason is Irenaeus was guilty of doing exactly what they are guilty of doing, that is, attempting to find an “Antichrist” in his generation. Another reason is that by quoting Irenaeus, they are quoting from a man in obvious error.

Understand that Irenaeus mentioned John to bring validity to his false teaching when he was obviously in error. It was an obvious false teaching, was it not? “Titan” was not the 666, was he? None of the others he mentioned were the “666.” Has anyone ever heard of “Titan,” much less of his being the “666” person? Please make a note that it is in the context of a false teaching that something so important is “pulled out,” quoted, and then taught as fact. It is from this context of a false teaching that theologian after theologian draw on as proof that the Revelation was written in the mid-90’s A.D.

The late date simply does not fit. Here is the primary reason why. The problem with the late date is that this would make John around 90 years of age when he was on Patmos receiving the Revelation. This is not to suggest that a 90-year-old could not receive the Revelation, but is to suggest the difficulty and the near impossibility of a 90-year-old man working in the copper mines of Patmos. Patmos was an island prison – a large Alcatraz-type island with copper mines. John was required to work the mines.

If John joined Jesus at age 20, which would probably be too young, this would make John at least 85 years of age in 95 A.D. Forty-five years would be a conservative age. John was likely to be older than 20 when joining Jesus, so, of course, he would be older than 85 in A.D. 95. Using the same figures, for a 65 A.D. writing, John would be 55 years of age. That age, fifty-five, is feasible for working in the copper mines of Patmos. Using the year A.D. 95 does not work well at all.

The Scriptural proof we need to establish the date comes from Revelation 17:10 which says, “And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” No one argues that this is, in fact, the Roman Empire (although contemporaries think it will be a recreated, modern Roman Empire). By beginning with Julius Caesar, the sixth king should be the king alive in the day in which the Revelation was written, or the king that John writes as “one is.” By finding that person, we would find the date Revelation was written. Actual historical records tell us the truth. The list was Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claud, then Nero (number 6), and then Galba. Nero died (suicide) in 68 B.C. We discover that the date of the writing of the Revelation must be prior to the death of Nero, thus prior to 68 B.C.

2. Revelation 1:1 .... things which must shortly come to pass

The contemporaries teach that the “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1) does not really mean “shortly come to pass.” Usually a quote from Peter is added, such as the one found in a book named Revelation Visualized.

“Because the book of Revelation was written in about A.D. 95 some took the phrase in Revelation 1:1 ‘...things which must shortly come to pass...’ to mean these events would occur within a few years after John was inspired of God to write this book. However 2 Peter 3:8 tell us that ‘...one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and thousand years as one day.’ Only in this current day does it appear that the prophecies of Revelation are finally becoming fully ripe for fulfillment. God’s next event is the Rapture.”

This “shortly” was sufficiently dealt with in verse one. It will be mentioned throughout the book, and even mentioned redundantly in chapter 22. Most of us would agree to a 2 Peter 3:8 interpretation had John mentioned the imminence of the book only once. However, when it is expressed no less than ten times (see discussion verse 1) throughout the book, one must begin to question and eventually throw out the “one day ... thousand years” thinking. Especially since the “shortly” one thousand years has turned into two thousand years.

If 2 Peter 3:8 is the true literal interpretation of the passage and we use two years, then those taking this position should not look for the coming

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9 Gary G. Cohen, Revelation Visualized, page 35
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until the year 730,000 A.D. (365 days per year, times 2 years, times 1,000). Figuring that way is silly, but so is the 2 Peter 3:8 interpretation. When properly understood, Peter’s context in 2 Peter 3:8 is the termination of Judaism’s temple worship as Jesus had promised in Matthew 23 and 24 (see Doctrine of Imminence in Dispensational Belief).

That was what Peter was addressing as some were considering the Lord’s being slack concerning His promises (2Pe 3:9).

3. Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

The contemporaries shine as they interpret “every eye shall see him.”

“Until a few years ago ministers and laymen alike wondered how it would be possible for ‘every eye’ to see the Lord Jesus Christ as He came through the clouds. From a human standpoint this seemed an impossibility. But with the space age this has become more clear. On Sunday, July 24, 1969 people from all over the world watched Neil Armstrong as he took his first step on the moon. Through orbiting satellites that bounced back to earth radio and TV signals ‘every eye’ was able to see the exact same occurrence simultaneously.”

That “space age” interpretation works well until the rest of the sentence in that verse is included. The verse actually says, “Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” Once again, this places the occurrences of the Revelation back in the generation upon which Jesus said it would come (Mat 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). That generation was the generation “which pierced him.”

4. Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ

“John underwent tribulation as so many other Christians did. The Roman Emperor, Domitian, was heavily persecuting the church. John, even at his advanced age, was banished to this treeless, volcanic island called Patmos, used by the Romans for the exile of the lowest criminals.”

This is the position today’s theologians assume. (Note that Swaggart recognizes the “advanced age” of John in Domitian’s reign, but does not

10 Gary G. Cohen, Revelation Visualized, page 39

11 Jimmy Swaggart, The Prophecies And Symbols Of Revelation, page 11

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 1 record what that “advanced age” would be. Knowing this, he maintains the late date position.)

The majority of contemporary theologians knowingly see this “tribulation” that John is in along with others (companions). Yet they will not say that it was the tribulation that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21. Again, they avoid the remainder of the verse.

John writes that he is not only in the tribulation, but that he is also in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (1:9). Amazingly, most contemporaries do not comment about the presence of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. They comment about the tribulation saying all Christians go through a degree of tribulation. However, they say, this is not the tribulation that will come at the end of the earth. Yet they seem to avoid the present reality of the kingdom in which John clearly states he dwells. Amazingly (not really), Scofield does not comment on this in his notes in his 1967 edition. Swaggart does not comment in The Prophecies And Symbols Of Revelation, 1991 edition. Cohen nor Kirban comment in Revelation Visualized, 1993 edition. Even Finis Dake does not comment in Revelation Expounded, 1991 edition. Walvoord and Zuck do not comment in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1988 edition. Wycliffe does not comment in The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, 1977 edition. We would classify all of these as contemporary, including Wycliffe, whose commentary is a combined work of modern theologians that carry his name.

Surprisingly (not really), when we go back beyond the contemporaries, we find a different theology. Listen to what Matthew Henry says in the early 1700’s prior to the dispensationalists of the mid and late1800’s.

“He was their brother and companion in the patience of the kingdom. By this account he gives of his present state, he acknowledges his engagements to sympathize with them, and to endeavor to give them counsel and comfort ....”

Matthew Henry saw this not only as tribulation, but he also saw John’s “present state” as his being in the kingdom.
Adam Clarke, another pre-dispensationalist theologian writing between 1810-1826 says, “For we are a kingdom of priests unto God.”  

We can arrive at the position of Clarke on Revelation by viewing his comments on 1:7 concerning the Lord’s coming in clouds. “This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his religion; perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as he was to be particularly manifested to them that pierced him, which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews.”

Theologians prior to the dispensationalists in the mid-1800’s saw the kingdom as a present and ongoing kingdom. Theologians after the dispensationalists see the kingdom as a future event. John said “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (1:9).

5. Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day

Swaggart says, “The term, ‘Lord’s day,’ was used by early Christians of the first day of the week, the day of the Lord’s resurrection (Sunday). Romans set aside certain days for emperor worship and called them ‘the Augustean day.’ Christians set aside Sunday as the day to worship God and Christ, calling it, ‘the Lord’s day.’”

This is the position nearly every commentator takes. Sadly, it is not the way the Bible describes the Lord’s day. 

Joe 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

Isa 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

The term “the Lord’s day” is never used to describe Sunday. If the writer of the Scriptures was speaking about the first day of the week (which, by the way, they did not use the name Sunday yet), he said “the first day of the week.” The Lord’s day is a day of judgment and vengeance by the Lord according to Scriptures (see discussion).

Dake says, 


15 Jimmy Swaggart, The Prophecies And Symbols Of Revelation, page 11

6. Revelation 1:13 ... Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Amazingly (this really is), each and every commentator interprets this Son of Man as the one described in Daniel 7.

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Dan 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Just as amazing, they will not recognize that the kingdom had already been given Him at Ascension as He came with the clouds of heaven before the Ancient of days. He now rules the kingdom, nations and people. His dominion began at ascension and is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away or be destroyed. That would mean that the kingdom of Jesus Christ began at His ascension and is now in operation. Yet contemporary theologians say we must wait for the return of Christ to establish the kingdom.

The true kingdom is a kingdom subduing every enemy until defeat. Thus at His return, His millennial kingdom ends, though He continues as the Husband of the Lamb’s wife (Rev 21:9, 10). It is at this point, a major difference comes. It is not that theologians differ with eschatology (end times), as much as they differ with Christology (who Christ is). Is Christ, the Son of man, king and Lord, now ruling as Daniel 7 says? Or is He still awaiting His kingdom and will take it at His second coming? The way one views Christ greatly determines one’s eschatology.

16 Finis J. Dake, Revelation Expounded, page 32
The Stone Cometh

7. Revelation 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter

"Write the things which thou hast seen, that is, the vision of Christ in the midst of the candlesticks (Rev 1). Write the things which are, that is, the things concerning the churches (Rev 2:3). Write the things which shall be hereafter, that is, the events which must be after the churches (Rev 4:1-22:5)."

The problem with this flow of thought is that it totally voids the opening verse where God Himself says that this is “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1). For the book of Revelation to make sense, the hereafter must “shortly come to pass” (1:1) and must “come quickly” (22:12, 20). In fact, at least some of the things which shall be hereafter must happen soon enough that “they also which pierced him” will be alive to witness them (1:7). The Revelation cannot be a book only for a generation millenniums away. It is about events that will “shortly come to pass” and “quickly” transpire.

17 Swaggart, The Prophecies And Symbols Of Revelation, page 13