

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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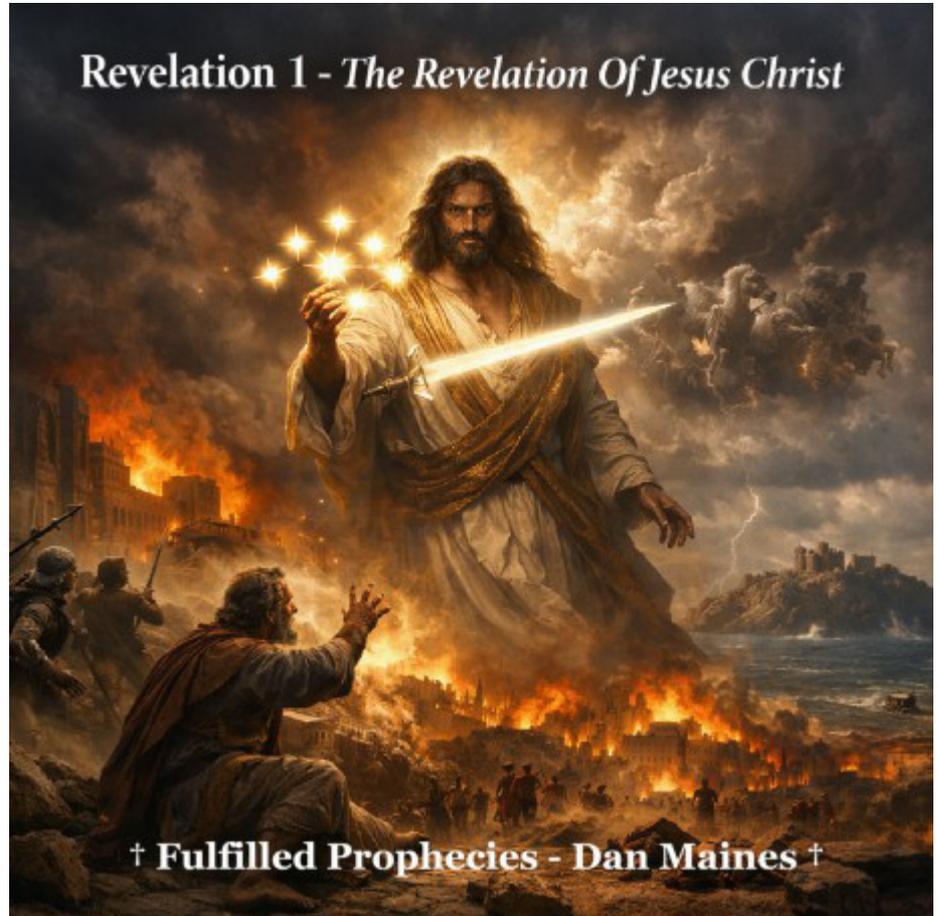
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## Revelation 1 - The Revelation Of Jesus Christ



By Dan Maines

## Revelation 1 - The Revelation Of Jesus Christ

### Introduction

† The book of Revelation is not a mystery about events thousands of years in the future. The book tells us exactly what it is about in the opening lines. It was a revelation given to show Christ's servants what was about to happen in their time. The timing statements are clear, repeated, and impossible to ignore.

† Many people approach Revelation as if it were written to people living 2000 years later, but the text itself says the opposite. It was written to real churches facing real persecution in the first century. Christ was revealing the approaching judgment that was about to fall on the covenant-breaking nation that rejected Him.

† The opening chapter establishes the authority of Christ, the nearness of the events, and the audience that would experience these things. Everything that follows in the book must be understood through this opening foundation.

## **Revelation 1:1-2**

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw.

† The book begins with urgency. The things revealed must soon take place. That language cannot honestly be stretched into thousands of years. It meant exactly what it says, the events were approaching in John's lifetime (Revelation 22:6).

† Jesus used the same kind of time language throughout the Gospels when He warned about the coming judgment on Jerusalem. He repeatedly told His disciples those events would happen within their generation (Matthew 24:34).

† The prophecy was given to Christ's bond-servants. That means the intended audience was the early believers who were already suffering persecution and about to witness the fulfillment of the warnings Jesus had spoken decades earlier (Luke 21:20-22).

† Eusebius records that John was exiled to Patmos because of his testimony for Christ, which confirms the historical setting of this revelation (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.18).

† The book both begins and ends with the same statement that the events would happen soon, confirming that the prophecy was about events approaching in the first century (Revelation 1:1, Revelation 1:3, Revelation 22:6, Revelation 22:10).

### **Revelation 1:3**

Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† The blessing is directed to those who read and hear the prophecy. Those readers were the first century churches receiving the letter. It would make no sense to promise a blessing for keeping something that would not occur for thousands of years (Revelation 22:10).

† The statement that the time is near reinforces the urgency already stated in verse 1. The prophecy was not sealed for distant generations but opened because the fulfillment was approaching.

† Daniel was told to seal his prophecy because its fulfillment was far away (Daniel 12:4), but John was told the opposite because the events were about to unfold.

### **Revelation 1:4-5**

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and

released us from our sins by His blood—

† The book was written to seven real churches located in Asia Minor. These congregations existed in the first century and were dealing with persecution, compromise, and pressure from both Roman authority and unbelieving Jews.

† Christ is described as the ruler of the kings of the earth. That means His authority was already established through His resurrection and ascension (Matthew 28:18).

† The seven Spirits before the throne represent the fullness and completeness of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity (Isaiah 11:2).

† The phrase firstborn of the dead refers to Christ's resurrection as the beginning of the resurrection victory that secured eternal life for His people (Colossians 1:18).

## **Revelation 1:6**

And He made us into a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

† Believers had already been made into a kingdom and priests. This shows the kingdom was not something waiting to begin in the distant future. It already existed among Christ's people (Colossians 1:13).

† This fulfills the promise originally given to Israel that they would be a kingdom of priests if they obeyed the covenant (Exodus 19:6).

† Through Christ the faithful remnant and believing Gentiles were brought together into that priestly kingdom (1 Peter 2:9).

## **Revelation 1:7**

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

† The language of coming with the clouds comes directly from Daniel's prophecy about the Son of Man receiving authority and judgment (Daniel 7:13-14).

† The statement that those who pierced Him would see this coming clearly places the fulfillment within the lifetime of the generation responsible for His crucifixion (Matthew 23:35-36).

† The tribes of the earth mourning refers to the tribes of Israel, echoing the prophecy of national mourning described by Zechariah (Zechariah 12:10-14).

† The phrase tribes of the earth reflects the language used for the tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and connects directly with the mourning described in Zechariah's prophecy (Zechariah 12:12-14).

† Jesus used the same language about coming with the clouds when speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem within that generation (Matthew 24:30, Matthew 24:34).

† Josephus records extraordinary signs seen in the sky during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, including visions of chariots and armies appearing in the clouds, imagery that echoes the prophetic language used in scripture (Josephus, Wars 6.5.3).

## **Revelation 1:8**

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

† Christ declares Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. This title shows His authority over all history and prophecy.

† Every event described in Revelation unfolds under His sovereign control.

† The judgments described later in the book are not accidents of history but deliberate acts of divine justice.

## **Revelation 1:9**

I, John, your brother and fellow participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

† John identifies himself as a fellow participant in the tribulation. That means the tribulation was already happening in his time, not thousands of years later (Acts 14:22).

† The early church experienced intense persecution from both Roman authority and hostile Jewish leadership (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

† John's exile to Patmos demonstrates the cost of faithful testimony during that time of persecution.

† John does not speak of a future tribulation but identifies himself as already sharing in it with the churches he is writing to (Revelation 2:9-10).

## **Revelation 1:10-11**

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus,

Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

† The vision begins with a command to write and send the message to seven specific churches. These congregations were the first recipients of the prophecy.

† Each of these churches is later addressed directly in chapters two and three, showing that the message had immediate relevance to their situation.

† The trumpet-like voice echoes the prophetic language used throughout scripture when God speaks with authority (Exodus 19:16).

### **Revelation 1:12-13**

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And after turning I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and wrapped around the chest with a golden sash.

† The lampstands are later identified as the seven churches. This shows Christ standing among His churches, watching over them and guiding them.

† The title Son of Man again connects this vision to Daniel's prophecy about the Messiah receiving authority and judgment (Daniel 7:13).

† The priestly robe shows Christ functioning as both King and High Priest for His people (Hebrews 4:14).

† Christ standing among the lampstands shows that He was actively overseeing His churches and evaluating their faithfulness, which is exactly what He does in the messages to

the seven churches in the following chapters (Revelation 2-3).

### **Revelation 1:14-15**

His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze when it has been heated to a glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

† The description closely matches the imagery of the Ancient of Days in Daniel's vision, emphasizing Christ's divine authority and eternal nature (Daniel 7:9).

† The eyes like fire symbolize His perfect knowledge. Nothing is hidden from Him, including the deeds of the churches He is about to evaluate (Hebrews 4:13).

† The powerful voice like many waters reflects the overwhelming authority of His command.

### **Revelation 1:16**

In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

† The sharp sword represents the power of Christ's word to judge and expose truth (Hebrews 4:12).

† The seven stars are later identified as the angels or messengers of the churches.

† His radiant face reflects the glory revealed at the transfiguration when the disciples briefly saw His divine glory (Matthew 17:2).

† The sword coming from His mouth symbolizes the authority of His word to judge and expose truth, the same imagery used throughout scripture for the power of God's word (Isaiah 11:4).

## **Revelation 1:17-18**

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

† John's reaction shows the overwhelming holiness and glory of Christ.

† Jesus identifies Himself as the one who died and rose again, proving His victory over death.

† Holding the keys of death and Hades means Christ has authority over life, death, and final judgment (Romans 14:9).

## **Revelation 1:19-20**

Therefore, write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

† Christ explains the symbols directly so the churches would understand the vision.

† The prophecy includes what John had already seen, the present condition of the churches, and the events about to unfold.

† Christ standing among the lampstands assures the believers that He had not abandoned them. He was present with them during their trials and would soon bring justice.

† Christ Himself explains the symbols so the churches would understand the message, showing that Revelation is not meant to remain mysterious but to be understood by its original audience.

## **Historical References**

† Eusebius records John's exile on Patmos and confirms that Revelation was written during a time of persecution for the early church.

† Josephus provides detailed historical accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and reports unusual signs in the sky that match the prophetic imagery used in scripture.

† Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian both testify that the apostles suffered persecution and exile for their testimony, confirming the historical context of the tribulation mentioned in Revelation.

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† Christ reigns now. His authority over the kings of the earth did not begin in the future, it began with His resurrection and ascension.

† The fulfillment of these prophecies proves that Jesus spoke truthfully when He warned that judgment was coming upon that generation.

† The same Lord who walked among the lampstands in the first century still watches over His people today.

† His victory over death assures believers that death is not the end, because Christ holds the keys of death and Hades.

† Prophecy fulfilled strengthens our confidence in the reliability of scripture and the faithfulness of God.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** What does must soon take place mean in Revelation 1:1?

**A:** It means the events were approaching in John's time. Scripture repeats the same timing language throughout the book. See Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:3; Revelation 22:6; Revelation 22:10.

**Q:** Who were those who pierced Him in Revelation 1:7?

**A:** The people responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus in the first century. Jesus said that generation would bear the guilt for the blood of the prophets and for His death. See Matthew 23:35-36; Acts 2:36.

**Q:** What tribulation was John referring to in Revelation 1:9?

**A:** The early church was already experiencing persecution from both Roman authorities and unbelieving Jews. John himself was exiled to Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. See Revelation 1:9; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.

**Q:** What do the lampstands represent?

**A:** Jesus explains the symbol directly. The lampstands represent the seven churches in Asia Minor. See Revelation 1:20.

**Q:** If Revelation was written about events in the first century, why does it say every eye will see Him?

**A:** The language comes from Old Testament judgment imagery where God is described as coming in the clouds against nations. It does not describe a physical descent visible to the

entire planet. Isaiah used the same language when God judged Egypt. Jesus used this same prophetic imagery when speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem within that generation. See Isaiah 19:1; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 24:34.

**Q:** Who are the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 1?

**A:** They were real congregations in Asia Minor in the first century. Christ sent the prophecy directly to them because they were facing persecution and needed to understand what was about to happen. See Revelation 1:4; Revelation 1:11; Revelation 2-3.

**Q:** Why does Revelation say the time is near?

**A:** Because the events were approaching in the lifetime of the original audience. The book repeats this timing language several times to emphasize urgency. See Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:3; Revelation 22:6; Revelation 22:10.

**Q:** What do the seven stars represent?

**A:** Jesus explains that the seven stars are the angels or messengers of the seven churches. See Revelation 1:20.

**Q:** Why does Jesus appear with a sword coming from His mouth?

**A:** The sword represents the authority and power of His word to judge and expose truth. Scripture repeatedly uses this imagery for the power of God's word. See Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 11:4.

**Q:** What does it mean that Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades?

**A:** It means Christ has authority over life, death, and judgment because of His resurrection. See Revelation 1:18; Romans 14:9.

**Q:** Why did John fall at His feet like a dead man?

**A:** The overwhelming glory and holiness of Christ caused John to collapse in awe. Similar reactions appear throughout

scripture when people encounter divine glory. See Daniel 10:8-9; Ezekiel 1:28.

**Q:** Why are the churches called lampstands?

**A:** Lampstands symbolize light. The churches were called to shine the light of the gospel in the world. See Matthew 5:14-16.

**Q:** What does firstborn of the dead mean in Revelation 1:5?

**A:** It means Christ is preeminent in resurrection victory. He is the risen Lord whose resurrection secured life for His people. See Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:18.

**Q:** Why is Jesus called the ruler of the kings of the earth?

**A:** Because His authority was already established through His resurrection and ascension. All authority had already been given to Him. See Revelation 1:5; Matthew 28:18.

**Q:** Why does John call himself a fellow participant in the kingdom?

**A:** Because the kingdom was already present in his day. Believers were already sharing in Christ's kingdom while enduring tribulation and perseverance. See Revelation 1:9; Colossians 1:13.

**Q:** Why were these things written to those specific churches?

**A:** Because they were the original audience and were the ones facing the conditions addressed in the prophecy. Revelation was not first written to a distant future generation but to real first century churches. See Revelation 1:11; Revelation 2-3.

**Q:** Why does Revelation begin by calling this book the Revelation of Jesus Christ?

**A:** Because the book reveals Christ in His authority, glory, judgment, and care for His churches. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ as reigning Lord. See Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:12-18.

# † This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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## Source Index

† Revelation 1:1-20; Daniel 7:9-14; Zechariah 12:10-14; Matthew 23:35-36; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 4:12-13; Colossians 1:13; Romans 14:9; Isaiah 11:4

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.18; Josephus, Wars 6.5.3; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata; Tertullian, Apology 5

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