

January 14 2024  
Introduction to Revelation Part 1

## **Revelation 22:1-5**

**1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **3** No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. **4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5** And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

This is the hope that we have in Christ, when we're in heaven. You will see his face and **his name will be on their foreheads** and not the number 666, but His Name on our forehead. This is Revelation. Amen

Here is what I would like to do for you. Today (January 14th), we will go over the background or the context in which how John wrote the book of Revelation. Then, next Sunday the 21st, I will give an overview of the Book of Revelation. We're going to have a birds eye view of Revelation, so we can see the whole picture the beginning to the end.

And on January 28th, Sunday, we will have a guest speaker, coming to speak. It is our goal for 2024 to have one new speaker each month. This is so that you can have **fresh perspective on the Bible from experienced preachers**. Then starting on February 4th, we will jump right into the details of the book of Revelation.

**Are you ready? So let's begin!**

When you think of Revelation, what words come to your mind?

[Wait for the audience response first before showing the screen]

Typical Words that most people **think about the Book of Revelation**

1. Mark of the Beast 666 (right hand or on their foreheads: **Show image of microchip implants you can pay with hand: Rev. 13: *that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark***)
2. Anti Christ
3. Apocalypse
4. End Times
5. The Great Tribulation

I was thinking, “***Lord do you really want me to talk about Revelation? Is it because we are seeing signs that Jesus is coming back soon like the Euphrates River drying up?***” For some of you who are not aware, currently right now, the Euphrates River is actually drying up. **How is this important?**

The Euphrates River has been talked about since the book of Genesis. This river is a significant landmark in Scripture and a very valuable resource in the Middle East as it runs through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. So the river can not dry up because about 60 million people rely on water from the Euphrates River.

**[Show image of Euphrates River drying up]**

***How is this related to Revelation?*** So there are two prophetic passages in the Bible that predict the drying up of the Euphrates River as a sign of the “end times.”

### **Jeremiah 50:38**

A drought against her waters, that they may be dried up! For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols.

The prophet Jeremiah he is prophesying that some point in the future, the Euphrates River will dry up, because you worship other idols.

Here is a second prediction of the Euphrates River drying up when it talks about the seven “seals” or “bowls” of judgment.

### **Revelation 16:12**

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its **water was dried up**, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

“Lord is it because the Euphrates river is drying up and is matching with the prophetic words as the reason for me to talk about Revelation?”

So I kept praying and I realized that the Book of Revelation **ultimate goal is not** about the “end times” but about a Hope in Jesus Christ. And that we will reign with Him for a thousand years and to eternity.

Here are Three questions that we need to address before we get into the book of Revelation:

1. **What is Revelation?**
2. **Why is it at the end of the New Testament?** (If it’s about Jesus Christ, why not put it as the very first book? Matthew scoot over!)
3. **Why did God give us the book of Revelation?** (Rapture, the great tribulation, the antichrist, and the mark of the beast. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Some scary stuffs)

### **What is Revelation?**

**Revelation** (Greek Word: apokalypsis, pronounced ap-ok-al’-oop-sis in English it means “Apocalypse”): an **uncovering**, an **unveiling**, a **disclosure**, or **revealing**.

Revelation refers to something or someone, once hidden, becoming visible. This book reveals or uncovers is Jesus Christ in glory.

And we see this from the very beginning of Revelation 1:1.

### **Revelation 1:1**

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to **his servants** the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his **servant John**,

**Revelation** is the “uncovering” or “unveiling” of the Person, Power and Plan of Jesus Christ.

**“His Servants”**: *Who are “his servants?”* Us the believers. The followers of Jesus Christ. Meaning God will reveal himself to the believers. God wants you and I to know Revelation.

**What will Jesus reveal?** **“the things that must soon take place.”**

**“He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.”** So the next question is: **who is “John?”**

### **Author of the Book of Revelation**

We know that John is one of the disciples of Jesus. He is one of the Four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Now this is interesting: John wrote the book of Revelation when he was in the ***island of Patmos***.

### **[Show image of the island of Patmos]**

- **Island of Patmos**: In New Testament times, Patmos was a destination for criminals and political prisoners. ***“John was sent to an island filled with criminals!”***

- Apparently, at this island, many died from exposure to the harsh environment, other criminals would kill each other, or they just died from starvation.
- Can God still provide for you while you are still in prison? When you are at the most difficult time in your life, **God will never leave you nor forsake you**. John trusted God with all his heart, even when he was in a very hard situation. When you are at the most difficult time of your life, just hold onto the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- **Traditions tell us that John's friends and followers in Ephesus sent food and supplies and that is how he survived.** And, no body wanted to hurt John. In fact, John in this season of life that he was in, was evangelizing to the prisoners. It's like, ***"While I'm in prison, I might as well share the good news of Jesus."***

**How John ended up in prison in the first place?** He was sent to prison for sharing the gospel. And it was in this **prison he received the visions and the signs of the future events.**

And, I'm being reminded that no matter where you go or where you are in the season of life you are in or how far you try to run away from God, God will be there and he will find you.

### **Psalm 139:7-10**

**7** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? **8** If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! **9** If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, **10** even there **your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.**

He is saying, ***"Even if I go to heaven (sky, air), you are there! Even if I make my bed in Sheol (grave, burial place, cemetery), you are there! Even if I am at the far places of the ocean, you are still there! You will never leave me or forsake me."***

This is interesting, it is because of the Roman Emperor Nero who hated Christians, is how John got sent into the prison in the first place.

**Emperor Nero reigned from A.D. 54-68.**

**Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70**

**Revelation was written A.D. 94-96**

After Jesus was resurrected, he showed himself to over 500 people.

### **1 Corinthians 15:3-6**

**3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to **more than five hundred brothers at one time**, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

So you have along with the disciples more than 500 people spreading the Gospel message. Christianity was spreading so rapidly out of Jerusalem and all over the Roman empire, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem. Years later, this caught the attention of Emperor Nero.

Christianity spread so much that it reached Muhammad the founder of Islam: Muhammad was between 9 and 12, he met with a Christian monk in Syria. The monk told him Christian tales. Additionally, when Muhammad allegedly received his first divine revelation, he went to his wife's cousin who was also a Christian and an expert in the Hebrew Bible. That's why many parts of the Quran is from the Bible.

**Back drop on Emperor Nero:**

- Nero assassinated his mother **Agrippina** in 60 A.D. He tried to drown her in a boat in her villa on Lake Lucrine.
- His younger brother **Britannicus** was poisoned by his order at a banquet in 55 A.D.
- His **first wife Octavia** was divorced in order that he might marry Poppaea, the wife of his friend **Otho**, and afterward put **Octavia** to death.
- **Poppaea** herself died from the effects of a kick given her by Nero while she was with a baby in her womb.

And, it was under Nero that the two Apostles have died: **Paul was beheaded in Rome** and that **Peter was crucified under Nero**. Nero really hated Christians.

***Why would Nero hate Christians?*** Christianity offered a better world filled with **love, compassion, equality and God's social justice**. And by promoting the idea of equality and brotherhood among all believers, regardless of social status or background, they were able to come together as one body. Because Jesus commands us to **love our neighbor**. This was something very foreign to the Roman elites, ***"Love your neighbor? It's more like subdue your neighbor and control them!"***

So Christianity was seen as a threat to the established order, as it rejected the traditional Roman gods and did not recognize the authority of the emperor. This really angered Nero.

There was a great fire swept through Rome, destroying much of the city, and Nero thought that this would be a **good idea to blame Christians for the fire**. They would be the scape goat.

So they would put Christians in gladiator games and be killed by animals for show. Another time, Nero would take Christians who are and tied them to stakes and covered in tar or pitch before setting

them on fire. They would use the ***burning bodies to be used to light up the gardens*** as a spectacle for the guests.

So with that type of hostility against Christians, you can get an idea why John as a old man was sent to the island of Patmos.

## **Why is the book of Revelation at the end of the New Testament?**

### **Revelation 22:18-19**

**18** I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, **19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Revelation is at the end because it is the **final warning or a last command to the disciples. That is why you cannot add, change or delete anything in the Bible. It is complete!**

Do NOT add, change, or delete any from God's Words or "the plagues described" in the book of Revelation will be upon you. God will take away his share in the "**tree of life.**"

Have you ever been so, so thirsty, they you were desperate to drink water, but you couldn't. Can you imagine an eternity like that, where you are near death, but not dying, thirsty but you can't drink the living water. **This is what is like not being part of the tree of life.**

## **Why did God gives us the book of Revelation?**

- To help us discover when Jesus will return.
- To give us nightmares about the rapture, mark of the beast, and tribulation.
- To confuse us.
- To give Christians something to argue about.



God gave us the book of Revelation for multiple purposes:

One of the main reason is that, God promises His blessing seven times in Revelation:

1. to those who hear and hold to the Revelations message (Rev. 1:3)
2. who die “in the Lord” (Reve. 14:13)
3. to stay awake and alert (Rev. 16:15)
4. who attend the Lamb’s marriage supper (Rev. 19:9)
5. who share the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6)
6. who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 22:14 and 7:15)

Out of these, I want to high light what I feel is very important. In Matthew 24, Jesus talks about what the signs will be for the end of the age.

### **Matthew 24:3**

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and **what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**”

Jesus then goes about a long list:

### **Matthew 24:4-6**

**4** And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. **5** For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. **6** And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that **you are not alarmed**, for **this must take place**, but the end is not yet.

There is a long list after verse 6, but I believe the key words as we prepare ourselves for Revelations is “***Do NOT be alarmed, for this must take place.***”

The Lord is reminding us Christians, not to worry, right. Do not be alarmed. Do not be anxious, or depressed for these “must take place.”

### **Matthew 6:25**

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

After reviewing Revelation, I’m starting to understand why God gave us the book of Revelation.

### **Matthew 24:13-14**

**13** But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **14** And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The word “Endure” in Greek (hypomenō, pronounced: **hoop-om-en’-o**) : To tarry behind (not recede or flee). To persevere under misfortunes and trials and to hold fast to one’s faith in Christ.

This is the promise from God and the hope of Revelation

### **John 14:1-4**

**1** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. **2 In my Father's house are many rooms.** If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. **4** And **you know the way to where I am going.**”

In my Father’s house are many rooms: Who is this for? For those who know for certain that if they were to die the next day or at any moment to go to heaven. In the Father’s house are many rooms. That’s why the Father goes ahead of us to “**prepare a place for you.**”

And “where” is the way to where God is going? To the Tree of Life and that is where God dwells!

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