

Revelation Chapter One

Prologue (vv. 1-3)

Chain of Command in Transmission (v.1)

VERSE 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*noun nom.f.s. apokalupsis revelation, disclosure; as an action; generally used of what God discloses; e.g. His plan + noun gen.m.s. Jesus; OT Joshua = Yahweh saves + noun gen.m.s. Christ, strictly, 'one who has been anointed' e.g. for a task; the OT Messiah is the counterpart*], **which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants** [ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ [*rel.pro.acc.f.s. hos which; the antecedent is "revelation" + aor.act.ind.3s. didomi give; as a constantive aorist + pro.dat.3.s. autos him; ref. is Jesus Christ + def.art.w/noun nom.m.s. theos God; ref. is God the Father + aor.act.infin. deiknumi to show, demonstrate, point out, exhibit; "to show" + def.art.w/noun dat.m.p. doulos slave; generally as one who serves in obedience to another's will + pro.gen.m.s. autos him; "His"*], **the things which must soon take place** [ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει [*rel.pro.acc.neut.p. hos; "the things" + pres.act.ind.3s. dei must; as expressing necessity, compulsion or inevitability; here as expressing the inevitability of the Bible prophecy + aor.mid.inf. ginomai become, come to be; here of events which come about, happen, take place + prep en in + noun dat.neut.sing. tachos speed; but with the preposition it means "without delay"; here interpretatively "without undo delay"*]]; **and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John** [καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, [*conj kai and + aor.act.ind.3s. semaino signify, indicate, show; here of making something clear; "communicated" + aor.act.part.nom.m.s. apostello send forth/out; in relation to the sender 'send with a commission' "send with authority" send for a purpose'; the subject is God who commissioned an angel; "He sent" + prep dia + art. w/gen.m.s. angelos angel, angel, messenger + pro.gen.m.3s. autos "His" + art.w/noun dat.m.s. doulos slave, servant; "bond-servant" + pro.gen.3s. autos "His" + noun dat.m.s. John*],

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. Verses 1-3 constitute a prologue (intro) to the book (Gospel of John and 1 John also have prologues).
2. The first three words in the Greek text provide us with a title to the book.
3. The term "revelation" means as disclosing of information not previously known.
4. The term appears without the definite article (anarthrous) indicating the quality of this apocalypse.

5. This book arose in an environment in which various spurious apocalyptic writings circulated purporting to be divinely inspired.
6. This is probably why the book was looked upon with suspicion by the church for some time.
7. The words “of Jesus Christ” indicate that the book is about the Person of Jesus Christ, the glorified God-Man, with respect to his present and future glory.
8. It is a revelation of truth (BD) *about* Christ Himself (cf. 19:10); that is, a disclosure of future events, culminating in His 2nd coming when Christ will be fully revealed to the nations.
9. Also, these words, “of Jesus Christ,” indicate that this revelation comes *from* Christ (hence, we have a plenary genitive).
10. The common title of the book, “The Revelation of John,” merely identifies the human author.
11. The subject is a revelation of Jesus Christ, described in this verse as given by God the Father to Jesus Christ the Son and then revealed “to His servant” by angelic mediation.
12. The revelation of information from the Father to the Son is also mentioned in Jn.3:34-35; 5:20-24; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 24; 16:15; 17:8.
13. The substance of the revelation is described as “things which must soon [or “quickly] take place.”
14. This phrase or expression “soon” (Gk., *en tachei*) indicates that the scope of the prophecy will unfold “soon” or without unnecessary delay.
15. The idea is not that all the details (“things”) will occur soon, but that when it does, it will be certain (cf. Lk.18:8; Acts 12:7; 22:18; 25:4; Rom.16:20).
16. The cognate adverb, *tachu*, is translated “quickly” six times in Revelation (2:16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20).
17. Sometimes the nuance of the expression *en tachei* is that the occurrence will happen fast (as in Lk.18:8; Act.12:7; 22:18); and sometimes it means that which will occur “soon” (as in Acts.25:4; 1Tim.3:14; Rev.22:6).
18. Here it seems best to take the expression as translated in the NAS, “soon.”
19. Once the “things” are set in motion each succeeding event will happen without delay.
20. Obviously when the time is right each prophetic event in the chain will occur “quickly.”
21. The channel through which the revelation comes from Christ to John is “by His angel.”
22. The body of information contained in this book was to be “communicated” [or “signified”] in this fashion.
23. It has been suggested that the angel was Gabriel (cf. Dan.8:16; 9:2, 21-22; Lu.1:26-31).
24. John is said to be the recipient of the revelation, his name occurring four other times in this book (1:4, 9; 21:2; 22:8).
25. That John should be called a bond-slave is not unusual in that this was a term used in reference to other apostles in the NT (cf. Rom.1:1; Phil.1:1; Titus 1:1; Jm.1:11; 2Pet. 1:1; Jude 1).
26. Finally, the information contained in this book is for the education of all believers as seen in the phrase “to show to His bond-servants.”

John's Part (v.2)

VERSE 2 who testified to the word of God (ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

[*rel.pro.nom.m.s. hos who; ref. to John + aor.act.ind.3s. martureo testify, bear witness +*

*art.w/acc.m.s. logos word + art.w/gen.m.s. theos God] **and to the testimony of Jesus***

Christ, even to all that he saw [καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅσα εἶδεν [*conj kai and*

+ *art.w/noun acc.f.s. marturia testimony* + *gen.m.s. Jesus* + *gen.m.s. Christ* + *correl.adj.acc.nt.p. hosos in such an amount as or everything that, whatever; “to all that”* + *aor.act.ind.3s. eidon see; as taking note of something by visual observation*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. In this second verse of the prologue John affirms that he has faithfully communicated what “he saw” to posterity.
2. He has included “all” that he was a witness to, leaving out nothing.
3. He also makes it clear that what he has left for posterity is “the word of God.”
4. This and this alone, he “bore witness to.”
5. The only way he could have done this is to have communicated the things he saw via writing, which he was commanded to do in verse 11.
6. The revelation is not only the Word of God but also “the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
7. In the process of making this book available God the Son faithfully transmitted its contents to an angel who in turn revealed it to the apostle John who in turn bore faithful witness to “all that he saw.”
8. The integrity of Christ and John is underscored here.
9. John was the human eyewitness who faithfully penned all that he heard and saw under the supervision of God the Holy Spirit.
10. John’s integrity as a servant of God is unimpeachable.
11. This is the ultimate mark of all who aspire to communicate BD.
12. The prologue then bears witness to the nature of the subject matter as well as the chain of command involved in the transmission of the “Revelation of Jesus Christ.”
13. This invaluable book comes to us from God the Father through God the Son, through a commissioned angel, and finally through an apostle who visually experienced its contents and later wrote it all down for the benefit of believers living from that point forward.

Threefold Blessing (v.3)

VERSE 3 **Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy**

(*adj.nom.m.s. makarios blessed, happy; without religious connotation ‘fortunate’ or ‘lucky’; used in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount* + *art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. anaginosko, read aloud; cf. Lk.4:16; here of public exposition* + *conj kai* + *art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. akouo hear* + *art.w/noun acc.m.p. logos word* + *art.w/noun gen.f.s. propheteia prophecy*], **and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near** [*καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὃ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς. [conj kai + pres.act.part.nom.m.p. tereo keep + art.acc.neut.p. “the things” + prep en w/pro.dat.3f.s. aute “which” + perf.pass.part.acc.neut.p. grapho write + def.art.nom.m.s. ho + conj gar for + noun nom.m.s. kairos time + adv engus near, close]*].

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. The final verse of the prologue contains a threefold blessing (beatitude) which is invoked: (1) “Blessed is he [singular] who reads”; (2) and those [plural] who hear the words of the prophecy”; (3) and keep [plural] those things which are written in it...”.

2. The one “who reads” or “reads aloud” is the communicator or pastor-teacher (CA) whose responsibility it is to study and teach the entire realm of revealed truth.
3. Obviously he would need a copy of the book in the original language.
4. He would also need to translate from the Greek text of Revelation into the common language of his flock.
5. Before he could do a credible job he would have to have been trained in the ICE hermeneutic.
6. Simple reading of the text would not explain its intended meaning.
7. The Greek participle “he who reads” is a compound verb that literally means to “know again” and it means more than just reading aloud to an audience.
8. This verb is used in the NT in connection with public reading and exposition of the text of Scripture (1Thess.5:27; Col.4:16; Eph.3:4; 2Cor.1:13; 3:2; Lk.4:16 provides an example of reading plus interpretation).
9. The cognate noun *anagnosis* is found in the instruction of Paul to Timothy with respect to his pulpit duties (1Tim. 4:13: “Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and to doctrine”).
10. Those who hear with understanding are likewise said to be blessed.
11. That of course refers to his congregation.
12. For both “reader” and “hearer” to be blessed also requires adherence to the things revealed in the study of Revelation.
13. The one who studies and teaches this book, as well as those who GAP its contents, there is the attendant obligation to “keep” or “guard” the teachings herein.
14. All three participles are in the present tense, implying continual communication, listening, and observing.
15. This book is the only book in the Bible that contains this direct promise of blessing.
16. The blessing promised here is the first of seven beatitudes in the book (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).
17. This seems to anticipate that many, over the course of the centuries, would neglect or distort its prophetic message.
18. John wanted this book published and expounded in the churches of his day and beyond.
19. The importance of this verse is seen by the fact that the adherence aspect of this blessing is repeated at the end of the book (22:7: “Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”).
20. The verb “heed” means to watch over or guard something that has great value.
21. Because of all the study that has been done on this book over the centuries (and some of it is quite valuable) we who live in the shadow of the 2nd advent have a distinct advantage; therefore, “from everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more” (Lk. 12:48).
22. This book is described by the phrase “the words of this prophecy,” implying that the book as a whole is prophetic.
23. The perfect passive participle “which are written in it” anticipates the original autograph penned by John shortly after his visionary experience on the island of Patmos.
24. Obviously this is the only way posterity could benefit from the things revealed to the apostle John.
25. Furthermore, this perfect participle [“which are written”] substantiates the fact that this book was completed *before* John penned the inspired prologue (inspired afterthought).

26. The urgency in assimilation of its contents is emphasized by the phrase “for the time is near [or “at hand”].”
27. The noun for “time” is *kairos* and refers to a season or period of time that is characterized by certain developments, compared to time viewed as a succession of certain events as per the noun *chronos*.
28. The season in view is the last days inaugurated with the strategic victory of Christ at His resurrection, ascension and session, which include the church age and the seven year tribulation leading to the establishment of the 1000 year reign of Christ and the ultimate goal of bible prophecy which is the establishment of the eternal state.
29. All these things are within the scope of “the words of [this] prophecy.”
30. The expression “at hand” or “near” indicates the commencement of the earliest phase of fulfillment (as related to the book of Revelation), which began with the church of Ephesus, which represents the first of seven eras of the current dispensation.
31. In summary, in order to have any chance of making known the true meaning and setting of the many prophecies within this book we must adhere to the Royal Chain of Command, which includes a properly trained pastor-teacher; a word by word, verse by verse, analysis of the entire book, in accordance with the grammatical-historical exegesis of Scripture; a group of positive believers under academic discipline; orientation to the One given to us to lead us into all truth and disclose to us things to come— God the Holy Spirit (Jn.16:13); function of GAP with a view to acclimation to our place and time in prophetic fulfillment; and a harmonization of prophecy found throughout the Bible.
32. Then there is the importance of adherence to the true doctrine of immanency.
33. The false view of immanency says that believers living prior to the coming of Christ “can’t know” their place relative to the coming of the Lord.
34. This view overlooks the fact that the regathering of the Jews from the nations within the church age is the primal sign that tells alerts us to the final or rapture generation.
35. This understanding is based on the interpretation of Jesus answer to His disciples query regarding “the sign” [singular] of His return in Matthew 24.
36. The answer is found in the verses dealing with the parable of the fig tree (see doctrine) as well as the prophecy of the restoration of the land and the people in Ezekiel chapters 34 through 37.
37. Another factor of orientation to one’s place in the prophetic scheme of things is the 7000 years of history mentioned in 2 Peter 3:8-9.
38. Obviously we are now at the very end of the 6th millennium.
39. Then there is the recognition that we are living in a time when the corporate church on earth is in bad shape.
40. We are now living in the 7th and final stage of the church age based on the interpretation of the 7 churches featured in chapters two and three of the Book of Revelation.
41. The 7th stage is the Laodicean era of which we are a part.
42. Last, and certainly not least, there is the prophecy of Hosea 6:2 which projects two thousand years from some date until the Jews enjoy restoration under messianic blessing.
43. This is to be dated from their formal rejection by Jesus Christ on the last day of the 69th week of years which was Monday, March 30th 33 AD (this puts us at either 2033 or 2006 depending upon whether we use a 365 or 360 day year).
44. The doctrine of Daniel’s 70 Weeks of years (Dan.9:24-27) is an essential key to the interpretation of Revelation.