

Who Am I?

Unlocking and Understanding the Mystery of Christ

Week Eight

Day Four

A REVELATION FROM GOD!

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”
(Revelation 1:8)



Unlocking the Mystery

To bring the end of this New Testament Survey to a close, I need to take you to a book to which many are afraid to go. This book is very scary for many because it is hard to understand. It is an apocalyptic style of literature, meaning it is highly symbolic and contains images of how the world will end, how Jesus Christ will judge His church and Satan, and what happens after. This book was originally written by John as a vision from Jesus to encourage believers to the very end. It is true that persecution of Christians will increase, but it is also true that Jesus is the Victor and will reward those that stay faithful to the end.

In this lesson, we will visit a few details from this book of Revelation, but also you will be given access to some crude reality of what Christians around the world and over time have faced for their faith. I do not pretend to completely understand this book due to it being prophetic of that which is to come. What I do understand is the promises of Jesus that come from this book which encourages me to walk a life of integrity for Christ. It is such a mystery that the Son of God came the first time as a lowly baby in a stable, grew to the man that took the sin of the world upon Himself, died and resurrected, ascended into heaven, and will be coming back in the clouds as the King of King and Lord of Lords. His promises will be fulfilled and His work here complete.



Understanding the Word

The book of Revelation came about in the midst of Christian persecution. John was exiled to the Island of Patmos as a prison sentence. Revelations 1:1 says that God gave this to him to show His servants what must soon take place. His people were getting anxious about Jesus fulfilling His promises. The longer time passed the more anxious some became, so God gave this vision to remind His people that He will fulfill all that He has promised and that it is our job to be ready. The book of Revelation brings much controversy over details such as time and order. All of that will be settled

in the end...bottom line, be ready and don't be deceived. He is the Alpha and Omega, who is, who was, and who will be.

DIGGING DEEPER: Revelation 1-3

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Revelation 1:12-18

V.13 Who is the someone "like a son of man?" _____

V. 14-16 ...dressed in a _____ reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. His head and hair were white like _____, as white as _____, and His eyes were like blazing _____. His feet were like _____ glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of _____. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp, double-edged _____. His face was like the _____ shining in all its brilliance.

V. 17-18 "Do not be _____. I am the First and the Last. I am the _____ One; I was _____, and behold I am _____ forever and ever! And I hold the _____ of death and Hades."

In the following chapters and verses, you will be looking at the "Seven Churches of Revelation." It is important to understand that SEVEN means whole or complete. When you take time to study these specific churches realize He was talking about the complete church which includes all believers. This is a great time to do a self-evaluation of your own life and heart to see where you are in Christ and what Christ thinks.

To each of these seven churches, Christ reveals Himself by a different name or description of who He is. He goes on to tell what He knows about them and what He holds against them. He tells what will happen if they do not change their ways and then encourages them with reward if they do change. Take some time to read these chapters and ask God to open your eyes to His message. You may recognize yourself in many or some of these churches. It is my prayer that you allow Him to teach you and take you where He desires you to go. Use your own words to write what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. I have given you an example to follow.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Revelation 2-3

Church name	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamum	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Description Of The Church					<i>Sleeping Church</i>		
Description Of Jesus					<i>Will come like a thief Will come when least expected</i>		
Praise What They Are Doing Right If Anything					<i>There are a few dressed in white and doing what they are supposed to be doing</i>		
Critique What They Are Doing Wrong If Anything					<i>Deeds are not complete in God's sight. Not obeying or repenting</i>		
Consequence If Nothing Changes					<i>Blotted out of the book of life</i>		
Reward To The Ones That Overcome					<i>Will not be blotted out of the book of life. Acknowledged before God</i>		

Revelation outlines the end times with symbols of lamp stands, stars, a scroll, seals, trumpets, bowls, a beast, a lamb, and much, much more. Understanding of this book comes from prior scriptures that have already spoken of the details these symbols represent. The Old Testament prophets spoke a great deal on these last days, as did the Psalms. The writers of the Gospels wrote of Jesus' teaching on the end times, and Paul's letters to the Thessalonians discloses much. Below is a very brief understanding of words/topics you will encounter when studying the end times. Scriptural references have been excluded as a study of that magnitude would be too much for this day's study.

Last Days	*The days leading into the End Times *There will be an increase of false prophets/teachers and much religious compromise *There will be an increase of crime and disregard of God's expectations *There will be an increase of famine and earthquakes *There will be a decrease of love and a breakdown of family *Persecution and intolerance of Christians will increase *The Spirit of God will be poured out and God's Word will be preached to all nations
Rapture	*The word rapture does not occur but a taking out will. *The dead in Christ will rise to meet Jesus in the air followed by the believers that are still alive *It will happen very quickly; like a blink of an eye *No one knows the day or time
Tribulation	*A period of seven years following the rapture *The Anti-Christ will rise to power *A period of what will seem to be World Peace that will result in Hell breaking loose *Demonic powers will manifest *The Gospel will still go forth *There will be severe persecution to anyone proclaiming Christ *Many Jews will come to Christ *Two witnesses that were killed will resurrect and proclaim Gospel truth *The battle of Armageddon will be fought and God's wrath poured out on the ungodly *Christ will triumph in the end
Anti-Christ	*This will be a ruler that will rise in power before or during the tribulation *He is known as the Lawless one *He will appear as a world peace leader in the midst of chaos *An image of Him will be set up in the temple in Jerusalem and he will demand to be worshipped *After a time of peacemaking he will display his evil *He will do deceptive miracles through Satan's powers and will demand the mark of the Beast; 666 to be taken by everyone
Return of Christ	*His return will come from the clouds *He will have with Him an army of Saints *He will judge and bind (eventually fully destroy) Satan *He will gather and judge/reward the tribulation Saints
Millennium	*Christ will reign on this earth for 1,000 years *Satan will be bound *God's children will have rest *Nature will be restored *
Final Judgment	*Final battle of Gog and Magog *The wicked will be raised to face judgment at which time they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire
New Heaven/New Earth	*God will destroy this present earth and bring down a New Heaven and New Earth *God will dwell among His people and He will be their God *Our worship of the Lord will be unhindered, inspiring, and beautiful



In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus explains many things regarding the end times. He says that we will not know the day or the hour so be ready all the time. He also tells us to watch the signs or prophecies come to fulfillment. We are seeing many of those things line up in our life time. One thing I want to bring back to your attention is the topic of persecution. In the lesson, “One Dark Knight,” I discussed being willing to suffer much and possibly even die for Jesus. **Revelation 6:9-11** talks of the fifth seal that was opened and of John seeing under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained. There will be a special place for those that are persecuted and killed (martyred) for His sake. There are many countries facing much of that persecution today. We see it in Scripture even from the days Jesus walked this earth, and it still exists today. I do believe we will see it in our own country, The United States of America, in due time, but I am asking you to start making yourselves aware of the reality of it now. The Voice of the Martyrs is just one organization that supports Christians all over the world in countries that are hostile to them. Through the grace of God, they are able to get literature to the underground churches, and they have resources for us to learn how to write letters of encouragement and to governments on a person’s behalf. They give information on those that have been bound by persecution and give guidelines on how to pray. Please visit www.persecution.com to learn more.

We need to be ready for His return. We study to learn more about Jesus. We study to know His mind and thoughts, commands and expectations, promises and fulfilled prophecies. He gives us much information, some we can comprehend now and some we will never know until the end has come. Ask God to open your heart and mind to what you need to know now, and then walk in faith that you are equipped to do His work. Keep studying and keep asking as this will increase not only your knowledge but also your faith and wisdom. It is okay to not know all the details or explanations, but it is not okay to say you live for Him and never study His Word.