

Episode: Revelation Series No. 01

Narrator: John the Apostle

Primary Scriptures: Revelation 1

Story Summary: Background of *Revelation*, Revelation 1

Location: Roman Empire, Island of Patmos

Time:

AD 30	Jesus crucified and resurrected; Pentecost; Holy Spirit arrives
AD 48	Paul's "famine visit" to Jerusalem; First Missionary Journey starts
AD 50	Council at Jerusalem; Start of Second Missionary Journey.
AD 53	Start of Third Missionary Journey
AD 67/68	Paul probably killed in Rome
AD 85-95	John writes <i>Revelation</i>

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Revelation 1:3, 1:8, 1:18-19

Due to lack of trustworthy records, it is often difficult to verify statements about history, especially when those statements are written by writers who may be biased. This is an ongoing challenge for those who study the history of the early churches.

One fact remains indisputable: the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and virtually wiped out that city in 70 AD. For a long time afterward, Jews were out of favor with the Roman government. It seems likely that, from 70 AD on, Christians sought to separate themselves from being associated with their Jewish counterparts and any favor or special privileges Jews once had from the Romans were no longer valuable.

It was about this time when the churches started growing because of dedicated evangelistic efforts, as well as the advent of the gospels and letters which would become the bulk of the New Testament. Even though the church was growing, it was still too small to receive much recognition or persecution from the Roman Government. However, there were localized pockets of persecution.

John wrote *Revelation* as the first century was coming to a close. Jesus had been dead for more than five decades, and the Christians were unsure about when He would return. False teachers tormented churches throughout the empire. Some churches were not doing so well. Jewish leaders were no longer persecuting Christians, but persecution by local officials and citizen groups was growing. Overall, *Revelation* was written in a time of great uncertainty and turmoil.

To modern readers, *Revelation* appears to be a confusing mix of prophecies and symbols that address mostly events future to modern times. It is often unclear what these events are or when they will occur. Although it is a difficult read, it is still a valuable part of the New Testament. As John wrote in the opening: "Blessed are those who read and hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things written in it; for the time is at hand." You don't have to understand *Revelation* to be blessed by reading it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the first three verses of *Revelation*. Where did John get his revelation? Where did Jesus get His revelation, and why did He receive it? How did John get his revelation?
 2. Discuss the possible tie of Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 22:3-5.
 3. Why is it valuable to read *Revelation* even if you don't understand it?
 4. According to Revelation 1:4-8, what is the relationship of Jesus and God and the Father?
 5. Do you think Revelation 1:7 ties to Mark 13:26? Does it tie to 1 Thessalonians 4:17?
 6. Where was John when he received the revelation? When did he receive it?
 7. When do the events of *Revelation* take place?
1. John got his revelation from Jesus Christ. Jesus got his revelation from God, so that Jesus could show his servants what must soon take place. The angel made the revelation known to John. 2. The letter is written so the servants of Jesus will know what is going to take place. In the end, the servants of Jesus will serve him forever. 3. Per Revelation 1:3, you get a blessing for reading it aloud, hear it and take it to heart. 6. On the island of Patmos. He received it on the Lord's Day, Sunday. 7. Per Revelation 1:19, they take place now and in the future.

Application Questions:

1. John wrote *Revelation* about six or seven decades after the death of Jesus, when it surely reassured the early Christians that Jesus was coming back. It has now been nearly 20 centuries since He died. Does *Revelation* encourage you that Jesus will return? Does it cause you to behave or believe any differently?
2. Much of *Revelation* is hard to understand. Does that cause you to want to study it more or to study it less? If you were to study it more, how would you choose your study material?
3. Does it make a difference whether you read Revelation silently or aloud? If aloud, should you read it to somebody? (Revelation 1:3)
4. Revelation 1 gives many descriptions of Jesus as he is in heaven. How do you visualize Jesus in heaven?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Revelation 1:1 says the reason for the revelation to John is to show what must "soon" take place. Do you think that means all the events have already taken place, or that "soon" could mean a very long time?
2. Revelation is written for the benefit of God's servants according to Revelation 1:1. What does it take to be one of God's servants? Are you willing to be a servant of God?
3. Is there anybody you trust enough to teach you about *Revelation*, or do you think you need to figure it out on your own? If the former, who? If the latter, how would you go about figuring it out on your own?