

I. John's Personal Introduction and Greeting (Rev. 1:1-4)

- A. Within the first few sentences of Revelation John the beloved lists two reasons why Jesus wanted this book to be in the hands of His church.
1. It reveals Jesus - The book of Revelation is primarily a book of the revealing of the person and work of Jesus Christ. You're reading revelation through the wrong lens if you're not walking away thinking about who He is.
 2. Prepares the Church – An even greater preparatory reality than knowing the coming events leading up to the return of our Lord is knowing His heart and purpose behind them. The leadership and kindness of Jesus in giving us this book does both.
- B. Blessings of the book – The book of Revelation is the only book of the bible which carries with it special blessings to the one who studies it (reads). As you study the book you must engage with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to renew your heart and mind through it (hears). When your heart and mind have been renewed concerning who Jesus is and what He is doing in the last days, then you are positioned to partner with Him as He transitions the earth to the age to come (keeps).

II. John's review of the Beauty and Glory of Jesus (Rev. 1:5-7)

- A. Jesus gives us these insights into His heart and ministry to form the way we pray, prophesy, and serve. No aspect of God's grace more powerfully transforms our emotions or satisfies us than when the Holy Spirit reveals God to our hearts.
1. Paul gladly gave up everything as he saw the magnificence, or excellence, of Jesus! The potency of the knowledge of Jesus is what we have been created for and we would give up anything to position our hearts to gain more insight into Jesus' magnificence and to feel the power of it. (Phil 3:8)
 2. The Spirit was given to us to be our escort into the deep things of God's heart. He knows more about Jesus than we can imagine. He will reveal as much of Jesus as we are hungry for. He gives to us based on our hunger for more. He will not force-feed us. (Jn. 16:13-14, 1 Cor. 2:10-12, Eph. 3:8)

B. John reviews the beauty of Jesus that most impacted his heart as Jesus showed him His glory and end time plans.

1. ***Faithful witness:*** Jesus told the truth about God, man, Israel, culture, the end times, etc. Jesus embodied truth in His life and words. Jesus revealed the truth and stood for it regardless of the cost. It resulted in His death. Jesus did not hold back the negative (rebukes or declarations of judgment) or exaggerate the positive (affirmations or promises). He is the perfect faithful representation of God. (Jhn 14:9, 18:37; Heb. 1:3)
2. ***Firstborn among the dead:*** Jesus is preeminent in authority over the supernatural realm as its human heir. He occupies the first place of authority and honor as the firstborn of creation. This does not mean He was the first one created, but rather that He is the “first” in *cause and authority*. The power over creation “begins” with Him. He is the first man with a resurrected body and is in the position of the firstborn son as the unique heir of God. He is the *firstborn* from the dead and the *firstfruits* of those who have died (1 Cor. 1:15-18, 15:23; Col. 1:18).
3. ***Ruler of the kings of the earth:*** Jesus is preeminent in authority over the earthly realm of government. A main theme of the book of Revelation is that Jesus is returning to earth to rule all the nations as King of all kings. In the Millennium, all the kings of the earth will be saved and worship Him. (Ps. 72:11, 102:15, 138:4; Isa. 62:2).
4. ***The One who Loves Us:*** Jesus uses His position of honor as heir in the realm of the spirit and ruler of the earth to express love to us. He genuinely and perfectly loves us and desires us to be His bride forever. (Jhn. 13:1, 15:9; Eph. 5:2)
5. ***He Washed our Sins in His Own Blood:*** The pinnacle expression of love for someone is their willingness to give up their life for you. Our God demonstrated the depths of love when He gave up His blood for us. This was His desire not His obligation. (Jhn. 13:8, 15:13; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
6. ***Made us a Kingdom of Priests:*** He not only died for those who hated Him and gave them eternal life, He also qualified and exalted them to partnership with Him. We will participate with His rule now and in the age to come primarily through the intimacy of communion. (Prayer) (Mat. 25:23, 1 Cor. 6:2-3)

7. ***The Coming One:*** The primary theme and story line in the book of Revelation is Jesus' coming to the earth on the clouds to be received as king. From the beginning, it has been His desire to physically dwell with His people forever. His coming is the hope and fullness of life for all of creation. (Mat. 25:31, Titus 2:13, 1 Jhn 3:2)
8. ***The One who they Pierced:*** The Lord of Glory humbled Himself to the point of death at the hands of the ones whom He was dying for. He upheld the breath in the lungs of those who were snuffing out His. (Is. 53:7, Jhn 19:10-11, Acts. 2:36)

III. Jesus pronounces His Eternal Supreme Leadership (Rev. 1:8)

- A. ***Alpha and Omega:*** The Greek alphabet starts with alpha and ends with omega. John's readers were primarily Greeks who understood that the name Alpha and Omega indicated completeness, meaning the first and last letters and all the letters in between (Jesus is the A to Z of life). This title emphasizes Jesus' sovereignty (power over all), transcendence (infinitely superior to all), self-existence (eternal nature), and self-sufficiency (needing nothing from His creation). (Jhn 17:5, Acts 17:24-25, Col. 1:16)
- B. ***Beginning and End:*** He is the reason and end goal of humanity and has authority over everything in-between. This verse does not teach that Jesus was the first being created, but that He is the ruler, source, and origin of all creation. It has the idea that He has the first and final say and power to your life and all of humanity. (John 1:3, 3:27, Col. 1:16)
- C. ***Was and Is and Is to Come:*** I believe this title is specially tied to His relationship with the earth. He was dwelling with man He is dwelling now through His Spirit and He will come and dwell again. His concern, longing, and purposes are focused on this planet and its inhabitants. (2 Sam. 7:1-16, Ps. 132:13-14)
- D. ***The Almighty:*** This word literally means "the one who has his hand on everything." It speaks of the great sovereign control of Jesus over everything. This great word, "Almighty," is used ten times in the New Testament, and nine of the ten times are in the Book of Revelation. This book has a striking emphasis on Jesus' sovereignty over the events we're about to see, the understanding that He has His hand on everything and is in perfect control. (Ps. 115:3, Jer. 32:17, Mat. 19:26)

IV. Personal Growth in Revelation (*A-R-K Prayer*)

A. The acronym A-R-K represents three different prayer focuses as you seek to encounter more of who Jesus is. The Ark of the covenant was associated with the presence and glory of God. Noah's Ark was a place of safety in the storm. In that day, the name of the Lord will be the ark of safety and the ark of His presence. I'm using the word ark in both ways, as the ark of His glory, and stability or safety.

1. ***Agreement:*** Make declarations of agreement with the identity of Jesus you're focused on. Let's use Jesus as the "Faithful Witness" as an example.

Pray, "Jesus, You are the faithful witness. You took a stand with courage and love. You always speak the truth and I believe You. I can be totally confident in who God is through your witness"

2. ***Revelation:*** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you more detail into the specific identity of Jesus that you're focused on.

Pray, "Reveal Yourself to me and show me more of Your glory as the faithful witness."

3. ***Keep the Revelation:*** Respond in faith and obedience to this specific truth of Jesus. Intercede for yourself that you would have more of this particular nature or character of God formed in you.

Pray, "I will stand for truth regardless what it costs me. Help me to do this."