

# Revelation-Week 3

Revelation 1:7-8

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## I. Introduction

- a. Read - Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."
- b. The book of Revelation is the ultimate action thriller. Anyone who loves books filled with adventure and excitement will certainly love this book.
- c. The amazing Revelation contains drama, suspense, mystery, passion, and horror.
  - i. It tells of apostasy by the church.
  - ii. It speaks of unprecedented economic collapse, and of the ultimate war of human history—the war that will truly end all wars.
  - iii. It describes natural disasters rivaled in intensity only by the worldwide Flood of Noah's day, as God will pour out His wrath on the sin-cursed earth.
  - iv. It speaks of the political intrigues that will lead to the ascendancy of the most evil and powerful dictator the world has ever known.
  - v. Finally, and most terrifying of all, it describes the final judgment and the sentencing of all rebels, angelic and human, to eternal torment in hell.
- d. The book of Revelation is thus a book of astounding drama, horror, and tragedy.
  - i. Yet, amazingly, it is also a book of hope and joy with a happy ending, as sin, sorrow, and death are forever banished (21:4; 22:3).
- e. It will take some time for the drama to unfold, so, like any good writer, John gives his readers a preview of what will come later in the book.
- f. By so doing, he reveals the theme of the book of Revelation:
  - i. It is a book about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. In verses 7 and 8 John presents five truths about His second coming: its necessity, glory, scope, response, and certainty.

## II. The Necessity of the Second Coming.

- a. Behold, He is coming (1:7a)
- b. After the introduction and greetings (vv. 1–6) that we discussed last week, verse 7 begins the first great prophetic oracle in the book of Revelation.
- c. The exclamation *idou* (**Behold**) is an arresting call to attention.
  - i. It is intended to arouse the mind and heart to consider what follows.
  - ii. This is the first of its twenty-five uses in Revelation—a book filled with startling truths that demand careful attention.
  - iii. Fittingly, the first thing John calls attention to is the glorious truth that **He** [Jesus] **is coming**.
- d. The present tense of *erchomai* (is coming) suggests that Christ is already on the way, and thus that His coming is certain.
- e. The "coming (or expected) One" was a title for the Messiah. John the Baptist, "while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, [and] sent word by his disciples and said to Him, 'Are You the Expected [from *erchomai*] One, or shall we look for someone else?' " (Matt. 11:2–3; cf. Luke 7:19–20; John 3:31; 6:14; 11:27).
- f. *Erchomai* is used nine times in Revelation to refer to Jesus Christ; seven times by our Lord in reference to Himself. So, the theme of the book of Revelation is the coming One, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. Despite the scoffers who deny the Second Coming (2 Pet. 3:3–4), the Bible repeatedly affirms that Jesus will return.

- i. That truth appears in more than five hundred verses throughout the Bible.
  - ii. It has been estimated that one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming.
  - iii. Jesus repeatedly spoke of His return (e.g., Matt. 16:27; 24–25; 26:64; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26) and warned believers to be ready for it (e.g., Matt. 24:42, 44; 25:13; Luke 12:40; 21:34–36).
  - iv. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth is thus a central theme in Scripture.
- h. In addition to the explicit prophecies of the Second Coming, there are several compelling reasons why Christ must return.
- i. First, the promises of God require that Jesus return. Genesis 49:10, the first prophecy of Messiah's rule, reads, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."
  - i. Psalm 2:6–9 declares: But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware."
  - ii. Isaiah also predicted Messiah's earthly rule: (Isa. 9:6–7)
  - iii. Jeremiah foresaw Israel's future blessedness under Messiah's reign: (Jer. 23:5–8)
- j. Those predictions and many others that speak of Messiah's earthly reign (e.g., Dan. 7:13–14, 18; Zech. 14:4–9; Mal. 4:1–4) were not fulfilled at Christ's first coming.
- i. Therefore, He must come again to fulfill them, since "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).
- k. Second, the promise of Jesus requires His return.
  - i. As I just stated, Jesus repeatedly predicted that He would return (cf. Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20).
  - ii. John 14:2–3 gives one important reason for His return: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."
  - iii. In a parable (Luke 19:11–27), Jesus pictured Himself as a nobleman who would one day return to His estate and destroy those who had rejected His rule. Jesus' promises—both to reward those who believe in Him and judge those who reject Him—demand His return.
- l. Third, the guarantee of the Holy Spirit requires that Jesus return.
  - i. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 15:26; 16:13), who would "teach [the inspired authors of the New Testament] all things, and bring to [their] remembrance all that [Jesus] said to [them]" (John 14:26).
  - ii. So every New Testament promise of the Second Coming (cf., in addition to those already mentioned 1 Cor. 1:4–8; Phil. 3:20–21; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 2:19; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:13; 1 John 3:2; etc.) is a promise from the Spirit of truth.
  - iii. Jesus must return because the legitimacy of the Trinity is at stake.
- m. Fourth, God's program for the church demands that Jesus return.
  - i. In Revelation 3:10 Jesus promised, "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."
  - ii. To keep that promise, He must return for His church before the onset of "the hour of testing." That event, known as the Rapture of the church, is one aspect of Christ's second coming.
  - iii. Following the Rapture, Christ will reward His church for its faithful service to Him (Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:12–15; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2 Tim. 1:12, 18; 4:8; Rev. 11:18).
  - iv. That time of reward presupposes that Christ will have already returned for His church.
  - v. At the end of the seven-year tribulation period, the glorified church, the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7–9; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22–30), will return in triumph with Him (Rev. 19:14; cf. v. 8).
  - vi. At that time the church will be vindicated before the unbelieving world, making it evident who truly belongs to the Lord (cf. 2 Tim. 2:19).
  - vii. God's program for the church—to rescue it from the terrors of the Tribulation, reward it for faithful service, and vindicate it in exaltation in His kingdom before the world—requires that Christ return.
- n. Fifth, Christ's program for the unbelieving nations requires His return.
  - i. Psalm 2 predicts a time when Christ will rule the nations, something that did not take place at His first coming.
  - ii. Similarly, Joel 3:1–2, 9–17 (cf. Isa. 11:1–5; Mic. 4:1–8; Zeph. 3:8; Matt. 25:31–46) describes His judgment of the unbelieving nations.
  - iii. Since no such judgment took place at Christ's first coming, He must return to carry it out.
- o. Sixth, God's program for Israel demands that Christ return.
  - i. The Bible teaches that God is not finished with Israel, His covenant people.
  - ii. Although he was the Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 2:7), Paul nevertheless wrote, "God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! ...
  - iii. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew" (Rom. 11:1–2).
  - iv. Speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God declared in the strongest terms that He would never permanently set aside Israel: (Jer. 31:35–37)

- v. “Thus says the Lord, ‘If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.’ ” (Jer. 33:25–26)
- p. In addition to continued existence as a nation, God promised Israel salvation, peace, prosperity, security, and a kingdom (e.g., Deut. 4:30–31; Isa. 9:6–7; 11:11–12; 60:10–14; Jer. 23:5–8; 30–33; 46:28; Ezek. 36–37; 40–48; Dan. 9:20–27; 12:1–3; Hos. 2:14–23; 3:4–5; 14:4–7; Joel 3:18–21; Amos 9:8–15; Obad. 17, 21; Mic. 4:8; 7:14–20; Zeph. 3:14–20; Zech. 13–14; Matt. 19:28; Acts 1:6–7).
  - i. Since those promises were not realized at Christ’s first coming, He must return to fulfill them.
- q. Seventh, Christ’s humiliation demands that He return.
  - i. At His first coming, He was rejected, reviled, abused, and executed as a common criminal. But that cannot be the way the story ends.
  - ii. One day, “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and ... every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11).
  - iii. At His sham trial “But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matt. 26:63–64).
  - iv. It is inconceivable that the last view the world will have of the Son of God is that of a bleeding, dying, crucified criminal.
  - v. Jesus Christ must return to reveal His glory.
- r. Eighth, the judgment of Satan demands that Christ return.
  - i. Satan is the temporary ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), who uses the power of death to enslave men (Heb. 2:14–15). But Jesus, the rightful ruler (cf. Rev. 5:1ff.), will return to destroy him (a process that began with His first coming; Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8) and reclaim what is rightfully His.
- s. Ninth, the expectation of believers demands that Christ return.
  - i. “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only,” wrote Paul to the Corinthians, “we are of all men most to be pitied” (1 Cor. 15:19).
  - ii. Believers are those who are constantly “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Titus 2:13); those “who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).
  - iii. The hope that Christ will one day return and take believers to heaven to live forever in His presence provides hope and comfort (John 14:1–3; 1 Thess. 4:18).

### III. The Glory of the Second Coming.

- a. with the clouds, (1:7b)
- b. **Clouds** in Scripture frequently symbolize God’s presence. A cloud was used as the visible manifestation of God’s presence with Israel during the wilderness wandering (Ex. 13:21–22; 16:10; Num. 10:34).
- c. At the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, “a thick cloud upon the mountain” symbolized God’s presence (Ex. 19:16; cf. 20:21; 24:15–18).
- d. When the Lord communicated with Moses at the Tent of Meeting (the tabernacle), “the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses” (Ex. 33:9; cf. 34:5).
- e. Both the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38) and the temple (1 Kings 8:10–12) were filled with a cloud symbolizing God’s glory at their dedications.
- f. Jesus ascended to heaven on a cloud (Acts 1:9); believers will ascend with clouds at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17), and, as the present verse indicates, Christ will return with **clouds** (cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30).
- g. The **clouds** picture Christ’s descent from heaven. More significantly, they symbolize the brilliant light that accompanies God’s presence—a light so powerful that no one could see it and live (Ex. 33:20).
- h. The appearance of the blazing glory of Jesus Christ, “the radiance of [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature” (Heb. 1:3), and the lesser brilliance of the countless angels and the redeemed who accompany Him, will be both an indescribable and terrifying pageant.

### IV. The Scope of the Second Coming.

- a. ...and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. (1:7c)
- b. During the incarnation, Christ’s glory was veiled.
- c. Only Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of it at the Transfiguration.
- d. But at His second coming **every eye will see Him**; His glory will be obvious to the entire human race.
- e. John divides those who will see the Second Coming into two groups.
- f. **Those who pierced Him** does not refer to the Roman soldiers involved in Christ’s crucifixion but to the unbelieving Jews who instigated His death.

- g. In Zechariah 12:10 God says, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”
- h. Peter affirmed that the Jewish people were responsible for Christ’s execution, boldly declaring
  - i. Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:22–23; cf. 3:14–15)
- i. Israel’s mourning, noted in Zechariah 12:10, will be that of genuine repentance.
  - i. Many Jews will be saved during the Tribulation, both the 144,000 and their converts.
  - ii. But for many others, the Second Coming will be the time of their salvation.
  - iii. It will be “in that day [that] a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity” (Zech. 13:1).
- j. John describes the second group as **all the tribes of the earth**, a reference to the unbelieving Gentile nations.
- k. Like the Jewish people, they too **will mourn over** Christ.
  - i. Some of that mourning may relate to the repentance of those who are saved at that time (7:9–10, 14).
  - ii. But unlike the Jewish nation, the Gentiles’ mourning will not generally result from genuine repentance.
- l. **Mourn** is from *koptō*, which literally means “to cut.”
  - i. The word became associated with mourning due to the pagans’ practice of cutting themselves when in extreme grief or despair.
  - ii. First Kings 18:28 records that the frenzied, panicked prophets of Baal “cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them” in a desperate attempt to get their god’s attention. The Israelites were strictly forbidden to engage in such pagan rituals (Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1).
- m. The Gentiles’ mourning, for the most part, will be prompted by terror, not repentance.
  - i. They will mourn not for the Christ they rejected, but over their doom.
  - ii. They will “not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts” (rev. 9:21).

## V. The Response to the Second Coming.

- a. Even so. Amen. (1:7d)
  - i. Having given the response of both believers and unbelievers to Christ’s second coming, John interjects his own response.
  - ii. Using the strongest words of affirmation both in Greek (*nai*; **even so**) and Hebrew (**amen**), John pleads for the Lord Jesus Christ to return.

## VI. The Certainty of the Second Coming.

- a. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (1:8)
- b. In this verse **the Lord God** puts His signature on the prophecy of the Second Coming recorded in the previous verse.
- c. Three of His divine attributes guarantee the certainty of the pledge of Christ’s return.
- d. **Alpha and the Omega** emphasizes God’s omniscience.
  - i. **Alpha** is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and **Omega** is the last.
  - ii. All knowledge is conveyed through the letters of the alphabet; thus God’s designation of Himself as **the Alpha and the Omega** affirms that He has all knowledge.
  - iii. He knows, therefore, the certainty of this promise.
- e. As the one **who is and who was and who is to come**, God’s transcendent, eternal presence is not confined by time or space or any feature or event in them.
  - i. There is no possible contingency of which He is unaware regarding the Second Coming.
  - ii. So, His promise that the Lord Jesus Christ will return settles the issue.
- f. The designation of God as **the Almighty** (cf. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22) affirms His omnipotence.
  - i. Since He is all powerful, nothing can hinder Him from carrying out His sovereign will.
  - ii. No one or nothing can possibly prevent Christ from returning in glory as described in verse 7.
- g. Jesus came the first time in humiliation; He will return in exaltation.
  - i. He came the first time to be killed; He will return to kill His enemies.
  - ii. He came the first time to serve; He will return to be served.
  - iii. He came the first time as the suffering servant; He will return as the conquering king.
- h. The challenge the book of Revelation makes to every person is to be ready for His return.
  - i. John Phillips writes,
 

One of the most stirring pages in English history tells of the conquests and crusades of Richard I, the Lionhearted. While Richard was away trouncing Saladin, his kingdom fell on bad times. His sly and graceless brother, John, usurped all the prerogatives of the king and misruled the realm. The people of England suffered, longing for the return of the king, and

praying that it might be soon. Then one day Richard came. He landed in England and marched straight for his throne. Around that glittering coming, many tales are told, woven into the legends of England. (One of them is the story of Robin Hood.) John's castles tumbled like ninepins. Great Richard laid claim to his throne, and none dared stand in his path. The people shouted their delight. They rang peal after peal on the bells. The Lion was back! Long live the king! One day a King greater than Richard will lay claim to a realm greater than England. Those who have abused the earth in His absence, seized His domains, and mismanaged His world will all be swept aside. (*Exploring Revelation*, rev. ed., Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 22–23)

j. Only those “who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8), who love Him and acknowledge Him as the rightful king, will enjoy the blessings of His kingdom.