



UNLOCKING THE REVELATION CODE

Episode Two: Revelation 1

No other book of the Bible contains more mysteries, allegories, metaphors, symbols, or riddles than the Revelation of St. John. Yet, God would not have given us this book, or promised blessings to those who read it, if he did not intend for us to understand it. In the first chapter we begin to unlock the code.

1. *Soon* is not the same to God as it is us. He operates on a different timetable [2 Peter 3:8]. “what must soon take place” [vs. 1] What are our options?
 - Everything described in the Revelation of St. John happened in his lifetime, or shortly thereafter. Everything is to be taken as symbolic. This view called *Realized Eschatology*. Yet, everything revealed here has not happened. Nor did it happen in history past.
 - God has given this revelation to every age of the church, for many of the things described are repeated again and again: Babylon, the Beast, the Seven Churches, the war between the Dragon and the Queen, antichrists, global wars, ecological disasters, and other events. They are previews of the coming and final attractions. God wants those in every

age to be prepared, for he will come as a thief in the night [1
Thessalonians 5:2]

- Christians somewhere, in every age, have lived the book of Revelation. And this is meant to encourage believers in each era of history. “Write therefore what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later...” [vs. 19]
 - One generation will ultimately be the one about which it can literally be said that the events of the final *Last Days* will soon come to pass. Is ours that generation?
2. The audience: “To the seven churches in the province of Asia.” [verse 4] This not written to the world, or to nonbelievers, but to the Bride of Christ—particularly, to suffering Christians. Who are these seven churches?
- Literal seven churches in what is now Turkey during the lifetime of St. John.
 - Churches that represent different ages of Christian history.
 - Churches in every age of Christian history.
3. The writer: **Not St. John** [vs. 7]. “I turned around to see” [vs. 12] “Write therefore what you have seen.” [vs. 19] Write on a scroll what *you see* and

send it to the seven churches. [vs 11] John is simply the witness to the story. He is the scribe that writes it down. Who then is the storywriter?

- God the Father is writing this: "...from who is and who was, and who is to come." [vs. 4] History is really His Story. Everything that happens is part of his plot to one end: "...to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." [verse 6]
 - God the Spirit is writing this: "and from the seven spirits [literally seven-fold Spirit] before his throne." [vs.4]
 - Jesus is writing this: "and from Jesus Christ..." [vs. 5] His Story—his story. World history, and each of our stories—is written by a team: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - Ultimately, Revelation is a love letter to the Church from heaven. It comes from God the Father who graciously chose us to be the Bride of his Beloved Son. [vs. 8] It comes from the Son who loves us enough to redeem us by his blood [vv. 5-7]. It comes from the Holy Spirit to show us our inestimable value and awesome destiny [vs. 10] The world may hate us. We may be the victim of cancel culture. But God loves us, and he will make us to rise above the powers of this world. HOW GREAT A LOVE LETTER THIS IS [vs. 3]
4. The Circumstances of the Revelation. A man suffering as captive in the Roman reincarnation of Babylon, imprisoned by the Beast in the salt mines of the Roman gulag on Patmos Island off the coast of Turkey. [vv. 9-11] This is for the suffering church, to give it the passion and hope to keep on keeping on

5. The numbers in the Revelation Code. "seven spirits" [vs. 4] "seven golden lampstands" [vs. 12], seven stars" [vs. 16], seven churches [vs.20]. Special numbers are repeated all the way through the Bible. They are not always meant to be taken literally: i.e. "A day is as a thousand years to the Lord" or, Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands. Here are key numbers for Revelation Code:

1 equals _____ 2 equals _____, _____ or _____

3 equals _____ 4 equals _____

5 equals _____ 6 equals _____

7 equals _____ 8 equals _____

9 equals _____

10 (or multiples of 10) equals _____

11 equals _____ 12 equals _____ & _____

So, how do these numbers work out in such famous numbers as the 4 creatures before the throne, or 7 (as in the tribulation period), or 40 or 666 or 144,000, to name just a few? Do the Revelation math.

6. The symbolism Revelation. No appearance is meant to be taken literally. Why, for instance would "seven golden lampstands" describe the churches? [vv. 12-20] Or the stars represent angels [vs. 20]? Or Jesus be represented in the robes he is wearing, or with hair white like wool, or feet like a furnace, or a voice that sounds like rushing waters? [vv. 12-15] Does he literally look like this? This warns to be careful with all the numbers or symbols in Revelation.

Everything it says is literally true, but its packaging is in symbols that have even deeper symbolic meanings.

Remember, too, that God is describing things to us that way a parent explains things to a child. We could never understand horrors of hell or glories of heaven, or excellencies of angels or God himself. So, those things must be explained to us in symbols or allegories or metaphors we can understand.

7. What is Revelations ultimate purpose for us? And why is it essential?

- God believes we need to be prepared to navigate bad times ahead. He wants us to remain his servants [vv. 1&2], not be seduced by the New World Order or its antichrists.
- To read it, and take it to heart, will bring blessings [vs. 3] Whatever we see in this Revelation should be understandable and hopeful, not mysterious and fearful.
- To see how loved we are by Jesus [vs. 5]
- To see how much more awesome our Triune God is than all the powers we face in this world descending into madness. [vv. 6&8]
- To know that history is His Story, not their story. It all makes sense.
- To know with certainty that Jesus is returning and we win in the end [vs. 7]