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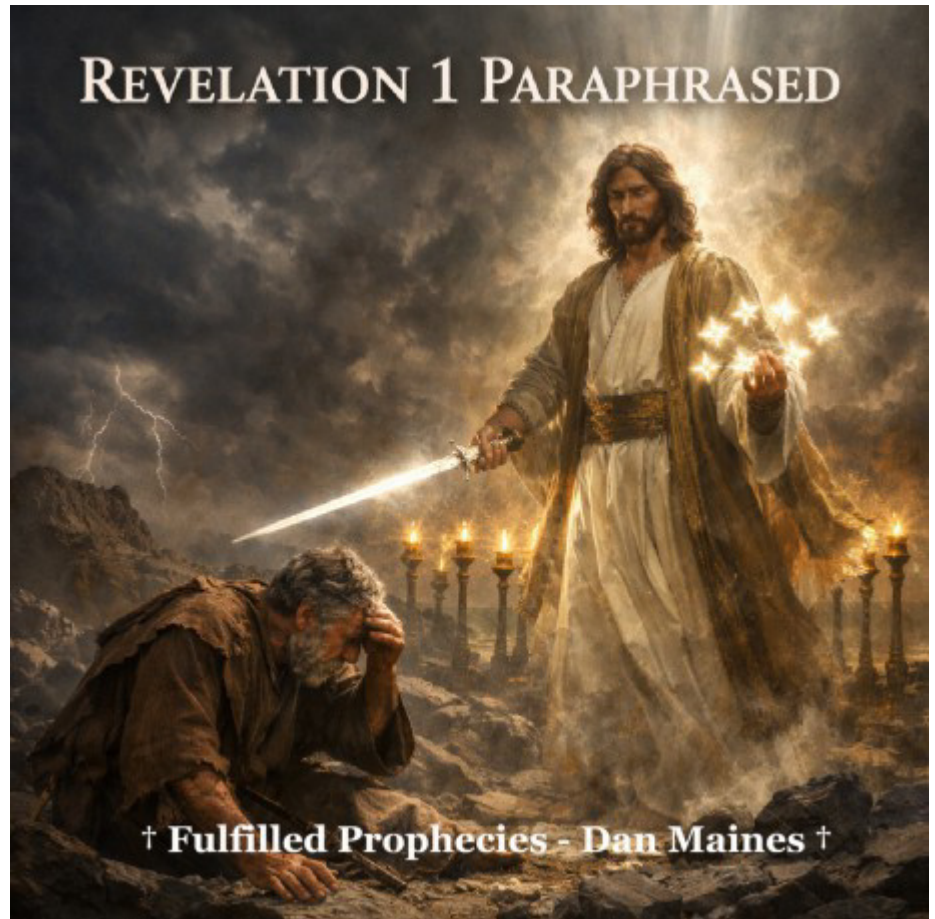
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Revelation 1 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Revelation 1 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This opening chapter explains the purpose of the entire book. It wasn't written about distant centuries far removed from its audience. It was written to reveal what Jesus Christ was about to bring to pass soon in the lifetime of the people who first received it (Revelation 1:1, Revelation 22:6).

† The message centers on Christ's authority over kings and nations and His coming judgment upon the covenant nation that

rejected Him. The language prepares the reader for a prophetic unveiling of events that would soon shake the first century world.

† Early Christians understood this book as dealing with their own time of persecution and crisis. Writers like Irenaeus and Eusebius recorded that the churches treated Revelation as a warning and encouragement during the struggles with Rome and the turmoil surrounding Jerusalem's fall.

Revelation 1:1

This message is the unveiling given by Jesus Christ. God gave it to Him so He could show His servants what would soon take place. He sent it through His angel to His servant John.

† The word unveiling means a revealing of something that was previously hidden. The prophecy wasn't meant to confuse the churches but to make clear what was about to happen soon (Daniel 2:28-29).

† The phrase soon sets the time frame immediately. The prophecy concerned events close to John's own generation, not thousands of years later (Revelation 22:6).

† Jesus Himself delivered this message to strengthen the churches who were already facing persecution under Roman authority (Matthew 24:34).

Revelation 1:2

John faithfully recorded the message he received, giving testimony about the word of God and about the message from Jesus Christ concerning everything he saw.

† John isn't presenting speculation or philosophy. He is testifying as a witness of what was shown to him by God (John 21:24).

† Revelation stands as prophetic testimony in the same line as the Old Testament prophets who recorded visions and divine messages (Ezekiel 1:1-3).

† This establishes the authority of the book from the very

beginning.

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is the one who reads these words aloud, and blessed are those who hear them and take seriously what is written in them, because the time is near.

† The blessing is tied to hearing and obeying the message, not merely studying it. The prophecy demanded immediate attention from the churches (Luke 11:28).

† The statement that the time is near confirms again that the fulfillment was approaching quickly for the original audience (James 5:8-9).

† If the events were thousands of years away, this warning would have had little meaning for the first century believers.

Revelation 1:4

John writes to the seven churches in Asia: Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who stand before His throne.

† The seven churches were real congregations located in Asia Minor. The message was directed to them because they were living through the unfolding events described in the prophecy (Revelation 1:11).

† The phrase describing God emphasizes His eternal nature, showing that the events about to occur were under His sovereign control (Exodus 3:14).

† The seven spirits represent the fullness of God's Spirit, echoing imagery used by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 11:2).

Revelation 1:5

Grace and peace also come from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. He loves us and freed us from our sins by His own blood.

† Jesus is called the ruler over the kings of the earth because His authority extends above every earthly empire, including Rome (Psalm 2:6-9).

† His resurrection marked the beginning of the new creation and confirmed His authority over life and death (Acts 2:32-36).

† The reference to His blood reminds the churches that their redemption came through His sacrifice, not through political power.

Revelation 1:6

He has made us to be a kingdom and priests serving His God and Father. To Him belong glory and power forever. Amen.

† This language comes directly from God's promise to Israel that they would be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6).

† Through Christ, that calling is now fulfilled in the people of God who follow Him (1 Peter 2:9).

† The kingdom was already established, not waiting for a future millennium.

Revelation 1:7

Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land will mourn because of Him. Yes, this will surely happen.

† The coming with clouds is prophetic judgment language taken from the Old Testament. God used this imagery when describing His judgment against nations (Isaiah 19:1).

† Those who pierced Him refers to the generation responsible for His crucifixion (Zechariah 12:10).

† The tribes of the land mourning connects directly with the judgment that came upon Jerusalem in AD 70 (Matthew 24:30).

Revelation 1:8

I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.

† Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, declaring God's absolute authority over all history (Isaiah 44:6).

† The statement assures believers that the events of Revelation were not chaos but part of God's divine plan.

† Christ shares this divine authority with the Father, confirming His full sovereignty.

Revelation 1:9

I, John, your brother and partner in the suffering, the kingdom, and the endurance found in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

† John wasn't speaking from comfort but from exile. His situation reflected the persecution Christians were facing under Roman rule (Acts 14:22).

† Patmos was a Roman penal island used for banishment. John's exile confirms the historical setting of the prophecy.

† The churches reading this message would have recognized the same pressures in their own lives.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.

† Being in the Spirit means John was receiving a prophetic vision, similar to the experiences of Old Testament prophets (Ezekiel 3:12).

† The trumpet imagery signals a divine announcement, often used in scripture when God is about to reveal something significant (Exodus 19:16).

† The Lord's day likely refers to the day dedicated to remembering Christ's resurrection.

Revelation 1:11

The voice said: Write what you see in a scroll and send it to the

seven churches, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

† These cities formed a circular route through Asia Minor, meaning the message would travel from church to church (Revelation 2-3).

† Each church faced unique struggles, yet all were connected to the unfolding prophetic events.

† The instruction to write shows that this revelation was meant to be preserved and shared.

Revelation 1:12

I turned around to see the voice speaking with me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands.

† The lampstands symbolize the churches themselves, showing that Christ stands among His people (Revelation 1:20).

† The imagery echoes the temple lampstand, representing God's presence among His covenant people (Exodus 25:31).

† This vision assures believers that Christ hasn't abandoned them.

Revelation 1:13

Standing among the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe with a golden sash across His chest.

† The title Son of Man comes from Daniel's prophecy describing the Messiah receiving authority from God (Daniel 7:13-14).

† The robe and sash resemble the garments of a priest, showing Christ's mediating role for His people.

† The imagery presents Jesus as both king and priest.

Revelation 1:14

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire.

† The white hair imagery echoes the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:9).

† The fiery eyes represent Christ's ability to see and judge all things with perfect clarity.

† Nothing in the churches would remain hidden from His authority.

Revelation 1:15

His feet looked like glowing bronze refined in a furnace, and His voice sounded like the roar of many waters.

† Bronze refined in fire symbolizes strength and purity.

† The sound of many waters reflects overwhelming authority and power (Ezekiel 43:2).

† The vision emphasizes Christ's unstoppable authority over the coming events.

Revelation 1:16

In His right hand He held seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword came out of His mouth, and His face shone like the sun in full strength.

† The seven stars represent the messengers of the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).

† The sword from His mouth symbolizes the power of His word to judge and expose truth (Hebrews 4:12).

† His shining face recalls the glory revealed at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:2).

Revelation 1:17

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. But He placed His right hand on me and said, Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last.

† John's reaction mirrors the response of prophets who encountered the presence of God (Daniel 10:9).

† Christ comforting John shows His authority paired with

compassion toward His servants.

† The title first and last again confirms His eternal authority.

Revelation 1:18

I am the living one. I was dead, but look, I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of Hades.

† Christ's resurrection proved His authority over death itself (Romans 6:9).

† Holding the keys means He alone controls the destiny of the dead.

† This assurance strengthened believers facing persecution.

Revelation 1:19

So write down what you have seen, what is now happening, and what will take place after these things.

† This verse outlines the structure of the book: the vision, the present condition of the churches, and the events about to unfold.

† The prophecy addressed both the current struggles and the coming judgment events.

† Everything recorded served to prepare the churches for what was approaching.

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands is this: the seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

† Christ explains the symbolism directly so the churches wouldn't misunderstand the vision.

† The message confirms that Christ walks among His people and oversees their condition.

† The prophecy begins with the churches because they were

the immediate audience living through the fulfillment.

Historical References

† Irenaeus recorded that the early church treated Revelation as a prophecy given to the churches during the Roman era and understood it as addressing real historical persecution.

† Eusebius wrote that John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Roman authority and later returned to Ephesus, confirming the historical setting of the book.

† Tertullian referred to John being banished for his testimony and connected the vision to the struggles Christians faced under Rome.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Christ still walks among His people. Just as He examined the seven churches, He sees the condition of believers today.

† The message reminds us that Christ rules over every nation and authority. No government or empire stands above Him.

† The book begins by showing that Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades. That truth still gives believers confidence and hope.

Q & A Appendix

Q What does the word revelation mean in this book?

A It means unveiling or revealing something previously hidden, showing events that were about to unfold (Revelation 1:1, Revelation 22:6).

Q Who was the book originally written to?

A It was written to seven real churches in Asia Minor that were living through persecution and coming historical upheaval (Revelation 1:4, Revelation 1:11).

Q What does coming with the clouds mean?

A In biblical prophecy clouds often symbolize divine judgment, not a literal appearance in the sky (Isaiah 19:1, Matthew 24:30).

Q Why does Revelation say the events would happen soon?

A The book repeats this time statement several times so the churches would understand the urgency. The prophecy concerned events approaching in their own generation, not distant centuries (Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:3; Revelation 22:6-7).

Q What are the seven lampstands?

A Jesus explains the symbol directly. The lampstands represent the seven churches themselves, showing that Christ walks among His congregations and watches over them (Revelation 1:20).

Q What are the seven stars in Jesus' hand?

A The stars represent the messengers of the seven churches, meaning those responsible for delivering and teaching the message within each congregation (Revelation 1:20).

Q Why did John fall like a dead man when he saw Christ?

A Encounters with the glory of God often caused prophets to collapse in fear and awe because of the overwhelming presence of divine holiness (Daniel 10:8-9; Ezekiel 1:28).

Q What does it mean that Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades?

A Keys symbolize authority. Jesus controls the realm of the dead and has complete power over life and death because of His resurrection (Revelation 1:18; Romans 6:9).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Daniel 2:28-29; Matthew 24:30, 34; Isaiah 19:1; Daniel 7:9, 13-14; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 6:9

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History Book 3; Tertullian, Apology Chapter 5

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