

Jude leads right into Revelation as the warnings that Jude was giving line up with Jesus' condemnation of actions in individual churches. The introduction tells us how John came to be the instrument of this message. God gave Jesus a revelation, and Jesus revealed it to one of His closest disciples, John the Beloved, through an angel. We see this in the opening verse. <sup>1</sup> *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,*

The New Testament church frequently received revelations by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:19-21), but this is the only book delivered by an angel. The only other messages via angels were announcing John the Baptist and Jesus' birth, (Luke 1:13, 26; 2:9) the angels at the tomb after Jesus' resurrection (John 20:12), and the angels that appeared at the ascension (Acts 2:10). In the days of the early church an angel rescued Peter and the apostles from imprisonment (Acts 5:19; connected Peter and Cornelius for the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 10:3), and sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26). Each of these was a major turning point in world history and for the church. Now the final record of a message delivered by an angel introduces the book of Revelation. That must mean this is a very significant book for the church. We may not understand all the implications or how it all plays out, but that does not detract from its importance for the church then and now.

The angel delivered the revelation to John <sup>2</sup> *who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.* John tells us what he witnessed, the audible and visual revelation that God gave of Jesus. He witnessed the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Some of you were present when I preached *The Revelation of Jesus*. We saw in nearly every chapter of Revelation some expression of the glory of Jesus. The book is full of Jesus' testimony. The world last saw Jesus on the cross. Only the few that were called saw Him after the resurrection. **In this book God has revealed Jesus' glorious state** and the future of the suffering servant referred to as the Lamb. (5:6)

You have a testimony of how God has worked in your life to bring you to salvation and put you on that road to sanctification. Jesus has a testimony in this book of how glorious He was and is and will always be. We'll see that in coming weeks and especially in chapter 5. Our testimony is filled with our weaknesses and the patience and love of God. Jesus' testimony is filled with His holy and perfect attributes. His desire is for us! By faith, what we will take from these first 5 chapters, is that our testimony should become more like His. (Romans 8:29)

**Commented [notes1]: 2 Peter 1:19-21 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

<sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

<sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**Commented [notes2]: Luke 1:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

**Commented [notes3]: Luke 1:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

**Commented [notes4]: Luke 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

**Commented [notes5]: John 20:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.

**Commented [notes6]: Acts 1:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

**Commented [notes7]: Acts 5:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,

**Commented [notes8]: Acts 10:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius."

**Commented [notes9]: Acts 8:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place.

**Commented [notes10]: Revelation 5:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

**Commented [notes11]: Romans 8:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.* Jesus declared that those who hear the word of God and keep it would be blessed. (Luke 11:28) John is almost quoting Jesus' words from Luke. Why is it necessary to read it aloud? I am not certain, and this is the only book that pronounces this specific blessing. It sounds like a description of the first century worship service. A reader (singular) would read the text, and those who heard (plural) were expected to put it into practice. Reading it aloud warns the spirits that are in rebellion, both humans and angels, and declares judgment is coming. This would go right along with what we learned in Jude about the false teachers denying the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming and the final judgment. (Jude 13)

When we read the book aloud, we pay closer attention and that helps to keep our minds from wandering, but it also proclaims to others, in the sound of our voice, the sharp two edged sword of the word of God. (Hebrews 4:12) It would also seem to be a way to ward off any oppression. Certainly no demonic power would want to sit around and listen to the splendor of Jesus and the inevitable judgment of all that is evil.

"The time is near" is the second emphasis of the urgency to hear and keep the words of this book. In the first verse, John said it would "soon take place". It is a single word in Greek, *tachos*, from which we get the word tachometer. We are reminded of the words of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3. Peter taught that the prophets predicted scoffers would question the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (2Peter 3:4) and ask why Jesus was taking so long to return. Peter responded, <sup>8</sup> *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* 2 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV) The church has always lived with a healthy expectation of the Lord's return. Whether it is today or a thousand years from now, we should be living as if His return is imminent. At the end of this book, Jesus declared three times that He is coming soon. (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20) He is, and we'd better be ready.

That was John's introduction or prologue. Now he turns to the greeting. <sup>4</sup> *John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,* The seven churches are named later. Notice that they are in Asia when he was writing. Some interpreters like to look at these churches as church ages, addressing certain problems throughout the history of the church. I suppose that could be a secondary meaning, but they were actual churches and the message was to them at that time. Of course the principles can apply to the entire church age, including our day.

John gives that typical greeting of grace and peace. We have seen before that it was a combination of the Hebrew and Greek greeting but brought to a richer meaning as it was the grace and peace that Jesus brings. The difference in this greeting is that

**Commented [notes12]: Luke 11:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

**Commented [notes13]: Jude 1:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

**Commented [notes14]: Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**Commented [notes15]: 2 Peter 3:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

**Commented [notes16]: Revelation 22:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

**Commented [notes17]: Revelation 22:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.

**Commented [notes18]: Revelation 22:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

instead of saying the grace and peace from God and Jesus, John emphasizes God's eternal nature, from Him who is and who was and who is to come. We saw this past, present and future blessing in the benediction that closed the letter of Jude. (Jude 24-25)

God lives in the Eternal Now. All time is before Him always. Therefore He is unchanging (Malachi 3:6), the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrew 13:8) We could say that He is outside of time, but He also continually invades time. When grace and peace comes from the One who knows your past, present and future, it is triply good. I hope you are catching the idea of how wonderful it is to know that the One who knows your past, present, and future offers His grace and peace to you. But we also need to accept that it is freely offered and then gratefully receive it. Have you? I pray that our hearts can begin to fathom this eternal grace and peace that comes from God. (2Peter 1:2)

John adds something we find in no other greeting, "and from the seven spirits who are before His throne". This is mysterious to most of us. We see it first in Zechariah 3:9, an incredible metaphor of Jesus removing sin, a metaphor in which He is said to have seven eyes. We'll see a similar statement in Revelation 5:6, *a Lamb ... with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth*. Chapter 4 verse 5 tells us they are like seven burning torches before the throne of God. That passage also calls them spirits of God. So we see that these are aspects of the Spirit of God. Zechariah 4:10b tells us these are the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the whole earth. The Holy Spirit is certainly everywhere seeing all things. Seven is the number of perfection. Grace and peace are ours from the seven fold Spirit of God.

And grace and peace are ours (and) from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood Jesus is faithfully witnessing to John this revelation. He is the faithful witness of all things. Sometimes we distort what we witness because of our perspective or limitations, but Jesus' witness is completely faithful. John has given us a Trinitarian blessing from the Father, Holy Spirit, and Son.

Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. (Colossians 1:18) Those in Christ will rise to everlasting glory. There are those who were raised from the dead (2Kings 4:32-33) before Jesus, but Jesus is the older brother. Firstborn is the position of preeminence.

He is ruler of the kings of the earth. Chapter 19 (19:16) declares Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. (Psalm 89:27) He sets up kings and removes them from power. (Daniel 2:21) He is in charge of history. The day will come when every ruler will bow to Jesus and give an account of how they ruled. Jesus is the supreme authority. (Philippians 2:9-10)

**Commented [notes19]: Jude 1:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,  
<sup>25</sup> to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

**Commented [notes20]: Malachi 3:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

**Commented [notes21]: Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

**Commented [notes22]: 2 Peter 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [notes23]: Zechariah 3:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

**Commented [notes24]: Revelation 4:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

**Commented [notes25]: Zechariah 4:10b (ESV)**

"These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."

**Commented [notes26]: Colossians 1:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

**Commented [notes27]: 2 Kings 4:32-33 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. <sup>33</sup> So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD.

**Commented [notes28]: Revelation 19:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

**Commented [notes29]: Psalm 89:27 (NIV)**

<sup>27</sup> I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

**Commented [notes30]: Daniel 2:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

**Commented [notes31]: Philippians 2:9-10 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

But the warmest description of all was the last one. *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood* John has greeted us with grace and peace from the eternal God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus. Now he is dedicating this work to that One, but listen to this description John felt so personally. *To Him who loves us!* John liked to refer to himself as the One Jesus loved. (John 13:23) Now in his old age, he refers to Jesus as the One who loves us all, the One that freed us from our sins by His blood. When we could not pay the wages of sin (Romans 6:23), He loved us enough to pay it for us. When it looked like Satan had defeated us and claimed us for eternal judgment with him in hell, Jesus came and paid the ransom with His own life. "Greater love has no man than this," John wrote years before. (John 15:13)

He loved us and freed us from our sins, <sup>6</sup> *and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* In Exodus, God had told Moses to tell the people of Israel that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they would become a kingdom of priests. (Exodus 19:5-6) Israel failed to do their part. But Jesus succeeded, and that righteousness that He lived He conveys to *all* who place their trust in Him. We inherit the promises to Israel, for Jesus did obey God's voice, and kept the covenant stipulations for us. (Galatians 3:29)

It is enough that Jesus ransomed us from our destiny in hell. It is enough that He took our punishment in our place. If that is all He did for us it would be more than enough, wouldn't it? If He gave us gifts of the Spirit and turned us from our destructive ways, it would have been enough. If He promised us resurrection and life with Him forever, we could say it was more than enough. Right? But He also gives us His righteousness and makes us a holy nation, priests to His God and Father! (1Peter 2:9) This all came from the loving heart of God. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen?

<sup>7</sup> *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.* When Jesus ascended in the clouds the angel spoke to the disciples that were staring up into the sky, <sup>11</sup>... *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."* Acts 1:11 (ESV) Because of the experience of Moses in the clouds of Sinai (Exodus 19:9), Jews equate clouds with the glory and presence of God. Maybe that is why some of us are so fascinated with summer clouds.

I don't think every eye will see him because of television or some assistance of man. It will be supernatural. Those who pierced Jesus had more than likely already died when John wrote this. John is referring to us all, for it was our sins that caused Jesus to be pierced. But he is also referring especially to the Jewish people because of Zechariah 12:10. <sup>10</sup> *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep*

**Commented [notes32]: John 13:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus,

**Commented [notes33]: Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [notes34]: John 15:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

**Commented [notes35]: Exodus 19:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;  
<sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

**Commented [notes36]: Galatians 3:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

**Commented [notes37]: 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

**Commented [notes38]: Exodus 19:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD,

*bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.* John quoted from this passage in his gospel. (John 19:37)

The fact that all will wail on account of him was foretold by Jesus. <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* Matthew 24:30 (ESV) They will mourn because they know the things they lived for are about to pass away and judgment is at hand. (Revelation 18:9, 14-17) The time of God's patience will be over and the last soul will have already come to repentance. The remainder will be so hardened that even Jesus' appearance will not change their hearts. (Revelation 9:21)

<sup>8</sup> *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."* The A to Z. It's all about our Creator, the One who knows all. In the last chapter of this book, Jesus makes the same statement, for the Father and Son are one. <sup>12</sup> *"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done."* <sup>13</sup> *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."* Revelation 22:12-13 (ESV) In the book of Isaiah, the eternal God of Israel tells us He is the first and the last. (Isaiah 44:6) Not only is He eternal, but He is Almighty. All things are in His hands. He has determined the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:10) He sees all, knows all, and has all power. He is gracious beyond our comprehension, but He is completely just and righteous in all He does. He's the A to Z God.

Once you have a little idea of the greatness of this God that John is declaring to us, every other idea of god pales in comparison. You wonder how anyone would try to resist Him. (Isaiah 1:20) How foolish! And once you see the greatness of His love, why would you want to? This is the majestic God who gave us the words of the Revelation and unveiled the glory of Jesus. We should take them to heart, read them aloud, meditate on these words to heart and let them transform us. We should see Jesus in His glory, the Alpha and Omega, the King of kings who is coming to judge the earth and reign forever.

#### Questions

- 1 Why put Jude before Revelation?
- 2 Why convey it by an angel?
- 3 What are we supposed to do with it?
- 4 Why emphasize "coming soon"?
- 5 What in the greeting is unique?
- 6 Discuss the seven spirits of God.
- 7 Go over the descriptions of Jesus.
- 8 What is the fruit of His love?
- 9 Review the "more than enough".

#### Commented [notes39]: John 19:37 (ESV)

<sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

#### Commented [notes40]: Revelation 18:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

#### Commented [notes41]: Revelation 18:14-18 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!"

<sup>15</sup> The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

<sup>16</sup> "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!

<sup>17</sup> For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste."

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off

<sup>18</sup> and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?"

#### Commented [notes42]: Revelation 9:21 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

#### Commented [notes43]: Isaiah 44:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

#### Commented [notes44]: Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,"

#### Commented [notes45]: Isaiah 1:20 (NIV)

<sup>20</sup> but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- 10 Why does the world wail at Jesus' return?  
11 What is the implication of Alpha and Omega?