

OPEN DOOR BIBLE CHURCH, PO BOX 446, WEST OSSIPEE NH 03890

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

January memory verse: Matthew 5:44 (NKJV) But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Commentary on Revelations Chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 1.6.21

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1), The Greek word "apokalupsis" is literally the unveiling. So in the very first phrase you have what the book is all about. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ, the lifting of the wraps.

Now, there is a common misconception concerning the book of Revelation, and a lot of people will say, "Well, I never deal with the book of Revelation. That is a sealed book." Exactly the opposite, rather than a sealed book, it is an unveiling. It is taking the wraps off. It is taking the seals off. It is allowing you to see what the future holds, as far as Jesus Christ is concerned. So it is the revelation, or the unveiling, of Jesus Christ as far as the future.

which God gave to him, to shew to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Rev 1:1):

So for the most part in the book of Revelation, there will be the angel speaking to John and revealing to him the things that were being revealed to him by Jesus Christ. So He sent this revelation by the angel to John. And there are times when the angel appears to John. There are times when John sees the Lord himself. There are times when the elder is explaining aspects of this revelation to John. But the basic format was the revelation of Jesus Christ given to him by God, to show to his servants, and it was sent to John signified by the angel, which is a messenger.

Who bore record of the word of God (Rev 1:2),

And that of course is John's declaration in his gospel and in his epistles that he was just a recorder, a recorder of the things for which he had seen and of which he had heard. And his job was just to record these things, and he bore record. And he said we know that our record is true, or our witness is true.

Who bare record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw (Rev 1:2).

Now, most of this revelation came to John by way of visions. And a vision is really insight into the spirit world. Now, there is a spirit world that exists about us. We cannot see it with our natural eyes, but God can open our eyes to the realm of the spirit, and the capacity of being able to see the spirit realm is called a vision.

Now, the spirit realm is the eternal realm. So in a vision you can spiritually see things either past, present or future, because the eternal realm is a timeless realm. So John, a little further down, is going to say that he was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord. That is, he saw the things that are going to yet transpire in the future. He saw things that have not yet taken place. Time hasn't yet caught up with it.

Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy (Rev 1:3),

So it is an easy book for me to plunge into, because I know you are going to be blessed, even though I may not say anything worthwhile. Because we are going to be reading the words of this prophecy and hearing the words of this prophecy, and so there is a built-in promise blessing for you. You can't escape it. It is there promised to you by the Lord, those that read and those that hear. So I am going to be blessed. And if you keep up with your reading, you will be blessed, and you will be blessed as you hear.

Not only hearing, but also keeping those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev 1:3).

There has always been in the church the sense of urgency and immediacy as far as the return of Jesus Christ. The time is short, we are told in verse one. Here in verse three, "the time is at hand." And there is a sense in which that is perennially true. Time is always short for each of us. We don't know how much time we do have. If we live to be one hundred years, time is short, such a short time especially in comparison to eternity.

So, now the greeting of John beginning with verse four, John to the seven churches which are in Asia (Rev 1:4):

We know that seven is a number that is symbolically used in the scripture often, the number of completeness. It is called the number of perfection, but the Greek word perfection in its use is different from our use of the word perfection. We think of something without flaw. The idea in the Greek is literally fully matured or of full age or complete.

So we find that there are many things that have a seven as a completion. For instance there are seven days in the week, so you have a complete week, seven days. Seven notes on the scale, then you start over again. Do, re, mi, fa, so, la, te, and you have to go to do, re, mi, again. So, the seven makes the complete scale.

The seven churches, there were more churches than this in Asia. There were some very prominent churches in Asia, for instance the church of Galatia also established by Paul. The church of Colossi, which Paul wrote to, which was not really far from the

church of Ephesus. So, why seven churches? It is to give you the complete picture of the church.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne (Rev 1:4);

The first, of course, is a description of God, "from Him which is, which was and which is to come". And this is a way of describing the eternal nature of God. He is, He was, He is to come, but He is all of that at the same time. There is no past and future with God. It is all now for He dwells in the eternal. "I am that I am"(Exodus 3:14). Only God can declare that because He is in the eternal. "I am" I may say that, "but than I was," because I said, "I am" a moment ago. But God dwells in the eternal. "I am that I am," the eternally present one. So, in describing the eternal character of God He is, He was, and He is to come are all at once and the same.

"The seven spirits which are before his throne," again the completeness of the work of the Holy Spirit. The seven being the number of symbolism again of completeness.

And from Jesus Christ (Rev 1:5), Now when he comes to Jesus Christ, he has quite a bit to say, who is the faithful witness (Rev 1:5),

The word "witness" in the Greek is "martyr", and is the word from which we get our word "martyr", which has come to mean one who dies for his faith. But originally the idea is one who has a faith so strong that he would die for it. So, Jesus is the faithful witness. What does that mean? He is the faithful witness of what God is.

Do you want to know what God is? You can look at Jesus Christ and know exactly what God is. "No man has seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father, He has manifested Him, made Him known" (John 1:18). So that when Philip said to Him, "Lord just show us the Father and we will be satisfied." And He said, "Have I not been so long a time with you and haven't you seen Me. Philip don't you realize that He who has seen Me has seen the Father"(John 14:9). The faithful witness of what God is.

Now we are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. That is, it should be that people could look at you and know exactly what Jesus is like. That is God's intent and purpose for your life. That is what the Spirit is seeking to accomplish in conforming you into the image of Christ. So that as the Spirit's work is complete in me, I will respond as He responds. I will love as He loves. I will forgive as He forgave. I will be His representative. I will be His true and faithful witness. The witness of what He is, even as He was the true and faithful witness of what God is.

And so unto Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead (Rev 1:5),

That is the first of this whole hope that we have of eternal life through Him.

and the prince of the kings of the earth. [King of kings, and Lord of lords we will be proclaiming Him in a few weeks as we get to chapter nineteen.] Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Rev 1:5),

The redemption that is ours through Jesus Christ. More than that He

has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Rev 1:6).

So, this is the work of Jesus Christ. He was the faithful witness. He is the first begotten from among the dead. He is the prince of the kings of the earth. But He loved you and redeemed you with His blood in order that He might make you a kingdom of priests unto God, in order that He might receive "glory and dominion forever".

Behold, he cometh with clouds (Rev 1:7);

Probably a reference to the church that is coming with Him. In the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, it tells us of all of these Old Testament saints who through faith made their mark upon the world. And then chapter twelve begins, "Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," (Hebrews 12:1) a multitude of people. "Behold He cometh with clouds," the multitudes of people that will be returning with Him, the church. "And when Christ who is our life shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him (Rev 1:7),

Contrary to what the Jehovah Witnesses teach that He came privately in 1914 into the secret chamber and only those with spiritual eyes could see Him, and that He now rules the world in the kingdom age from this secret chamber. Satan is bound, cast into the abysso. Well, they left a chain too long. He's got too much freedom to suit me.

every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him (Rev 1:7):

At His second coming we are told that Jesus came as far as Bethany with His disciples there on the mount of Olives and then He ascended up into heaven and a cloud received Him out of there sight. And while they were standing there two men stood by them in white apparel and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing into heaven? For this same Jesus, is going to come again in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Every eye shall see Him. He is going to come. It will be a public coming. Jesus is coming in the flesh to establish God's kingdom upon the earth.

every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him shall mourn (Rev 1:7):

There is a prophecy in Psalm twenty-two concerning Jesus Christ and it said, "they pierced His hands and His feet" (Psalm 22:16). They that pierced Him shall see Him.

In Zechariah, another prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, "and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12:10). And again in Zechariah, "And they shall say unto him in that day, what are the meaning of these wounds in your hands" (Zechariah 13:6). They shall look upon him whom they have pierced.

and all families of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen (Rev 1:7).

The recognition finally that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the longed for Messiah that the nation of Israel has waited for and sought. That recognition will come, but only after Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled and Jacob has gone through a time of great trouble and great sorrow. But, "they will look upon Him whom they have pierced".

Now Jesus addresses John directly and declares,

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Rev 1:8).

Now whether or not this is Jesus or God, it really is immaterial. But, Jesus addresses John in a moment in verse eleven saying "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what you see write in a book." Now if God declares of Himself that I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, and Jesus declares that I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending.

Now if God says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending," and Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending," then it makes them the same. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). "And the Word was made flesh, and He dwelt among us" (John 1:14). "Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending."

Now John gives a little background to the vision. He said,

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and the patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:9).

Now at this time all the rest of the apostles had all been martyred. They had all been put to death by the Roman government. John is the only one of the original left. He is well into his nineties. It is estimated that this was written in 96 AD, and it is estimated that John was probably approximately the same age as Jesus. So John is probably close to ninety-six years old at the writing of this book. He is in a little rocky crag out there in the Mediterranean, offshore a little bit from the area of Ephesus. And he is there for the word of God and the testimony that he has. He was exiled to the island of Patmos.

God wasn't through with John yet. God had one final word for man. The book of Revelation needed to be written and John was the one that was eminently qualified to write the book. So there on the island of Patmos, the aged John received this vision of the future.

And I was in the spirit on the Lord's day (Rev 1:10),

Now there is two possible ways to interpret this. One is that on Sunday, he went into a spiritual trance and had this vision. Another possible translation of this same Greek text would be, "I was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord". I prefer that translation myself. For I believe that John was taken in the spirit through a time machine, if you please, which of course is the transition from the natural into the spiritual world; that is a time machine, because you enter into the timelessness of eternity. Something that will take place when you die; you will enter into the timelessness of eternity. Time is only relative to our planet earth, because of its rotation on its axis and its revolution around the sun. So we count time here, but time is relative.

"John was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord" and heard behind me a voice, as of a trumpet (Rev 1:10),

Later on he is going to hear a voice as of a trumpet calling him up into heaven. "Come up hither and I will show you things which must be"(Rev 4:1).

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What you see [again he saw these things. It was a vision.], write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. So I turned to see who it was that was talking to me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to his feet, and gird about his [chest] with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they were burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters (Rev 1:11-15).

So it is interesting to me that in the New Testament, with all of the gospel writers writing concerning the life of Jesus Christ, there was never an endeavor by any of them to describe Jesus in a physical sense. None of them said he had brown eyes or he had blues; He parted his hair in the middle; He had a beard. No descriptions at all of Jesus Christ so that we are totally without any real knowledge of what Jesus looks like from a physical sense.

Man has often drawn pictures of what he envisions that Jesus might have looked like. But it is hard to really envision what a person looks like just by hearing the words that he said, or by even hearing his voice.

What you see depicted, as Jesus is just the figment of some man's imagination. The Bible hasn't really described Him in a physical sense. The only real description we have

of Jesus in the New Testament is given to us here in the gospel of John, by John himself. And this is Jesus as he sees Him in His glorified form. And he describes Him much as Daniel described Him in the book of Daniel, only a little more fully than Daniel described Him.

And he had in His right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword (Rev 1:16):

Now the Bible says the Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. So His words are like a sharp two-edged sword, because they are "able to cut between the soul and the spirit. They are a discerners of the thoughts and the intents of the hearts of man"(Hebrews 4:12).

and his countenance [or face] was as the sun shineth in his strength (Rev 1:16).

It would be like looking into the noonday sun. His feet would have been like brass heated to an incandescence. His hair white as snow, eyes like a flame of fire. What a vision. Holding in His right hand the seven stars,

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last [I am the Alpha and the omega. I am the first and the last. I am the beginning and the ending.]: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, so be it; and have the keys of hell and of death (Rev 1:17-18).

When Jesus died He descended into hell. Peter, in the second chapter of the book of Acts in explaining to the people of the phenomena that they were observing on the day of Pentecost, declared, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man who proved himself to be of God by the signs and the miracles, which He did in your midst, whom you with your wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God rose from the dead: because it was not possible that he could be held by death; for the scripture predicted and prophesied in Psalms thou will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow the Holy One to see corruption"(Acts 2:22-27).

So Jesus descended into hell and preached to the souls that were in prison. And when he ascended He lead those captives from their captivity for He had the keys of death and hell and He concords over death and hell.

The prophecy of Isaiah concerning Jesus was He was to set at liberty those who were bound and open the prison doors. He did that. Those who were held by the prison of death, He opened the doors for them and lead the captives from their captivity.

Now the command of John in verse nineteen gives to you the key to the book of Revelation. And the understanding of this book is really dependent upon your using the key, which is verse nineteen of chapter one, for there are three divisions to the book of Revelation.

Write the things which you have seen (Rev 1:19),

This is past tense; so, it was this vision that he wrote of Jesus Christ that he saw here in chapter one.

Secondly, the things which are (Rev 1:19), These are the present things, the church age.

And thirdly, and the things which shall be hereafter (Rev 1:19);

The words "hereafter" are a translation of the Greek words "meta autos", which literally means "after these things". So you have John writing that which he saw. He will be writing in chapters two and three the things which are during this present age, the things of the church. And then as you begin in chapter four, he is going to write of the things that transpire after the things of the church, the things that will be hereafter, or more literally after these things, so it is significant. You need to watch for it.

We are now living in the eras of chapters two and three, "the things which are". The church continues to exist, and the testimony and the witness of the church, and the witness of Jesus concerning His church, which is even more important.

So, there are three divisions of the book. It is important that you catch this, because if you don't you are going to have a constantly confused and garbled view of the future. You will see the church in the midst of the tribulation and the one hundred and forty-four thousand-you'll try to twist to be the church. There are all kinds of twisted and exaggerated concepts that have come from the book of Revelation, because people did not catch the key in this first chapter here.

Now, the Lord explains to John a little bit of the vision that he saw. Remember he turned and he saw Him walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the [messengers] of the seven churches (Rev 1:20):

The word "aggelos" in Greek is literally "messengers". It is usually used of a heavenly messenger, but also used of earthly messengers too. Anyone who is bearing a message could be an aggelos, a messenger. The word by usage has come to mean a divine messenger, a heavenly being.

The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches (Rev 1:20).

So the seven churches are the complete church and those who are ministering to the church.

Now it is always to me a very comforting, and yet an extremely exciting concept, to realize the place of the seven stars. They were being held in the right hand of Him. And how beautiful and comforting it is to realize that as a messenger to the church, your life is being held in the right hand of the Lord. I don't know of anything more exciting than that and comforting than that. Another thing that is extremely exciting is where Jesus is. He is walking in the midst of the church or the churches, the seven golden candlesticks or the seven churches. So Christ is walking in the midst of His church.

You remember in the Gospels, Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there will I be in the midst" ([Matthew 18:20](#)), His promised presence with His people. So Jesus is here with us tonight. He has promised to be with His people wherever they have gathered in His name. And that is always just beautiful and comforting to realize the presence of Jesus.

Now He, for a time, sought to familiarize the disciples with the concept that He is there even though you don't see Him. So after His resurrection He would show up and then disappear. And suddenly He would be with them in the midst and then He would be gone.

Two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus and suddenly Jesus was on the path walking with them. When they got to Emmaus, He pretended like He was going on, and they said it was too late; come in and eat with us. And when He broke bread, their eyes were open and they realized it was Jesus, probably they saw the marks in His hands. Then Jesus disappeared and they said, "Wow, that was the Lord", and they ran all the way back to Jerusalem to share with the disciples. "Hey, we have seen the risen Lord." And they said, "He appeared to Peter and Mary and a bunch of them."

Thomas said, "Ah, don't give me that stuff. I am not going to believe until I, myself, can take my finger and put it right there in His hand. I want to take my hand and put it right there in His side. I need more proof than your stories." So the disciples were gathered and Thomas was present and Jesus suddenly appeared and said, "Hey Thomas, go ahead, take your finger and touch me. See if it isn't me" ([John 20:27](#)). Hey, wait a minute. How did He know Thomas said that? He must have been standing there when Thomas expressed His doubts. You see Thomas couldn't see Him, but He was trying to get them used to the fact that He is there even though you don't see Me. That was part of the training.

Paul the apostle after fourteen days and fourteen nights on a stormy sea, when all hope of ever surviving was lost, in the morning of the fourteenth day Paul stood up and said, "Hey men, be of good cheer" ([Acts 27:22](#)). Everybody is seasick and miserable and they think they are going to die and he is saying, "Be of good cheer." He said, "Last night the Lord stood by me." The Lord was with him the whole while. The Lord is with us here tonight. The presence of the Lord is with us. He said, "Wherever two or three are gathered together here I am" ([Matthew 18:20](#)).

Now often we wish that we could have been at the Sea of Galilee almost two thousand years ago, or that we could have been at Capernaum or Bethsaida or one of those cities where Jesus visited; that we could actually have seen Him ourselves. How thrilling it would have been to have lived in those days and to have followed him along the sea listening to Him teach. Oh, I know that if I could have only been right there, if I could have only seen Him, I know that He could have reached out and touched me and He could have healed me or helped me. If only I could have seen Him like that, I know He could have helped me.

Like Martha when Jesus finally showed up four days after her brother had died, she said, "Lord if you only had been here my brother wouldn't have died" (John 11:21). "If You had just been here. If I could have just seen Him, I know that He could do it".

Hey, He is here. He is here to touch you tonight. He is here to minister to your needs tonight. Wherever the church assembles in His name, He has promised His presence to be there with them. And He is always there to minister to the needs of the people. That is the purpose of His being here tonight, to touch you and to minister to the needs in your life. He said, "Behold I am with you always even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Now, we come to the messages of Jesus to these churches. There are patterns in the messages. First of all, the messages to each of the churches begin with an address of Jesus naming the church that He is writing to. And then a description of Himself, and the description is usually taken from the first chapter here, and the description of Himself usually is correlated in the body of the message.

So it is Jesus becoming all things to all people, no matter what your need may be. He becomes all things to all men. Even as the name of God, the Yahweh, or Jehovah, or however it may be pronounced, is the thought of the becoming One. "I am the becoming One", where God sought to reveal himself as the One who becomes whatever you may need. So this name Yahweh is used in conjunction with other words. So we have Jehovah Rophi, the Lord our healer. If you need healing, he becomes your healer. He becomes your provider, Jehovah Jireh. He becomes your righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkenu. He becomes your Savior, Joshua or Jehovah Shua.

So, Jesus in the description of Himself, as He writes to the churches again, takes that adaptive form where He adapts to what you might be needing. He becomes all that you might need, so the description of Himself. Then in each of the churches there is the acknowledgment that I know what you are going through. I know your condition. I know what is happening. To five of the churches, there is the call to repentance.

Now, remember the church is less than one hundred years old. We so often hear quoted, "The early church fathers this and the early church fathers that." Well, according to Jesus, the early church fathers became corrupted pretty early. Corrupt systems began to invade the church extremely early, as we will see when we get to the church of

Pergamus and Thyatira. These corrupt systems had entrenched themselves within the church before the end of the first century.

So you have some of the renown church fathers' origin and some of the others, who are espousing child and infant baptism, and some of the other things that were borrowed from the pagans. You have an early development of the priesthood. It began before the death of John in Thyatira and in Pergamus.

So you cannot really look back at church history to find the model or the pattern. You have to look right back to the book of Acts to find out God's true pattern. And the true pattern is one of great simplicity. People just being brought to a faith in Jesus Christ and a living relationship to Him, no fancy organizations, no great structures, no seminaries; just a simple trust and faith in the Lord shared from person to person and friend to friend.

In each of the churches there is a group who are victorious, who are overcoming, and they are recognized by the Lord. And there are special promises to those who do overcome and they exist in every church. So no matter how corrupt the church system may become, the Lord always has His true witness within that church. And in each of the churches there is that call of Jesus to pay attention. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church" (Revelation 2:7).

So seven times we are going to be commanded by the Lord to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. So, let us now as we enter into this very awesome solemn territory of the messages of Jesus, Jesus' epistles to the church, and may God by His Holy Spirit give us ears to hear what He is seeking to say to the church, for He is going to tell us that as many as He loves He chastens and He rebukes. Let's not try to defend ourselves or justify our positions, but let's be open to hear what the Spirit would say to us, His church.

Added by Pastor John:

Since so much controversy has risen over the interpretation of the Book of Revelation, it is helpful to know the four basic approaches people have used through the centuries to understand Revelation.

The Preterist (or present) View: This approach believes that Revelation dealt only with the church in John's day. In the *Preterist* approach, Revelation doesn't predict anything. John simply described events of his current day, but he put them in symbolic code so those outside the Christian family couldn't understand his criticism of the Roman government. In the *Preterist* view, the Book of Revelation was for *then*. **People who hold this belief also believe all prophecy had been accomplished by the time John wrote Revelation.**

The Historicist View: This approach believes that Revelation is a sweeping, disordered panorama of all church history. In the *Historicist* approach, Revelation predicts the

future, but the future of the “church age” – not the future of end-time events. In the *Historicist* view, Revelation is full of symbols that describe *now*.

The Poetic View: This approach believes that Revelation is a book full of pictures and symbols intended to encourage and comfort persecuted Christians in John’s day. In the *Poetic* or *allegorical* view, the Book of Revelation isn’t literal or historic. Revelation is a book of *personal* meaning.

The Futurist View: This approach believes that beginning with chapter four, Revelation deals with the end times, the period directly preceding Jesus’ return. In the *Futurist* view, Revelation is a book that mainly describes the *end* times.

Which approach is correct? *Each one* is true in some regard. The Book of Revelation did speak to John’s day. It speaks to church history. And it does have meaning for our personal life. So while elements of the first three approaches have their place, we can’t deny the place of the **futurist** view. We can know the Book of Revelation speaks with clarity about the end times because of two central principles drawn from [Revelation 1:1-3](#).

First, we believe that the Book of Revelation *must mean something*. This is a book that Jesus gave *to show His servants* something. It isn’t a book of meaningless nonsense. It has a promise of blessing, not a promise of confusion.

Secondly, we believe that Revelation definitely claims to contain *predictive prophecy*. John made it clear: *things which must shortly take place... the time is near*. John wrote about events that were still future to him.

Verse 19 of chapter one starts, **Write the things:** This second command to write gives us a structure to understand the Book of Revelation. John is commanded to **write** regarding the past, present, and future (looking from John’s perspective).

The things which you have seen: This means that Jesus wanted John to write the things he had just **seen** in his vision of the glorious, heavenly Jesus.

The things which are: This means that Jesus wanted John to write about the things of his present day, the things regarding the *seven churches which are in Asia*.

The things which will take place after this: This means that Jesus wanted John to write about the things that would happen after the things regarding the *seven churches*, the things of the last days.

The Book of Revelation is arranged in this three-part structure.

- **The things which you have seen:** Revelation [chapter 1](#)
- **The things which are:** Revelation [chapters 2](#) and [3](#)
- **The things which will take place after this:** [Revelation 4](#) through [22](#)