

- 1 The **Revelation**  
of **Jesus Christ**,  
which **God** gave him  
to **show** His servants  
what must **soon take place**.  
He **made it known** by sending His **angel**  
to His servant John.
- 2 John  
**testifies** to everything **he saw** – that is,  
the word of God and  
the **testimony** of **Jesus Christ**.
- 3 Blessed is the one  
who **reads** the words of **this prophesy**, and  
Blessed are those  
who **hear** it and  
**take to heart** what is written in it,  
because the time is near.
- 4 **John**,  
**To the seven churches**  
**in the province of Asia**.  
**Grace and peace** to you  
From **Him who is, and who was, and who is to come**, and  
5 from the seven spirits before His throne, and  
From **Jesus Christ**, who is  
the **faithful witness**,  
the **firstborn from the death**, and  
the **ruler of the kings of the earth**.  
To Him who  
loves us, and  
has freed us from our sins by His blood, and  
6 has **made us to be a kingdom and priests**  
to serve His God and Father –  
to Him be  
glory and  
power,  
for ever and ever. Amen.
- 7 Look, **He is coming with the clouds**, and  
every eye will see Him,  
even those who pierced Him.  
All the peoples of the earth  
will mourn because of Him.  
So shall it be! Amen.
- 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega”,  
says the Lord God,  
“Who is, and who was, and who is to come,  
The Almighty”.

# THE HERMENEUTICAL KEYS IN 1:1-8

1:1 “Apocalypse of Jesus Christ”



The book of Revelation is an uncovering, an unveiling.  
It did not mean to cover up the message or confuse the reader, but on the contrary, to reveal and clarify a formerly hidden and unknown truth.

1:1-2 “to show” + “made it known” + “he saw”



Revelation is a visual unveiling.  
It was given to John with images, symbols and visions. [Dan 2:28-30,45]

1:1 “what must soon take place”



Revelation concerns the timeframe of the early church  
It was about things that commenced during the time of John or soon after.

1:2 “testifies” + “testimony”



Revelation is a public proclamation of God’s Word.  
It was spoken out loud in an increasingly hostile environment, concerning a divine reality.

1:3 “Blessed is the one who reads”

1:4 “John”, “to ...”, “grace and peace to you” + “the grace of Jesus is with you”



Revelation is a letter.  
It was read out loud, during a church gathering, in its entirety in one setting. The messages of the letter were understood by the hearers during that one session. It achieved that by using the means of ‘rhetoric’: a clear structure of the text, repetitions, symbolic numbers, opposite images and combinations of place and image.

[17:1-3 = 21:9-10 and 19:9-10 = 22:6-9]

Revelation addressed the specific needs and problems of a specific group of people, in their historical, factual, unique circumstances, to encourage, inform, exhort or correct, showing John’s personal involvement and concern.

1:3 “this prophesy”

“Blessed are those who hear it and take to heart”



Revelation is a prophesy.  
It provided spiritual understanding of the society John and his churches lived in, as seen from God’s perspective. It portrayed two different possible futures (destinies) and called for an ethical response based upon that given insight: obedience, faith, repentance, perseverance and holy living. This would lead the church to their destiny.  
The message of Revelation was primarily meant for John’s contemporaries, but could find repeated fulfillment in later times.

1:4 “Revelation” “which God gave” “to his servant John”



Revelation is God’s prophetic message to His servants.

God gave it to them through Jesus, who sent his angel to John. John considered himself to be a prophet in the line of the Old Testament prophets. He expected his audience to acknowledge this given authority.

1:4 “John testifies” + “revelation of Jesus Christ”



John is a witness of Jesus.

He prophesied over Jesus as the fulfiller of OT promises. Revelation was seen from the perspective of what Jesus did (His life, death on the cross and resurrection) and will do (return, bring judgments and rewards, reign on earth).

1:4 “to the seven churches in Asia Minor”



Revelation is addressed to and destined for the 7 churches in Asia Minor.

These churches were a specific group of people, in specific circumstances and each with their own specific background. As the number 7 is symbolically used throughout the bible and particularly in Revelation for fullness, totality and completeness, these specific letters were also meant for the entire church throughout the world and throughout the centuries.

1:4 “Him who is and who was and who is to come.”



Revelation is written in Hebrew-Greek.

It wanted the hearer to discover the close connection with the prophetic books from the Old Testament. John regularly translated Hebrew words literally to Greek words with Hebrew grammar (“He who is, the Was and the Coming”).

1:5 “faithful witness” + “firstborn from the death” +  
“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Revelation is filled with references and allusions to the Old Testament.

John used many Old Testament verses and concepts when he wrote what he was shown. This was understood fully by the original hearers, who were much more familiar with these as we are now.

[Isaiah 55:4, Psalm 89:27, 37]

1:1/6-7 “apocalypse” + “made us a kingdom and priests” + “his angel” +  
“is coming with the clouds”



Revelation is filled with symbolism from apocalyptic literature.

John used various themes of this literary genre: oppression of the saints, the sudden coming of God’s Kingdom, the judgment of the godless inhabitants of the earth, the rewards for the saints.

This message was written with the use of visions, angels, strange looking creatures and symbolic numbers, from a dualistic worldview.

[Daniel 7:13-14]