



# REVELATION

## FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE LAMB

**WEEK 02**

*Jesus:*

*One like a Son of Man*

**Rev 1:4-20**

### Dwelling in the Word

1. Prayerfully read through Revelation 1:4-20 and reflect on the following questions: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? Why? 2) What does this passage communicate to you about God? 3) How would you like to respond to what God may be desiring to accomplish in you?

### Digging Deeper

1. In this passage the third element that contributes to our understanding of the type of literature the book of Revelation is unveiled: it is not only an apocalypse, it is not only a prophetic word, it is also a letter. What do you think is the significance of each of these ways of describing the book?
2. What was the cultural and political context of the recipients of the letter? How does John's vision (and the resultant "apocalyptic prophecy in the form of a circular letter") speak into their situation? That is, in what ways does the form and message of the book of Revelation uniquely speak to what they are facing?
3. Revelation 1:4b-6 is a typical greeting that moves into a well-crafted and theologically profound Trinitarian statement about God, the Spirit, and Jesus. What qualities are emphasized about each person of the Trinity? How do you think this description of God would comfort and encourage the Christ followers in Asia Minor?
4. What are some of the ways Jesus described in the greeting (1:4b-5a) and the doxology (1:5b-6)? How would this comfort and challenge its first readers? How does it comfort and challenge us today?
5. In John's initial vision recorded in Revelation (1:12-16), we get a picture of Jesus Christ as "one like the Son of Man." This foundational vision draws upon rich imagery from the OT, particularly the book of Daniel 7:13-14. "Son of Man" was also the most common way Jesus referred to himself in the gospels. What do we learn about Christ from this vision?
6. What does this powerful image convey to you? (If you are feeling ambitious, look up and read the different OT passages noted in the sermon slides). How does this portrait of Jesus challenge or change your perception of him?
7. How would Jesus' words in 1:17-18 encourage John not to be fearful in his presence? How do you find comfort in these words?

### For Groups

1. Have someone in the group read 1:12-16 out loud. As it is read, engage with this passage with your senses. What do you notice most about the imagery and the words that were used? What does it evoke in you? If you had an experience like John did in these verses, what do you think your reaction would have been?
2. Revelation was written to Christ followers being pressured to give up their allegiance to Christ under threat of persecution. While our situation is quite different, what are some of the subtle pressures and temptations we face to worship things other than Christ? (e.g., money, sex, and power) How can this vision of Jesus encourage us to resist these and other seductions of our society?
3. In 1:9, John emphasizes solidarity with his fellow Christ followers in experiencing suffering and practicing patient endurance that belong to those in Jesus. Could you share what areas of life are requiring your patient endurance right now?
4. In 1:4 we read that "this letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia." Through the Alberta Baptist Association, we at Greenfield are connected to 58 different churches. Take some time with your group to pray for a few of the

### Living it Out

1. How does John respond to this initial vision of Jesus and why? How can you respond this week in a couple practical ways?
2. In your prayer life this week, try to imagine speaking to Jesus as portrayed in 1:10-16.

## JESUS: ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN

Revelation 1:4-20  
September 17, 2023 | Tyler Williams

## WHAT IS THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

- An “apocalypse” (1:1)
- A “word of prophecy” (1:3)
- A letter (1:4-20)

“An apocalyptic prophecy in the form of a circular letter to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia” (Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 2).

## OUTLINE

- **Author** – John (1:4a)
- **Addressees** – The Seven Churches (1:4a)
- **Greeting** (1:4b-8)
- **John’s Vision & Commission** (1:9-20)
  - Vision of “One like a Son of Man” (1:12-16)
  - John’s Response & Commission (1:17-20)

## AUTHOR

- “John” (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8); a dissident disciple who was:
- A “companion in the suffering [tribulation, *thlipsis* θλιψις] and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus” (1:9).
- Imprisoned on the Island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:9).
- Likely written during the latter parts of the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD).

## ADDRESSEES

“To the seven churches in the province of Asia....

Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea” (1:4, 11).



## ADDRESSEES

- Apocalyptic is literature of the persecuted.
- The seven churches were struggling with being faithful followers of Jesus in an increasingly intolerant empire.
- Purpose is to provide both hope and encourage resistance by revealing the truth about present and future unseen realities.

## ADDRESSEES

“The most powerful piece of political resistance literature from the period of the early Roman Empire” (Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 38).

Primary purpose is “to remind the church, both then and now, to not give in to the demands or practices of a system that is already judged by God and is about to come to its demise” (Michael Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 25).

## GREETING

“Grace and peace to you from...

“him who is, and who was, and who is to come” — **The Father** (see 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5; cf. Exod 3:14).

“and from the seven spirits [sevenfold Spirit, NLT] before his throne” — **The Spirit** (3:1; 4:5; 5:6; cf. Isa 11:1; Zech 4:2-6).

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness” (Ps 89:37?), “the firstborn from the dead, and the [true!] ruler of the kings of the earth” (Ps 89:27) — **The Son**.

## DOXOLOGY

“To him *who loves us* [present] and *has freed us* from our sins by his blood [past].

“Has made us to be a kingdom and priests (Exod 19:6) to serve his God and Father—to him [=Jesus] be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen (1:5b-6).

## ACCLAMATION

“Look, he is coming with the clouds’ (Dan 7:13) and ‘every eye will see him, even those who pierced him’ (Zech 12:10); and all peoples on earth ‘will mourn because of him’ (Zech 12:10). So shall it be! Amen” (1:7).

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (1:8 and 21:6; cf. 22:13 of Jesus).

## JOHN’S VISION

- Initial vision of “seven golden lampstands” (1:12 = churches in 1:20).
- And “One like a Son of Man” as standing among them.
- Draws imagery from Daniel and other OT passages.
- Jesus is **Present** in their situation.

“...there before me was One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14).

## JOHN’S VISION

- “Son of Man”
- Refers to humanity in its mortality (see Ezekiel).
- In Daniel, describes a mysterious figure who appears to be Israel’s hoped-for Messiah (Dan 7).
- In 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra, this figure sits on God’s throne and is pictured as eschatological judge.
- Jesus’ favourite self-designation in the gospels.

## JOHN'S VISION

### His Clothing

- “robe reaching down to his feet” – the tunic of the High Priest (LXX Exod 28:4; Zech 3:4).
- “golden sash around his chest” – because his work is complete (see Heb 4:14; 7:26).



## JOHN'S VISION

### Sevenfold Description

1. “hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow” – like the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9); image of forgiveness (Isa 1:18).
2. “eyes were like blazing fire” – penetrating divine vision and understanding (Dan 10:5-6).

## JOHN'S VISION

3. “feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” – in contrast to vision in Dan 2:33 (but Dan 10:6); Jesus' kingdom rests on strong feet and endures forever.
4. “voice was like the sound of rushing waters” – an image of the voice of God (Ezek 1:24; 43:2).
5. “in his right hand he held seven stars” – perhaps based on pagan astrology; later the “are the angels of the seven churches” (Rev 1:20; 2:1; 3:1); underscores Jesus determines the destiny of humanity (Col 1:17).

## JOHN'S VISION

6. “coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword” – drawn from Isa 49:2; suggests both words of blessing and correction (image used of the word of God in Heb 4:12 and also used in Rev 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21; cf. Eph 6:17).
7. “His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” – backwards reference to the face of God (Exod 33:18-20), and anticipates the future vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:23).



## RESPONSE

- How are we going to respond?