

He Reigns: Ready or Not... He's Coming! (Book of Revelation)

Week 1

Text: Revelation 1:1–8

Big Idea: Jesus is coming soon—and the Church must wake up, live holy, and carry out her mission before He comes again.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ. (The revealing of Jesus the Christ)

Who remembers that great line from the terminator? Arnie saying, “I’ll Be Back!” The phrase stuck with Arnold; he repeated it many times in other movies.

How many of us have used that catchphrase in our best Arnold impression?

Guess who else said they would be back again? Jesus!

Read John 14:1-3.

That catchphrase seems to fit perfectly today. There are so many talks and questions about, are we living in the last days?

Things to remember: God has everything under His control. He either allows things to come along, or He sends them. Nothing happens by happenstance.

God’s biblical timeline is different from how we think. God has a timeline for Israel, (unbelievers) and a timeline for the church, age of grace.

1. The Dispensation of Innocence – Gn. 1:26-3:24
2. The Dispensation of Conscience – Gn. 4:1-8:19
3. The Dispensation of Human Government – Gn. 8:20-11:32
4. The Dispensation of Promise – Gn. 12 – Ex. 18
5. The Dispensation of The Mosaic Law – Ex. 19:1-Mt. 27:56
6. The Dispensation of Grace – From the death of Christ to the Second Coming
7. The Dispensation of The Millennium – Rev. 20:1-6

We are living in the “last days” of the church, age of grace, church age. When the church age ends, time/world/unbelievers will continue to live on.

God will close the chapter on this period of time (age of grace) and move into the period of time called the Tribulation. Before the time of tribulation, the Church, believers that are still living will be raptured “caught up” into heaven, and then God will pour His wrath on the earth.

Most of the disagreement, discussions, blathering and arguments regarding the rapture and Jesus second coming isn't about whether Jesus is coming back. The arguments, disagreements and discussions are about the timing of when Jesus is coming back.

The N.T. describes two facets of Christ's second coming:

Stage 1: Jesus will come for His church (bride) to escort her to His Father's house (**John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16**).

Stage 2: Jesus will come with His saints when he descends from heaven to judge his enemies and establish His glorious one-thousand-year kingdom on earth (**Zech. 14:4-5; 1 Thess. 3:13**).

Both stages describe the Lord's coming, but their differences indicate that they are two unique stages occurring at two separate times.

The first stage, The Rapture, is imminent and sign less and could occur at any moment (**1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18**).

The second stage, The Second Coming, will be preceded by all kinds of signs (**Matthew 24:1-29**).

Jesus Christ's coming is a single event in two stages; these two stages are separated by at least seven years, during which the Tribulation happens.

There are 3 major theories on when Jesus will return: Pre-tribulation, Mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation.

I personally believe Pre-Tribulation is the correct theory. Now, I have lots of friends, and people smarter than me that believe differently. There are plenty of godly people, some in this church that believe differently. But the belief of this church theology and mine is Pretrib.

Many ignorant, some ignorant on purpose Pre-Trib believers can be lulled into a place of complacency and even living as if nothing bad will happen. No matter what you believe about the rapture or return of Jesus, we are to be sold out, serious, living as sinless of a live as possible, standing ready to be called out.

Why do I believe this is the correct theory?

- ❖ It holds truest to Jesus' return being imminent.

Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

1 Thessalonians 1:10, “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (The “wait”) in the Greek is in the present tense, which means they were to wait continuously and literally means to “wait up for” like a parent waiting for and looking for a child that they expect to be home at any moment.

❖ Believers will **NOT** experience any of God’s Wrath/judgement.

Revelation 3:10, “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

1 Thess. 5:9, For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

I do not believe that Christians are spared from the troubles and trials of this life. Even serious troubles. I do not believe that I won’t or couldn’t face martyrdom. Every generation of believers have faced trial, troubles, and martyrdom.

John 16:33, These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

This life’s troubles, trials, persecution, and even martyrdom is vastly different than the wrath of God poured out on a sinful planet during the Tribulation.

Today, I face persecution and wrath from man and Satan. I face trials and troubles to purify my faith, or a correction from my heavenly father.

It doesn’t make sense for God’s people to endure God’s wrath. Part of salvation in Christ saves us from the Wrath we deserve.

We have biblical examples of God judging the wicked and sparing his people. Lot was released from Sodom; Enoch was raptured before the flood; Noah from the flood.

The Tribulation is the product of God’s wrath upon wickedness. Six times the book of Revelation refers to God’s wrath being poured out. **(Rev. 6:16-17; Rev. 14:8-10; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 15:7; 16:1; Rev. 19:15)**

J.F. Strombeck, “One is forced to ask, how could the Lamb of God die and rise again to save the Church from wrath and then allow her to pass through the wrath that He shall pour upon those who reject Him? Such inconsistency might be possible in the thinking of men, but not in the acts of the Son of God,”

I. THE CHAIN OF REVELATION: GOD WANTS US TO KNOW (vv. 1–2)

- **Read Revelation 1:1-2.**

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants...”

A. This Is Not Hidden, It’s Handed Down

- “Revelation” (Gr: apokalypsis) means **unveiling**, God is revealing, not concealing.
- This isn’t just prophecy; it’s an urgent message from Heaven’s throne to God’s servants.

B. God Doesn’t Want You Confused, He Wants You Prepared

- He gave this revelation so His servants wouldn’t be in the dark.
- While the world shrugs at prophecy, the Church should burn with anticipation.

Application:

Are you living like someone who’s been given insider intel from the King?

II. THE BLESSING OF WATCHFULNESS (v. 3)

- **Read verse 3.**

“Blessed is he who reads... and keeps those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

A. Revelation Is the Only Book That Promises a Blessing to the Reader

- God is saying: “Pay attention—this isn’t trivia. This is treasure.”

B. “The Time Is Near” — That’s a Rapture Alarm, not a Suggestion

- “Time” (Gr: kairos) means a God-appointed moment is rapidly approaching.
- From a Pretribulation perspective, this includes the **imminent rapture** of the Church (**1 Thess. 4:16-17**).
- We are not looking for signs. We are listening FOR a shout.
- *“The problem is that when everything becomes a sign, then nothing is a sign.”*

Application:

Is your life rapture-ready or worldly-rooted?

III. THE CHURCH AGE IS NOW, BUT IT WON’T LAST FOREVER (v. 4)

- **Read verse 4.**

“John to the seven churches...”

A. This Message Was to the Churches, But Not Just for the Churches

- Seven = completeness. This is a word for every church in the Church Age.

B. From Grace to Glory; But Grace Has an Expiration Date

- We are in the **Age of Grace**, but when the rapture happens, judgment follows (**Revelation 6** and on).
- The Church is promised “**deliverance from the wrath to come**” (**1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9**).
- The “seven spirits of God” in the book of Revelation are a reference to the Holy Spirit in the perfection of His manifold ministry.
- The prophecy is that the Messiah would be empowered not by seven individual spirits but by the One Spirit, described seven ways: (**Isaiah 11:2**)
 1. The Spirit of the LORD
 2. The Spirit of wisdom
 3. The Spirit of understanding
 4. The Spirit of counsel
 5. The Spirit of power
 6. The Spirit of knowledge
 7. The Spirit of the fear of the Lord

We find Jesus’s attributes/characteristics in Rev. 3:1, 4:5, 5:6.

Application:

Church, are you busy building buildings or building the Kingdom?

IV. JESUS IS THE CENTERPIECE OF HISTORY AND DESTINY (vv. 5–6)

- **Read verses 5-6.**

“Jesus Christ... the faithful witness... the firstborn from the dead... the ruler over the kings of the earth.”

A. Three Titles that Shatter All Oppositions

- **Faithful Witness** – He told the truth to a hostile world and never flinched.
- **Firstborn from the Dead** – He conquered death so we could rise too.
- **Ruler of Kings** – He doesn’t answer to presidents or prime ministers. They answer to Him.

B. He Made Us Kings and Priests, So Why Are We Living Like Paupers and Cowards?

- You were saved not to sit, but to serve.

- We are a priestly army, not a passive audience.

Application:

Are you living like you are royalty with a mission or royalty with entitlement?

If Jesus is central in heaven's story, is there any good reason He is not central in our story?

V. HE'S COMING WITH CLOUDS (v. 7)

- **Read verse 7.**

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...”

A. Two Phases: Rapture & Return

Pretrib View:

- The rapture (**1 Thess. 4:16–17**): He comes for His Church, unseen by the world.
- The second coming (**Rev. 19**): He comes with His Church, visible to all.
- **Revelation 1:7** refers to His visible return, (that is described in **Revelation 19**) when Jesus descends in glory to judge and reign.

B. For the Redeemed, He's, Our Bridegroom. For the World, He's the Judge.

- For the Church: hope.
- For the rebels: horror.
- Every eye will see Him. **Nobody will ignore Him then.**

Application:

Do you tremble at the thought of His coming, or rejoice?

VI. THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA SPEAKS (v. 8)

- **Read verse 8.**

“I am the Alpha and the Omega... who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

A. He Was Before It All. He'll Be Standing After It All.

- Jesus is not a footnote in history. He authors it.
- The first Word and the last Word belong to Him.

B. “The Almighty” – Not a Politician, Not a Prophet, Not a Puppet

- This isn't gentle Jesus meek and mild. This is sovereign Jesus, mighty and wild.
- He is not coming back as a lamb... He's coming back as a lion.

Application:

Does your worship reflect the God who is...or the Jesus you've imagined?

Do you follow Jesus as your Savior...but ignore Him as your King?

Conclusion:

WAKE UP.... SPEAK UP... LOOK UP

Ready or not, Jesus is coming.

You can't inherit the Kingdom while sitting on the fence.

You can't plead ignorance when you've been handed Revelation.

You can't delay obedience and expect to escape judgment.

The rapture could happen at any moment.

The warning has been sounded.

The King is coming for a Bride who is awake, alert, and advancing.

Invitation:

If you're spiritually asleep...wake up and repent.

If you've been a silent saint...it's time to speak truth boldly.

If you've never trusted Christ...you are not ready for His return.

But you can be. Right now.

Come, receive Jesus, not as a religious concept, but as Lord of all.

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, we hear Your voice through the pages of Revelation. Wake us from spiritual slumber.

Purge our complacency. Revive our urgency. Let us live rapture-ready, not terrified, but triumphant. And may we spend our days bringing others into the safety of Your salvation before the door closes.

In Your powerful name, Amen.