

Revelation 1:1-2 - Things Which Must Take Place

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COURSE COMMENTARY



Background

- [Background Preparation](#)

Necessary in order to appreciate the issues involved as we come to verse-by-verse exposition of the text. From this point onward, alternate views will receive less focus and exposition of the text will be the priority.

- [Previous Lessons](#)

[Study Resources](#) Familiarization with study aids available with this course.

[Introduction](#) Goals of the course, attacks upon the book, and how to approach the study of Revelation.

[Audience](#) Audience, purpose, and theme.

[Anti-supernatural Bias](#) Anti-supernatural bias of some interpreters, the style of writing, and the genre of Revelation.

[Authorship](#) Issues related to authorship.

[Canonization](#) Canonization and literary structure.

[Date](#) When was Revelation written?

[Symbols](#) How to interpret symbols.

[Interpretations](#) Systems of interpretation applied to Revelation.

[Related Passages](#) Passages and themes from other parts of the Bible.

1:1 - The Revelation

- [Revelation = Apocalypsis = unveiling](#)

Revelation was written to *reveal* rather than *conceal*. From **apocalupto** : a compound of **apo** (away from) and **kalupto** (cover or hide). *To remove a cover to reveal something. To unveil.*

- [Perspicuity of Scripture](#)

The clearness and lucidity of Scripture is its consistent theme ([Deu. 29:29](#); [Isa. 5:24](#); [Mat. 11:25](#); [24:15](#); [2Ti. 3:16](#); [2Pe. 1:19](#)).

- [Revelation and Mystery](#)

Revelation is intended to unveil mystery. They are **opposites** ([Rom. 16:25](#)).

1:1 - of Jesus Christ

- **Of Jesus Christ**
Is this the **subjective** or **objective** genitive? Is the verse saying the revelation is **about** Jesus or **from** Him?
1) Jesus *provides* revelation ([Gal. 1:12](#)).
2) Revelation is *about* Jesus ([Rev. 1:11-18](#)).
3) Jesus *reveals the Father* in His incarnation ([Heb. 1:1-2](#)).
Context favors Jesus as the source (subjective genitive).
- **Revelation Initiated by God**
Biblical revelation is not by human insight, instruction, or discovery. These are things *beyond finding out*.
Example: Peter's declaration of Jesus as "the Christ" ([Mat. 16:17](#)).
The "veil is done away in Christ" ([2Cor. 3:14](#)).

1:1 - which God gave Him

- **Did Jesus not Know?**
In the mystery of the incarnation, Jesus **grew in wisdom, learned** , and said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" ([Mark 13:32](#)).
- **Role Distinctions within the Trinity**
The members of the Trinity are **equal** but voluntarily occupy different **roles** ([John 5:20-23](#); [1Cor. 15:28](#)).

1:1 - to show His servants

- **servants**
His servants (*doulos*) are those who know Him, not unbelievers. Faith is required for spiritual revelation.

1:1 - must shortly take place

- **must**
God's predictions are **guaranteed** to come to pass! ([Mat. 26:54](#); [John 10:35](#)).
That these things "must... take place " indicates they were **predicted** elsewhere in Scripture. See the lesson on [Related Passages](#).
- **shortly**
What does "shortly" mean in this context?
1) Within the lifetimes of John's immediate readers?
2) Events in distant future, but rapid once begin?
3) Closeness in time from God's perspective, "imminent"?

1:1 - imminency

- **Imminency - What is it?**
"The quality or condition of being about to occur."
The coming of Jesus is an imminent event ([Mat. 24:42-48](#); [Luke 12:37-39](#); [1Th. 4:15-17](#)).
- **Motivation for Godly Living**
Ongoing **expectation** that the event is "about to happen!"

A motivation for godly living (2Pe. 3:10-14).

- **The Tension between Certainty and Uncertainty**
 - 1) The event is certain to take place (not "if" but "when").
 - 2) The timing is uncertain (may be immediate or delayed indefinitely).

"Imminent" is the same as "soon" from a human perspective.

- **Other Events cannot be *known* to Precede Imminent Events**
As soon as we say that some other non-imminent event **must precede** an imminent event, then imminency is destroyed!
If the 70th week of Daniel (Dan. 9:27) or the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15) must precede the Rapture, then the Rapture is no longer "imminent" and the church should be watching for Antichrist instead of Christ!
- **'Soon' from God's Perspective**
Scriptures predict that scoffers will ridicule the eschatological understanding of "soon" as denoting imminency (2Pe. 3:1-10).
God's delay is an indication of His great **mercy** .

1:1 - signified it

- **Communication Utilizes Symbol or Analogy**
Communication by comparison and with the use of symbols. The word *esemanen* is used by John elsewhere to describe how Jesus described His death:
"This He said, " **signifying** by what death He would die (John 12:33). Jesus used the symbol of Moses' serpent on the pole (see Num. 21:8) to communicate this truth.
- **Golden Rule Still Applies**
This word does not indicate normative interpretation is to be jettisoned when interpreting Revelation. The symbols are either explained in the immediate context or in other passages ("Scripture interprets Scripture")
See the lesson on [Interpreting Symbols](#).

1:2 - word of God

- **Evidence of John the Apostle as Author**
Referring to Jesus as the "word of God" is a characteristic of John (John 1:1; 1Jn. 1:1, 1:14; Rev. 1:2, 19:13).
See the lesson on [Authorship](#).

1:2 - testimony of Jesus

- **Testimony born by Jesus**
The context (revelation which God gave Jesus to **show**) argues for the subjective genitive.
- **From Jesus about Jesus**
The "Spirit of Christ testified" to the prophets concerning "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1Pe. 1:11).

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).