

## **Revelation 1— Background to the Seven Churches in Revelation**

- I. Who, What, Where, When, Why? (vv.1-4a, 9-11)**
  - a. Revelation= Unveiling—unveiling of Jesus Christ
  - b. Author: John- possibly John the Apostle but not for certain
  - c. He writes this while exiled on Patmos (persecuted because of word of God)—John was writing to believers who were experiencing persecution in the Roman empire; specifically the seven churches in Asia-Minor (Modern day Turkey)
  - d. 3 Literary genres in one: apocalyptic; prophesy, and letter
  - e. Main issue: how churches respond to the tension of living in the authority Roman Empire while staying faithful with Jesus Christ as their Lord
  
- II. Strange Greeting (vv. 4b-8)**
  - a. Seven spirits—likely symbolic reference to Holy Spirit
  - b. Description of Jesus—faithful witness: same word as martyr (faithful unto death); firstborn from the dead- primogeniture—Jesus’ position as heir- one who rules, as well as first to secure resurrection; ruler of the kings of the earth—reminder of who is in control, despite that it would seem Rome was ultimate ruler
  - c. Description of his work on the cross and the church’s role: freed us from our sins by his blood; made us into a kingdom and priests (*Exod. 19:6*) to serve his God and Father
  - d. Written in a very worshipful, doxological way; filled with OT allusions
  
- III. Not Your Normal Picture of Jesus! (vv. 7-8; 12-16)**
  - a. Coming on the clouds—allusion to *Daniel 7:13* (Jesus is fulfilling Daniel’s prophesy)
  - b. Dressed in robe; golden sash, feet like glowing bronze; sword out of mouth, etc.
  - c. Portray the power and holiness of Christ (equal to the Father) who is judge of the churches
  
- IV. The Unusual Exchange (vv.17-20)**
  - a. Fell at his feet; but told not to fear; There is something both terrifying and beautiful about Jesus in this from
  - b. Command to write what he has seen...sets stage for message to 7 churches
  
- V. So what?**
  - a. How do we as a church (and individuals within the church) relate to the powers that be in our modern context?
  - b. Do we see Jesus as Lord of our church; is our primary motive to please him and be faithful?
  - c. In the midst of an antagonistic world; we can find comfort that God is in control despite how the world may look; Worldly empires will rise and fall, but God’s church will always remain