

STUDY GUIDE 13

Revelation 1-3 Overview

Our study this week introduces us to the first three chapters of Revelation. The goal is to get a sense of the big picture of these chapters before we dive in for a closer look. In other words, avoid getting bogged down by details for now!

Study warm-up: As we begin our look at the first chapters of Revelation, what are you feeling? Are you excited? A bit nervous?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Review what you learned about John from Study Guide 1.

Read Revelation 1-3.

1. Where was John when he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ?
Why was he there?

2. To whom was John to relay the message of the Revelation of Jesus Christ? (Revelation 1:1)

3. From chapter 1, record the three things which John was instructed to write.

1)

2)

3)

Read Revelation 1-3 again with the three things John was to record in mind. Then consider the first verse of Revelation 4 below. (We will make a connection about the three things and the structure of Revelation in just a bit!)

Revelation 4:1

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Read Revelation 2 and 3.

4. What pattern do you see in the letters to the churches, i.e. what are the common elements? (Keep your observations general for now!)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

The church locations mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 were in western modern-day Turkey. Patmos is a Greek island off the western coast of Turkey. See Figure 13-1 to orient yourself and then examine Figure 13-2 for a closer look at the region.



Figure 13-1
Modern-day Countries



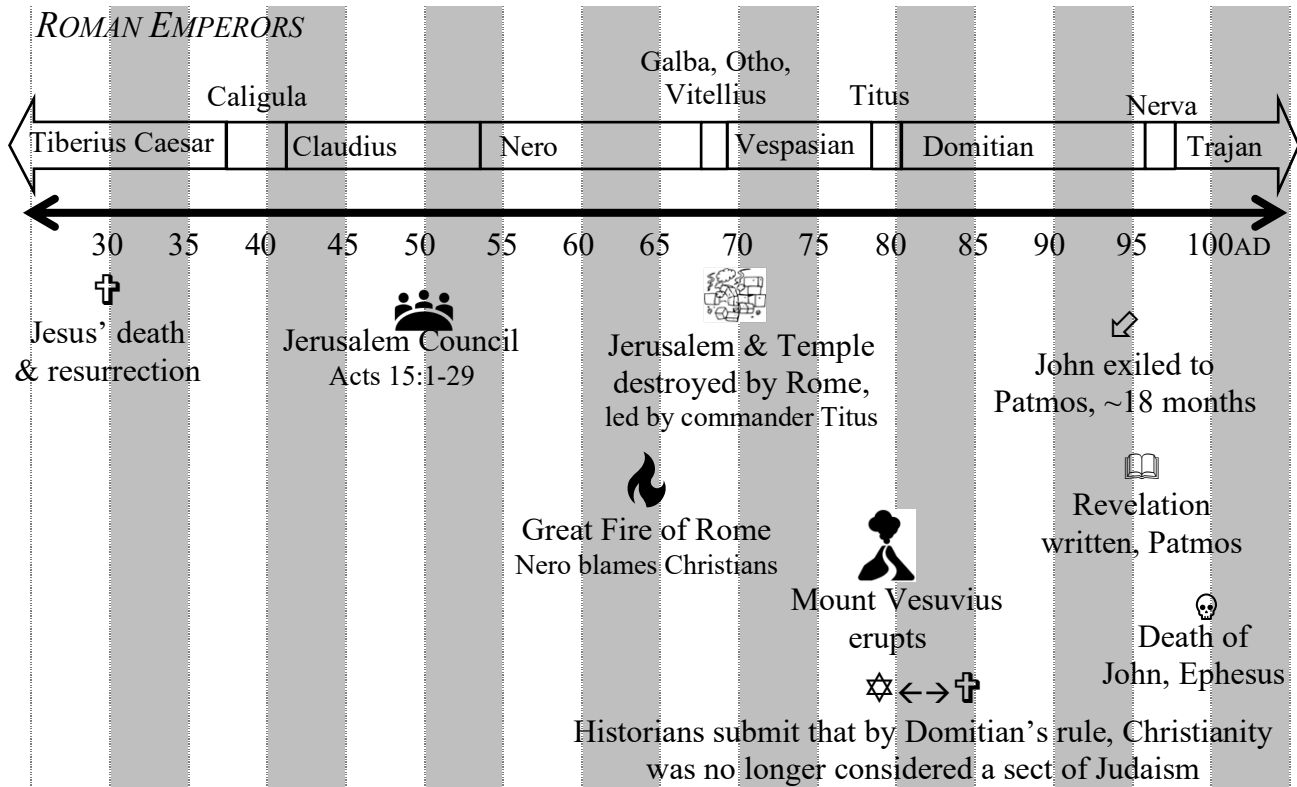
Figure 13-2
Locations in Revelation 1-3

Patmos is a small island of just over 13 square miles. (For comparison purposes, Boise, Idaho is about 85 square miles; Kuna, Idaho is about 20 square miles.) In the first century, Patmos was one of several islands to which Roman emperors exiled their opposition.

The Roman emperor Domitian (reigned 81-96AD) exiled John to Patmos late in the first century. After Domitian's death by assassination, Emperor Nerva reversed many of Domitian's policies and gave amnesty to many of those exiled under his predecessor's reign. The Apostle John is thought

to have left Patmos under that amnesty to live out the remainder of his days in Ephesus.

Figure 13-3 provides a timeline of the first century Roman Emperors and a few noteworthy highlights about their respective reigns.



14 - 37AD	Tiberius Caesar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Second Roman Emperor, after his stepfather Caesar Augustus (r. 24BC – 14AD)
37 - 41AD	Caligula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Known for unpredictable, erratic behavior; largely ignored the Christians
41 - 54AD	Claudius <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expelled Jews & Christians from Rome about 49AD (Acts 18:2)
54 - 68AD	Nero (died by suicide) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blamed the Great Fire of Rome, which he may have set himself, on Christians ▪ The first Jewish-Roman War 66-73AD began during his reign

68 - 69AD	Year of Four Emperors (Roman civil war): Galba, Otho, Vitellius, & Vespasian <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Galba reigned 6 months 68-69AD; Ortho, 3 months; Vitellius, 8 months
69 - 79AD	Vespasian <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The first 6 months of Vespasian's rule overlapped the final 6 months of Vitellius' reign as the civil war came to a close▪ Instituted the <i>Fiscus Judaicus</i>, a tax on Jews to fund the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter (as a punishment after the Jewish Roman War)
79 - 81AD	Titus <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Military commander under his father, he led the siege against Jerusalem in 70AD
81 - 96AD	Domitian <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Titus' brother; unpopular with the Senate and was assassinated by court officials
96 - 98AD	Nerva <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sought to restore freedoms that Domitian had limited; released exiles
98 - 117AD	Trajan <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Advised his governor in Asia against actively seeking Christians to persecute; but if Christians were discovered and would not renounce God, punish them

Figure 13-3
Roman Emperors in John's time

5. Look back at your answer to question 3 and review Revelation 4:1. If we accept the instructions to John as an outline for the book of Revelation, how would you divide the book?

John instructed to write:	Revelation chapter(s):
1)	
2)	
3)	

6. Why was John on Patmos?

7. Look at the list of the seven churches and locate them on the map in Figure 1-2. Why might the churches be listed in this order? (Question 8c may provide additional insight.)

8. Let's take a closer look at John's audience. From the verses listed, for whom is the message of Revelation?

a. Revelation 1:1 (You answered this in question 2, but we are building on that picture.)

b. Revelation 1:3

c. Revelation 1:4, 11

d. Revelation 2:7 (also Revelation 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, and 3:22)

e. Putting it all together, for whom is the message of Revelation?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. What especially catches your eye about the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-20?

10. Thinking big [big!] picture, what may be gleaned from Jesus' messages to the seven churches of Revelation? (You don't need to be specific at this time, so think generally!). In other words, what might be the benefit from studying Revelation 2 and 3?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Recalling that John had a close relationship with Jesus during his earthly ministry, does John's reaction to what he sees in chapter 1 surprise you? Explain.
- II) John is commanded to *write* fourteen times in the book of Revelation (ten times in the first three chapters); put yourself in John's sandals – how eager would you be to tell people of your encounter with Jesus and His messages to the churches?
- III) Thinking about the political turmoil that happened in the final 70 years of John's life, and how through it all God preserved the bride for His Son, what confidence do you have in God's plan for His Son's betrothed in the near future?

REFERENCES

Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language*. Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, 2013.

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Additional Scripture for Study Guide 13

□ Revelation 4:1

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."



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STUDY GUIDE 14

Revelation 1

Study warm-up: Do you ever imagine talking to Jesus face to face? How do you imagine Him to look?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Revelation 1.

1. Describe the path the message of Revelation traversed as it was delivered to John.
2. Verse 3 contains the first of seven blessings within the book of Revelation. How does one receive this blessing?
3. What does the passage (chapter 1) say about God?

4. How is Jesus described in chapter 1?

5. How are believers depicted in chapter 1?

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

The word *revelation* is translated from Greek term, *apokalypsis*. It means an uncovering or unveiling of that which was previously hidden.

6. Read the following cross-references that may help interpret the description of Jesus; then make note of what the phrase highlights about Jesus. (If the list seems overwhelming, answer those items of greatest interest to you.)

a. the faithful witness	Revelation 19:11 John 8:14 John 14:8, 9	
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b. the firstborn of the dead	Colossians 1:18 Acts 13:33 1 Corinthians 15:20	
c. ruler of the kings of the earth	Psalms 2:8, 9 Daniel 2:44 Zechariah 14:8, 9	
d. son of man	Daniel 7:13-14 Luke 21:25-28 Acts 7:54-56	
e. [long] robe	Exodus 28:3, 4 1 Samuel 24:4, 5 1 Samuel 24:11 Isaiah 6:1	
f. girded across the chest with a golden sash	Exodus 28:4	
g. head and hair like white wool, like snow	Isaiah 1:18	
h. eyes like a flame of fire	2 Chronicles 16:9 Proverbs 15:3	
i. feet like burnished bronze	Exodus 27:1-3 Acts 10:42 1 Corinthians 15:25	
j. voice like the sound of many waters	Psalms 29:3-9	

k. from His mouth a two-edged sword	Hebrews 4:12 Ephesians 6:17 Revelation 19:11-16	
l. face like the sun shining in its strength	Matthew 17:2 Acts 26:12-14	
m. the first and the last	Isaiah 44:6 Luke 1:32-34 John 1:1-3	
n. the living One	Luke 24:1-5	
o. dead, [now] alive forevermore	Mark 10:32-34 Romans 6:10	
p. has the keys of death and Hades	John 5:24 Acts 2:23-25 Romans 6:9 1 Corinthians 15:26 Revelation 20:14	

7. Explain how the church can be represented by a lampstand. (What is the purpose of a lampstand? What are the limitations of a lampstand?)

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

8. How might you be blessed by reading, hearing and heeding the message of Revelation?

9. How does the image of Jesus in the midst of the lampstands affect your perception of Him and of your church?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- 1) What is meant by *the Lord's day*? Some commentators suggest that *the Lord's day* in verse 10 could also be translated as the *day of the Lord*. The *day of the Lord* is sometimes used in Scripture to denote a time in which God acts mightily in the affairs of mankind to move His plan forward. More frequently the *day of the Lord* is used in an eschatological sense to describe the timing of end time events. Does that seem to be the intent in chapter 1?

- ii) Is the book of Revelation fulfillment of Jesus' words to Peter about John in John 21:22 – Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me!”?

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Additional Scripture for Study Guide 14

□ Revelation 19:11

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

□ John 8:14

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

□ John 14:8-9

⁸ Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

□ Colossians 1:18

¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

□ **Acts 13:33**

³³ that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'

□ **1 Corinthians 15:20**

²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

□ **Psalm 2:8-9**

⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

□ **Daniel 2:44**

⁴⁴ In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

□ **Zechariah 14:8-9**

⁸ And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one.

□ **Daniel 7:13-14**

¹³ “I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.

¹⁴ “And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and *men of*
every language
Might serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.

□ **Luke 21:25-28**

²⁵ “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. ²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

□ **Acts 7:54-56**

⁵⁴ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory

of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; ⁵⁶ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

□ **Exodus 28:3-4**

³ You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me. ⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.

□ **1 Samuel 24:4-5**

⁴ The men of David said to him, "Behold, *this is* the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. ⁵ It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's *robe*.

□ **1 Samuel 24:11**

¹¹ Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you,

though you are lying in wait for my life to take it.

□ **Isaiah 6:1**

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

□ **Exodus 28:4**

⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.

□ **Isaiah 1:18**

¹⁸ "Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are as scarlet,
They will be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They will be like wool."

□ **2 Chronicles 16:9**

⁹ For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

□ **Proverbs 15:3**

³ The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
Watching the evil and the good.

□ **Exodus 27:1-3**

“And you shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide; the altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ² You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. ³ You shall make its pails for removing its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze.

□ **Acts 10:42**

⁴² And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

□ **1 Corinthians 15:25**

²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

□ **Psalms 29:3-9**

³ The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;
The God of glory thunders,
The LORD is over many waters.

⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful,
The voice of the LORD is majestic.

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
Yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
And Sirion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire.

⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the deer to
calve
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everything says, "Glory!"

□ **Hebrews 4:12**

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

□ **Ephesians 6:17**

¹⁷ And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

□ **Revelation 19:11-16**

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine

press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

□ **Matthew 17:2**

² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

□ **Acts 26:12-14**

¹² "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

□ **Isaiah 44:6**

⁶ "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
'I am the first and I am the last,
And there is no God besides Me.

□ **Luke 1:32-34**

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ Mary said to

the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

□ **John 1:1-3**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

□ **Luke 24:1-5**

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; ⁵ and as *the women* were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?"

□ **Mark 10:32-34**

³² They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, ³³ *saying*, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and

will hand Him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill *Him*, and three days later He will rise again.”

□ **Mark 10:32-34**

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□ **Acts 2:23-25**

²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. ²⁴ But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. ²⁵ For David says of Him,
‘I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL
NOT BE SHAKEN.

□ **Romans 6:9**

⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

□ **1 Corinthians 15:26**

²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

□ **Revelation 20:14**

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

