

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION REVISITED

Wednesday, October 14, 2020 / First Assembly of God / Ft. Myers, FL  
with Pastor Dan Betzer



In the past nearly 34 years, Wednesday night Bible study has become my favorite night of the week. During that time, I have taught 37 series on the Bible, primarily presenting them on the basis of expository teaching, verse by verse. This will be my 38th, and last, series, once again revisiting the Apostle John's incredible book of Revelation. This series will be completed near the end of January when I retire from pastoring.

The picture above is a view of the Isle of Patmos with its primary settlement, the village of Skala. It was on Patmos that John was exiled by Roman emperor Domitian, about 94 or 95 AD, and it was here that Jesus Christ appeared to him, giving him the "revelation." Let's begin this remarkable journey together.

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Place*

The Bible, the Word of the Living God, is the ages-old saga of **REAL PEOPLE** who lived in a **REAL TIME** in a **REAL PLACE**. It is important to realize that as we begin this study of Revelation. What, for openers, was the place?

1 *Patmos*

2  
3 It was early spring, 1971. Our old Greek freighter slid into the harbor of  
4 the little village of Skala, one of two such communities on the Island of  
5 Patmos, located in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece. With me,  
6 sharing my cabin, was Jiles Kirkland, then-Bishop of the Methodist  
7 churches of Florida.

8  
9 Skala was not then a deep-water port, so we anchored off-shore and were  
10 taken by little tenders (boats) to the docks. To say we were excited about  
11 our destination was an understatement. We were eager to explore this  
12 rather small, but very hilly, island, where the Apostle John had been  
13 visited by the Christ, Jesus Himself. There, our Lord revealed (hence the  
14 name: Revelation) to John and to us His plan for the last days that would  
15 preface His return and global rule.

16  
17 Jiles and I were not able to secure a rental car anywhere on this small  
18 island; however, we did find a livery stable where we could rent donkeys.  
19 We paid for these obstinate little beasts and set out for adventure, making  
20 our way to the highest point on the island, a high hill on which sat the  
21 famed monastery of Saint John (believed to be near the cave where John  
22 had been secured). This huge edifice was completed almost a thousand  
23 years ago in honor of Saint John.

24  
25 Patmos is not a large island, only about 3 by 5 miles, but very rugged. Our  
26 donkeys slogged their way to the summit where we dismounted and began  
27 our exploration and copious picture-taking. Our old ship, The Monarch,  
28 was almost constantly in view, anchored far below in the ocean, awaiting  
29 our return later in the day. What a spectacular view! We had been warned  
30 that when we heard the ship's horn, we had thirty minutes to re-board.  
31 Suddenly - we heard it! We knew those donkeys would be useless at this  
32 point, so we ran - all the way, barely getting back before the ship started  
33 to leave the area!



1  
2 The monastery of St. John, located on the summit of Patmos. This massive structure is an important  
3 place for Orthodox and Western Christians alike. It was founded in 1088 by a monk in honor of  
4 John. Its towers and buttresses make it look like a fairy-tale castle but it was built that way to  
5 protect its treasures. The cave where it is commonly believed that the apostle was held was located  
6 just several hundred yards away. No photography is allowed inside the cave, which was sad to me  
7 when I visited it on several occasions. However, there is not really much to see inside it.

8  
9 *The Man - John*

10  
11 Almost neglected now by tourists, the ruins of Bethsaida lay at the  
12 extreme north end of the Sea of Galilee. In Jesus' time, it was a thriving  
13 fishing village. It was the home of John, and his brother James. His  
14 parents were apparently godly people and believed to be related - perhaps  
15 cousins - of Jesus. His mother loved Jesus and followed Him in His three-  
16 year ministry. His father was a commercial fisherman who owned his own  
17 boat and was prosperous enough to hire servants.

18  
19 John himself was a fisherman. He was working at his trade when Jesus  
20 called him to become one of His disciples:

21  
22

1 Matthew 4:18-22

2 *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon*  
3 *called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they*  
4 *were fishermen. [19] Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will*  
5 *make you fishers of men." [20] They immediately left their nets and*  
6 *followed Him. [21] Going on from there, He saw two other brothers,*  
7 *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with*  
8 *Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, [22] and*  
9 *immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.*

10

11 It is commonly accepted by Bible scholars that John was the youngest of  
12 all Jesus' disciples and the last to die. All of the disciples (except John)  
13 died violent deaths by martyrdom - except Judas who hanged himself  
14 when remorse for betraying Jesus overwhelmed him. John died a rather  
15 old man, probably in Turkey. He was in his 90's.

16

17 John wrote the Gospel that bears his name, the book of Revelation and I,  
18 II and III John. John and his brother James were cousins to Jesus. They  
19 were not shy about expressing their opinions and desires:

20

21 Mark 3:17

22 *And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he*  
23 *(Jesus) surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder.*

24

25 Luke 9:51-56

26 *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received*  
27 *up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, [52] And sent*  
28 *messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of*  
29 *the Samaritans, to make ready for him. [53] And they did not receive*  
30 *him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. [54] And*  
31 *when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou*  
32 *that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them,*  
33 *even as Elias did? [55] But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye*  
34 *know not what manner of spirit ye are of. [56] For the Son of man is*  
35 *not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to*  
36 *another village.*

1 While still suffering and dying on the cross, Jesus commended the care of  
2 His mother Mary to John:

3

4 John 19:25-27

5 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's*  
6 *sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. [26] When*  
7 *Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he*  
8 *loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! [27] Then saith*  
9 *he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple*  
10 *took her unto his own home.*

11

12 There are some who teach that Mary was “caught up” to Heaven;  
13 however, her earthly grave is in Ephesus.

14

15 On the next page, you will find a full-page picture of the ruins of Ephesus,  
16 Turkey, where John pastored and ministered until his death. At the foot of  
17 the hill lie the ruins of the Library of Celsus. Finished in the second  
18 century AD, it was named for a former Roman governor. The street is of  
19 marble and is indeed known as the Great Marble Way. It was down this  
20 magnificent highway that Marc Antony rode horseback with his troops to  
21 meet the ship of Cleopatra sailing into the harbor. That waterway has long  
22 since silted up and serves as farmland rather than an extension of the sea.  
23 Off to the right of the photo, and not seen, are the ruins of the massive  
24 25,000 seat theater, still used occasionally today for concerts. It was here,  
25 during Paul’s ministry, that the Ephesians rioted for two hours.

26





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- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

1 Acts 19:24-36

2 *For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver*  
3 *shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; [25]*  
4 *Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said,*  
5 *Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. [26] Moreover ye see*  
6 *and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this*  
7 *Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be*  
8 *no gods, which are made with hands: [27] So that not only this our craft*  
9 *is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great*  
10 *goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be*  
11 *destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. [28] And when*  
12 *they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying,*  
13 *Great is Diana of the Ephesians. [29] And the whole city was filled with*  
14 *confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of*  
15 *Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord*  
16 *into the theatre. [30] And when Paul would have entered in unto the*  
17 *people, the disciples suffered him not. [31] And certain of the chief of*  
18 *Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would*  
19 *not adventure himself into the theatre. [32] Some therefore cried one*  
20 *thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more*  
21 *part knew not wherefore they were come together. [33] And they drew*  
22 *Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And*  
23 *Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence*  
24 *unto the people. [34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with*  
25 *one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the*  
26 *Ephesians. [35] And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he*  
27 *said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that*  
28 *the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana,*  
29 *and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? [36] Seeing then that*  
30 *these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do*  
31 *nothing rashly.*

32

33 This story from Scripture had to do with Paul, more than John; but it  
34 provides setting for the difficulties that John must have faced during his  
35 ministry here.

36

1 In the meantime, there was a shakeup in the leadership in Rome that would  
2 have direct bearing on John.

### 3 4 *Emperor Domitian 81-96 AD*

5  
6 Emperor Domitian was the son of Emperor Vespasian (who constructed  
7 the Roman Coliseum) and the brother of Emperor Titus.

8  
9 This Roman dictator was inclined by his nature to extreme cruelty. He had  
10 his brother killed and then raised the second level of persecution against  
11 Christians. In his rage, he put to death some of the Roman senators and  
12 confiscated the property of others. He then commanded that all Jews  
13 be killed.

14  
15 No one was immune from the emperor's ferocity. His decree was  
16 frightening: "No Christian, once brought before the tribunal, should be  
17 exempted from punishment without renouncing his religion." The anti-  
18 Christian sentiment in the Roman Empire was that if famine, pestilence,  
19 or earthquakes afflicted any of the provinces, the blame was laid upon  
20 followers of Christ. These persecutions increased the number of  
21 informers; and many, for the sake of personal gain, swore away the lives  
22 of the innocent.

23  
24 Domitian required to be called "god." His diabolical worship was inflicted  
25 upon the Empire and became a required cult. Pastor John in Ephesus was  
26 a leader in opposition to this. Domitian decided to end this "troublemaker"  
27 once and for all. John himself wrote:

28  
29 Revelation 1:9

30 *I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and*  
31 *in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called*  
32 *Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*  
33 *This was meant to be a death sentence for the old apostle.*

34  
35 However, there came a divine intervention that brought about the writing  
36 of the book of Revelation. Try to imagine, John walking somewhere on



1 the Isle of Patmos when Jesus appeared to him. Surrounded by  
2 dying men...

3

4 Revelation 1:10-19

5 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice,*  
6 *as of a trumpet, [11] Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the*  
7 *last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven*  
8 *churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto*  
9 *Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia,*  
10 *and unto Laodicea. [12] And I turned to see the voice that spake with*  
11 *me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; [13] And in the*  
12 *midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed*  
13 *with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden*  
14 *girdle. [14] His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as*  
15 *snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; [15] And his feet like unto*  
16 *fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of*  
17 *many waters. [16] And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of*  
18 *his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as*  
19 *the sun shineth in his strength. [17] And when I saw him, I fell at his*  
20 *feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear*  
21 *not; I am the first and the last: [18] I am he that liveth, and was dead;*  
22 *and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell*  
23 *and of death.*  
24 *[19] Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are,*  
25 *and the things which shall be hereafter;*

26

27 What a transformation with Jesus! No longer the gentle Savior, on whose  
28 shoulder John had leaned during the last supper! Notice carefully how  
29 Jesus now appeared! (And one must wonder why we don't see pictures or  
30 depictions of Jesus in paintings or films according to the way John  
31 saw Him!)

32

33

34

35

36

1                                    ***The Promise To Those Who Read This Book***

2  
3 Revelation 1:1-3

4 ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto***  
5 ***his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and***  
6 ***signified it by his angel unto his servant John: [2] Who bare record of***  
7 ***the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things***  
8 ***that he saw. \* [3] Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words***  
9 ***of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for***  
10 ***the time is at hand.***

11  
12 \*"That he saw" (line 8) John was an eye-witness

13  
14 John 1:14

15 ***And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his***  
16 ***glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace***  
17 ***and truth.***

18  
19 Note the blessing promised to those who read, hear and keep the truths of  
20 Revelation: "Blessed is he...." Oh, the sheer delight and fulfillment of  
21 those who study Revelation.

22  
23                                    **Final Note For Today**

24  
25 The book of Revelation is not only a "revealing" of the future, but it is  
26 also a revelation of Christ Himself. We learn of His power and majesty  
27 over all things that He has made.

28  
29 Next week: THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA (the western coastline  
30 of Turkey)