

Revelation 1:1-2

The Prologue to the Book of Revelation

2024 | **WELLSPRING** CHURCH

Revelation 1:1

Opening Remarks

- Importance of introductory sections of scripture.
- Addressing authorship, structure, purpose, occasion, genre, schools of interpretation and theology.
- Exegetical study vs. systematic theology.

The Prologue (Rev. 1:1–8)

Revelation 1:1–3 (ESV)

¹The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Revelation 1:4–8 (ESV)

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Content Summary

As the opening declaration of the book, the prologue includes a superscription, a salutation, and a doxology. Included in those parts are authorial information with the author's authorization, a greeting to the author's audience, a declaration of genre (apocalypse, prophecy, and epistolary), and a doxology. This section conforms to the standard form of an epistolary greeting that we find in other NT books.

Structure: 2 Parts

- A. Superscription (1:1–3)
- B. Salutation and Doxology (1:4–8)

A. Superscription (vv. 1–3)

Revelation 1:1–3 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation** of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

“revelation” = apocalypse (Gk.
Ἀποκάλυψις)

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation** of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

“to reveal”

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Jesus is the revealer, or is
revealed?

(objective genitive or subjective genitive?)

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Both, but more subjective. Jesus is the one doing the revealing (than being revealed).

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Yes, John sees Jesus (objective) in the book of Revelation. However, Jesus is the one doing the revealing, and what he reveals is not himself, but **“the things that must soon take place.”**

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

The work is a revelation mediated by Jesus Christ rather than a revelation of Christ himself.

Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 40.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Christ is the revealer.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Jesus reveals:

- God
- Humanity
- Sin

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The **revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Christ is the revealer, not in the sense that he accompanies John on his visionary experiences (angels play this role), but because he alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny (Rev 5:5, 7) and disclose its contents (Rev 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1).

Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 40.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

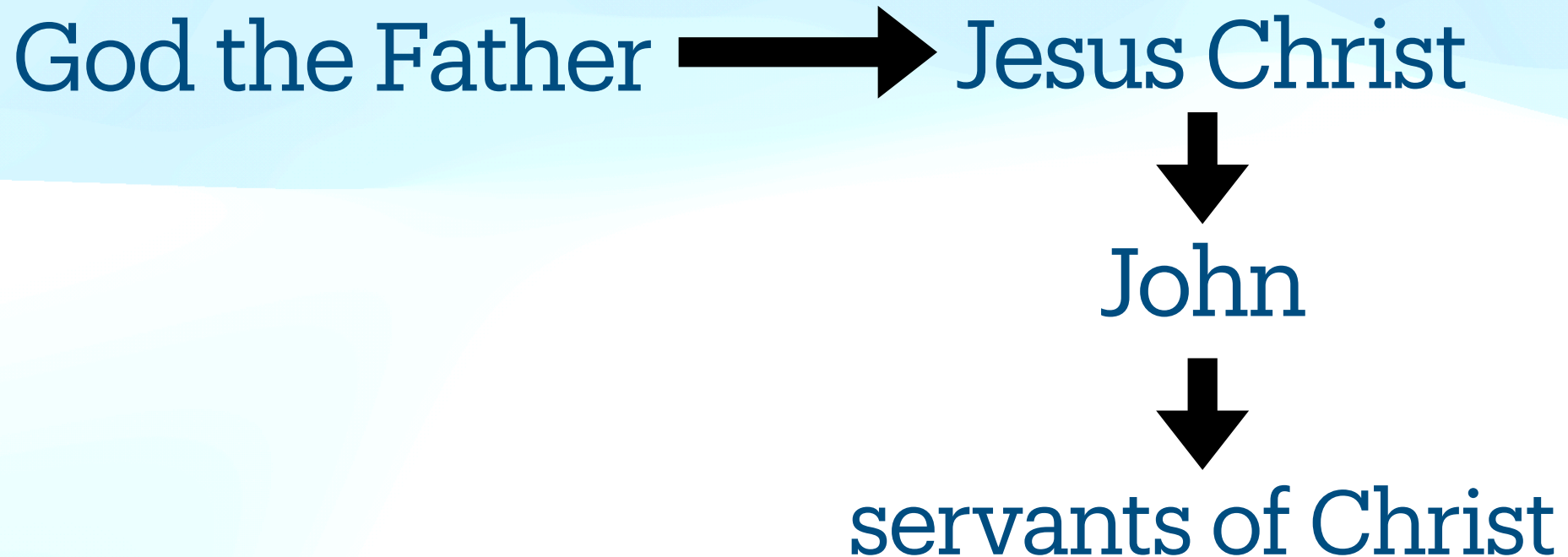
The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

God the Father gave Jesus the Son a revelation to uncover to John concerning things that must soon take place

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Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

God is the source of all revelation. He is, as Daniel declared to Nebuchadnezzar, the one who reveals mysteries and makes known what is going to happen (Dan 2:28, 29, 45; cf. Amos 3:7).

Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 40.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Daniel 2:28–29 (ESV)

but there is a God in heaven *who reveals mysteries*, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, *and he who reveals mysteries* made known to you what is to be.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

“servants” refers all Christians

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

“servants” of Jesus

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Revelation has a very high Christology. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega (22:13); He is the Son of Man (14:14); He is the lamb of wrath (6:16); the one with authority (2:27; 12:10).

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

By calling the saints the “servants” of Christ, he safeguards what is proper to his deity. For, to whom would men belong, unless to him who is the Maker and Creator of humankind? And who is the Creator of human-kind and of all creation? No one other than the only begotten Word and Son of God! For, the present author says in the Gospel, “All things were made through him.”

Oecumenius (6th century; writer of earliest Greek commentary on Revelation)

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Mark 9:35 (ESV)

And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Romans 1:1 (ESV)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

1 Corinthians 4:1 (ESV)

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Romans acquired slaves by conquering people militarily, but God obtained slaves through Christ, who conquered by self-sacrifice.

Koester, 211.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Galatians 3:13 (ESV)

Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Acts 20:28 (ESV)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, **which he obtained with his own blood.**

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

1 Corinthians 7:23 (ESV)

You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

History is not a haphazard sequence of unrelated events but a divinely decreed ordering of that which must take place. It is a logical and moral necessity arising from the nature of God and the revelation of his purpose in creation and redemption.

Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 41.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Soon? 2000 years?

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Possible Solutions

- “soon” means suddenly, or without delay once the appointed time arrives.
- what happens “soon” is the persecution of the church, which is indeed the case.
- “in the prophetic outlook the end is always immanent. Time as chronological sequence is of secondary concern in prophecy.” (Mounce)

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The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

And why does he wish to add “what must soon take place,” although those events which will take place have not yet occurred, even though a considerable span of time has passed, more than five hundred years, since these words were spoken? Because to the eyes of the eternal and endless God all ages are regarded as nothing, for, as the prophet says, “A thousand years in your sight, O Lord, are as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”

Oecumenius

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

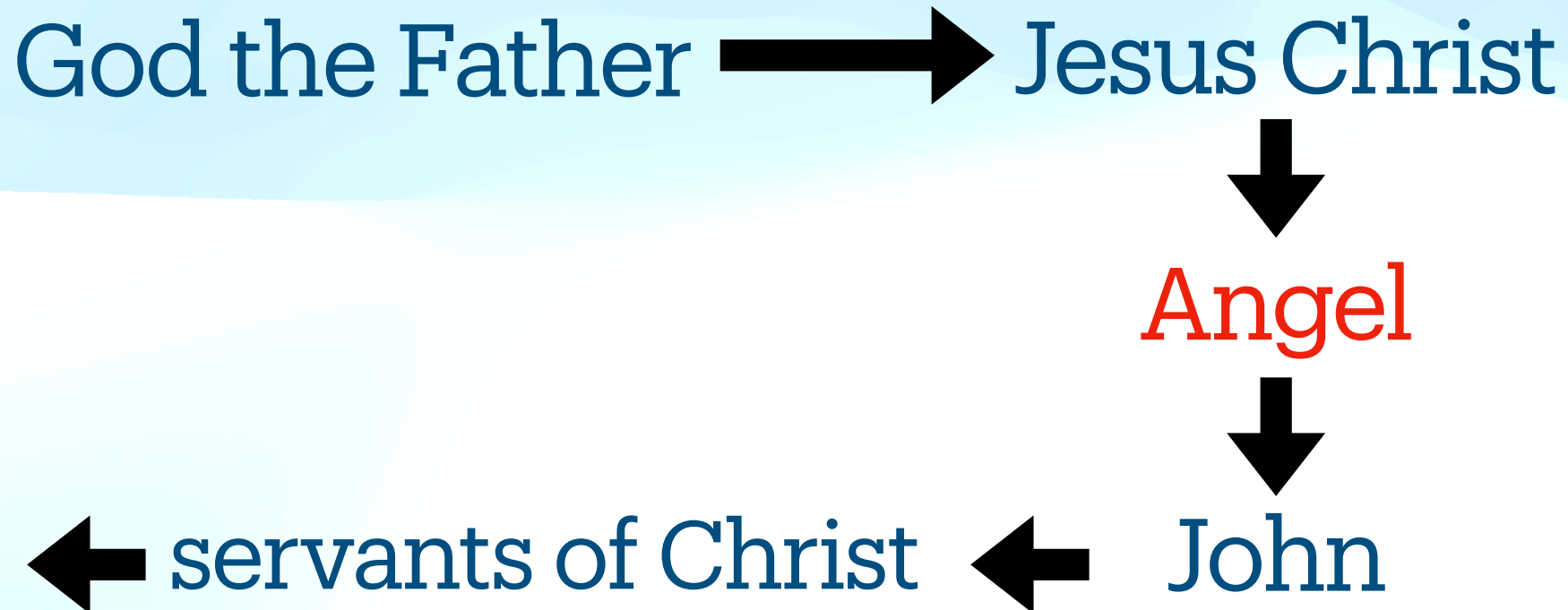
The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

For this reason, therefore, he added “soon,” not to indicate a measure of time which must pass before the fulfillment of what must happen, but to indicate the power and eternality of God. For to him who is, any passage of time, even should it be great and considerable, is something small when compared with that which is unending.

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

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The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...



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The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

Inclusio with the Epilogue

Revelation 22:6–9 (ESV)

And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”⁷ “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

A. Superscription (1:1–3)

Revelation 1:1 (ESV)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...

sēmainō = “signified”

figurative representation; made known through signs (analogies)