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A. Prologue. Read verses 1–3.

1. It’s all in the prepositions (vv. 1–2). This revelation (apocalypse) is:
   - __________ God.
   - Mediated __________ an angel.
   - Given ______ John (and John is to share it with the churches... and to us).
   - It is __________ the events that must soon take place.
   - And it is __________ Jesus. The revelation is not just about future events. Preeminently, it is an unveiling of Jesus: his identity and his work (past, present and future).

2. A blessing (beatitude) is promised to (v. 3):
   - The one who __________ this book out loud.
   - The one who __________ what is read.
   - The one who __________ what it tells us to do.


These statements were written some 1900 years ago! In what sense is the glorious victory of Jesus Christ and the coming Kingdom “near”? In what sense is Jesus coming “soon”? Even in the New Testament, the question “When?” was passionately asked (Mark 13:4; Acts 1:6–7; I Thessalonians 5:1–11; II Peter 3:8–10; Revelation 6:10).

Christ’s coming changed the way God’s people think about “__________.” During the time before Christ, time was basically conceived in two stages:

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Old Age   New Age
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End
But the coming of Christ changed this perspective so that time is now conceived something like this:

![Diagram of New Age and Old Age]

Christians live in the land of ___________________. The life of faith is the call to live victoriously in the interval between the old age and the age to come, the promise and the fulfillment, the ___________________ and the ___________________. Some use D-Day and the Battle of Berlin to describe this reality.

B. Pastoral Greetings to the Seven Churches. **Read verses 4–8.**

1. **The book of Revelation is addressed to “the seven churches that are in Asia” (v. 4).** These churches are named in verse 11. The book is in reality a ___________________ written to Christians undergoing great difficulty. But why seven churches? Why not one? Jesus apparently wants us to see the beauty of ___________________ in ___________________ and diversity in unity. Each local church contains part of the truth, a portion of the light. It is when they all work together (7 is the number for wholeness, completion) that the full-orbed beauty of the Gospel is best seen.

2. **John tells us seven truths about Jesus Christ, the one “who is and who was and who is to come” (vv. 4–7):**

   a. **Who he is (in this present moment):**
      - He is the faithful ___________________ (v. 5).
      - He is the ___________________ from the dead (v. 5).
      - He is the ___________________ on earth (v. 5).
      - He ___________________ (v. 5).

   b. **What he has done (in the past):**
      - He has ___________________ from our sins by his blood (v. 5).
      - He has made us a ___________________ of priests (v. 6). (The church is to be to the world what the Levitical priests were to Israel: mediators and intercessors).

   c. **What he will do (in the future):**
      - He is ___________________ (v. 7).

3. **As if to confirm and emphasize the truth of what has just been said, Almighty God (the Father) speaks: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come” (v. 8). He is the A and the Z and all that is in between. He is not constrained by the limits of time. He is the ___________________.**
1. The setting for the revelation. Read verses 9–11.

In the Greek, the preposition *en* is repeated seven times in verses 9–10.

a. I, John, your brother and partner *EN* the _____________________.

b. *EN* (understood) the _____________________.

c. *EN* (understood) the _____________________.

d. *EN* _____________________.

e. I was *EN* the island of ____________________ on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus...

f. I was *EN* _____________________.

g. *EN* the _____________________. (Note: it appears that the Christians were already making a distinction between the Sabbath, the Jewish day of worship, and Sunday, the Christian day of worship).


a. The seven golden lampstands (vv. 12–13).

The lampstands represent the seven churches (v. 20). Thus, the church is not the light, but it is meant to ____________________ the light. Yet these churches were ____________________:

Ephesus had left her first love, Pergamum was dabbling in the teachings of the Nicolaitans, Thyatira was tolerating that woman Jezebel, Sardis had a good reputation but was really dead, Laodicea was lukewarm, etc. But, if John is going to see Jesus, it will be “in the midst” of these churches!

b. One like a Son of Man (v. 13).

In the Gospels, Jesus referred to himself as “the Son of Man” more than any other title. The title comes from the book of Daniel.

*I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like ____________________, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given ____________________, and a ____________________, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13–14).*

The one John saw was “clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest” (v. 13). The word for “robe” describes what Aaron wore as the Great High Priest. Thus, the Son of Man is not only a ____________________. He is also a ____________________: and he exercises these functions now!

John then describes the characteristics of this Son of Man. There are seven elements of his description.

- His hair (v. 14). As white as snow. He is _____________________.
- His eyes (v. 14). Like a flame of fire. His gaze both penetrates and purifies. Christ doesn’t just look at us, he look ____________________us!
- His feet (v. 15). Like burnished bronze. His kingdom will ____________________. In Daniel’s vision, the statue had feet.
that were “partly of iron and partly of clay” (Daniel 2:33). Such a statue is sure to fall. Not King Jesus!

- His voice (v. 15). Like the roar of many waters. Many did not hear the Word spoken at Bethlehem (John 1:1–18). But the day is coming soon when ________________ what the son of man has to say.
- His right hand (v. 16). He holds seven stars. Jesus is not controlled by the stars (astrology). He ______________________ the stars and the entire universe by his mighty power!
- His mouth (v. 16). From his mouth comes a sharp, two-edged sword. This is the Son of Man’s ultimate weapon...and ours (Eph. 6:17)! His Word ________________, ________________ and ______________________ our deepest thoughts and intentions (Hebrews 4:12).
- His face (v. 16). Like the sun shining in full strength. Perhaps John was remembering the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus’ face “shone like the sun” (Matthew 17:2). The culmination of our Christian journey will be when we see him __________________ (22:4).

3. What John heard: the word. **Read verses 17–20.**
   a. “__________________________...” (vv. 17–18). Though John’s vision is unlike anything anyone has ever seen before, there is no reason to fear because he is already ________________ (vv. 9–10) and Jesus has already overcome sin, death, hell and Satan. Jacques Ellul says that the entire book of Revelation “can be summed up in this word: fear not” (p. 105).
   b. “I have ________________ of Death and Hades...” (v. 18). What he shuts, no one can open. What he opens, no one can shut. Nothing happens without the permission of King Jesus!
   c. “Therefore ______________________...” (vv. 19–20). Others need to know the vision John has seen and hear the words that he has heard.

**II. The Excellency of Christ.**

**A. Behold, the Man.**

This book is “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1) and here in the first chapter we see both who Jesus is and what Jesus does (past, present, and future). The revelation of Jesus seems to fall into two categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mercy &amp; Grace</th>
<th>Justice &amp; Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He loves us (v. 5).</td>
<td>He is ruler of kings of earth (1:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He died for us, forgave us (v. 5).</td>
<td>Those who pierced him will wail (1:7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He says “Fear not!” (v. 17).</td>
<td>His presence is overwhelming (vv. 13–16).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This double-reality of Jesus Christ comes through most poignantly in Revelation 5:5–6.

*And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the ____________ of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” And between the throne and the four living creatures*
and among the elders I saw a __________ standing, as though it had been slain.... (5:5–6).

B. The lion-like Lamb... the lamb-like Lion.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) preached a famous sermon, entitled “The Excellency of Christ,” based on the text Revelation 5:5–6. Edwards spoke of the fact that the final revelation of Jesus Christ shows him to be both a Lamb and a Lion... not one __________ the other but __________ at the same time! The purpose of his sermon was to show forth the “admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.” His sermon (35 pages) shows the contrasting excellencies that meet in the person and in the work of Jesus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a lamb, Jesus is...</th>
<th>As a lion, Jesus is...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinite in condescension</td>
<td>Infinite in exaltation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinite in grace</td>
<td>Infinite in justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinite in humility</td>
<td>Infinite in glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinite in meekness</td>
<td>Infinite in majesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinite in submission</td>
<td>Infinite in dominion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full of trust and reliance on God</td>
<td>Self-sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes our sin on himself</td>
<td>Judges and condemns sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered over to his enemies</td>
<td>Victorious over his enemies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At his first coming, Jesus came humbly, riding on a ____________________________.
But when he comes again, he will come on a ____________________________, prepared for war (Revelation 19:11–16). And yet Jesus is one Divine Person... not two. Behold, the excellency of Jesus Christ!

Perhaps the most amazing thing is this: as we follow Jesus the Lion/Lamb and allow his Spirit to transform our hearts and lives, we begin to reflect his glory and discover that his image is ____________________________! When we are in Christ, we too become lamb-like and lion-like ____________________________.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. (II Corinthians 3:18).

C. Living in the land of in-between.

Men and women today live in the time period between ____________________________ of Christ. He came as a Lamb and many did not recognize who he really was. He will come again as a Lion but this time everyone will know his true identity! But why, you may wonder, this interval? Why wouldn’t Christ come to us initially in all his power and glory so that no one would mistake who he was? C. S. Lewis speaks eloquently to this question in his book Mere Christianity.

Why is God landing in this enemy-occupied world in disguise and starting a sort of secret society to undermine the devil? Why is he not landing in force, invading it? Is it that He is not strong enough? Well, Christians think He is going to land in force; we do not know when. But we can guess why He is delaying. He wants to ____________________________ of joining His side freely. I do not suppose you and I would have thought much of a Frenchman who waited till the Allies were marching into Germany and then announced he was on our
side. God will invade. But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realize what it will be like when He does. When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play is over. God is going to invade, all right: but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else – something it never entered your head to conceive – comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be ______________ then to choose your side....That will not be the time for choosing: it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen.... Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last forever. We must take it or leave it. (pp. 64–65).

### TABLE TALK

1. Discuss something you learned from this study that you had never really grasped before.

2. Describe what it means for you personally to live in the land of in-between, in that time period between Christ’s first and second comings, between the promise and the fulfillment, the already and the not yet.

3. John saw Christ “in the midst” of the (dysfunctional) churches. Do you believe it is possible to find Christ outside of church? Explain your answer.

4. What conclusion should we draw from the fact that most (all?) of the seven churches addressed in this book no longer exist?

5. What difference does it make in our daily lives to realize that Jesus Christ is eternal and lives in the “eternal now,” not subject to the laws of past, present and future?

6. When you think of Jesus, what image comes to mind, the Lamb or the Lion? Does the thought of him make you feel warm and fuzzy or does it inspire fear? Why is it so important to be fully Biblical in the way we envision Jesus Christ?

### Bibliography
