



## FOCUS in 2020

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Dr. Jerry Edmonson, Founding and Lead Pastor

### REVELATION

*Living in the Inbetween* – Revelation 1

When you hear someone mention the book of **Revelation**, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

Revelation is a picture book, not a puzzle book.

*Revelation was written to enable its hearers to control their fear,  
to renew their commitment, and to sustain their vision.*

*Michael Gorman, Reading Revelation Responsibly*

**Do not get preoccupied with isolated details.** Rather, become engrossed in the overall story. Throughout the book of Revelation, look to do four things:

- Praise the Lord.
- Cheer for the saints.
- Detest the beast.
- Long for the final victory.

**Now that's a game plan.** Whatever you read, however you approach Revelation one thing is true!

God **reigns** and Christ will **return**!

But what do we do **until then**?

A **liminal space** is the space between **what was** and **what is next**.

It is a place of transition, a season of waiting, and not knowing. **Liminal space** is where all transformation takes place ... if we learn to wait and let it form us.

**Liminal spaces** are transitional or transformative **spaces**. They are the waiting areas between one point in time and **space** and the next. Often, when we are in **liminal spaces**, we have the feeling of just being on the verge of something. **Liminal space** is, of course, a literal **space**.

**The Author is John** – historically, the apostle John. Although many believe that it is a different John, John the Seer, because of how bad the Greek is in comparison to the gospel of John. Either way, it is part of the canon of inspired scripture and is the only NT book of its kind.

## Ground Rules

### Four Ways to Interpret Revelation

- It already **happened**. – **Preterist**
- It will happen in the **future**. – **Futurist**
- It has happened over **time** throughout **history**. – **Historicist**
- It uses **mystical** and **poetic** language to express truths about God, evil, history, etc. – **Idealist** (theopoetical)

**I believe they all have elements of truth** and help us interpret and understand Revelation. But I do not believe that any one view perfectly interprets or gives a clear picture of Revelation.

**Genre** – Apocalyptic, Prophecy, and Letter.

**Apocalyptic** – symbolism, poetry, appeal to imagination. It functions to provide comfort and challenge, hope and warning.

**So let's dive in!**

## LIVING IN THE INBETWEEN

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, who bore **witness** to the word of God and to the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, even to all that he saw. **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 1:1-3

**We are blessed when we ...**

- **Read** – one person reading.
- **Hear** – everyone listening – most could not read.
- **Keep** – take to heart so you will profit spiritually.
- **The time is near!**

**This is a revelation from Jesus about Jesus. Eugene Peterson writes ...**

*"It follows then that the Revelation is, in the first place, not information about the bad world that we live in, or a report on the first century church under persecution. First of all, it is a **proclamation by and about Jesus Christ**."*  
Eugen Peterson in *Reversed Thunder*

God – Jesus – Angel – John – Us.

This book is not meant to merely **peak** our interest ... it is meant to **strengthen** our hearts.

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, and from **Jesus Christ** the **faithful witness**, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.  
Revelation 1:4-5a

**Seven** – complete; it is good; it is about God.

**Six** – incomplete; it is about imitation; it falls short.

**Four** – the earth and humanity, etc.

### 3 Ways of Living in the Inbetween

#### 1. We live out our relationship with God.

To him **who loves us** and **has freed us from our sins by his blood** and made us a **kingdom**, **priests** to his **God and Father**, to him be **glory** and **dominion** forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1:5b-6

**When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.** But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, **I am the first and the last**, and the **living one**. I died, and behold I am **alive forevermore**, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.  
Revelation 1:17-18

**Security** – fear not.

**Hope** – I am alive forevermore.

**Discipleship** – follow me and we will overcome death and hades!

#### 2. We wait with patient expectation.

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.  
Revelation 1:7

I, John, your brother and **partner in the tribulation** and **the kingdom** and **the patient endurance** that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.  
Revelation 1:9

#### 3. We put our circumstances in perspective.

"**I am the Alpha and the Omega**," says the Lord God, "**who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty."  
Revelation 1:8,10-16,19-20

### Let the Vision Begin ...

**I was in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "**Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches**, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."  
Revelation 1:10-11

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**, and in the midst of the lampstands one like **a son of man**, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The **hairs of his head were white**, like white wool, like snow. **His eyes were like a flame of fire**, his **feet** were like **burnished bronze**, refined in a furnace, and his **voice was like the roar of many waters**. In his right hand he held **seven stars**, from **his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword**, and his **face** was like the **sun shining in full strength**.  
Revelation 1:12-16

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came **one like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, 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

**Write** therefore the things that you have seen, those **that are** and those that **are to take place after this**. As for **the mystery** of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the **seven stars** are the angels of the seven churches, and the **seven lampstands** are the **seven churches**.  
Revelation 1:19-20

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for **he who is in you** is **greater** than **he who is in the world**.  
1 John 4:4