

Revelation 1:1-8

"Things Which Are Seen - What is Christ Saying to the Churches"

"If men are in the hands of a God like that, nothing can pluck them away.
If behind the Christian Church there is a God like that, so long as she the Church is true to
her Lord, nothing can destroy her."
~William Barclay

Bible Study Questions

1. How is Jesus uniquely qualified for truthfulness (Rev. 1:5)?
 - a. In Rev. 1:5 Jesus is the faithful witness – (μάρτυς martus {mar'-toos})
 - i. Rom. 3:3, Phil. 3:9, Jn. 3:11, Jn. 18:37, 10:15, 10:17-18
 - b. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, (πρωτότοκος prototokos)
 - i. Col. 1:15-19
 - c. Jesus is the ruler of the earth (ἄρχων archon)
 - i. Ps. 89:27, Isa. 53:12, Rev. 19:16, 17:14
 - d. Jesus is God Almighty (παντοκράτωρ pantokrator)
 - i. 2 Cor. 6:8, Rev. 19:6, 1:8, 4:8, 11:18, 16:7, 16:14, 19:6, 19:15, 21:22
2. How is Jesus uniquely qualified to lead us in life and death (Rev. 1:18)?
 - a. Jesus holds the key of our future life and death
 - i. Rev. 1:19, Jn. 5:26, 10:10, 1 Jn. 5:11-12
3. How is the return of Christ a promise for the Christian?
4. How is the return of Jesus a threat for the world system?
5. Where can we place our confidence?
6. How is Jesus uniquely qualified ?

Biblical Text

Prologue

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

Greetings and Doxology

4 John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits[a] before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 “Look, he is coming with the clouds,”[b]

and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;

and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”[c]
So shall it be! 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.”

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Background and Content

Introduction:

1. The international word of the year according to Oxford Dictionaries is “post-truth.”
 - a. The definition: “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”
 - b. The editors found that circulation of the term had increased by 2,000 per cent in 2016, compared to the previous year.
 - c. One of the late-breaking stories of 2016 was a BuzzFeed News Analysis that found that during the final three months of the U.S. presidential election campaign, fake election news on Facebook outperformed real news. In other words, false stories got more engagement — clicks, likes, shares, comments — than real stories from such major news outlets as the New York Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post and NBC News

2. In his 1991 book *The Malaise of Modernity* based on his talks for the CBC Massey Lectures, philosopher Charles Taylor writes about “features of our contemporary culture and society that people experience as a loss or decline, even as our civilization ‘develops.’ ” He argues that technology has, in some ways, “flattened and narrowed” our lives: “People have spoken of a loss of resonance, depth, or richness of our human surroundings.”

~Celine Cooper - Montreal Gazette

3. Post-truthfulness builds a fragile social edifice based on wariness. It erodes the foundation of trust that underlies any healthy civilization. When enough of us peddle fantasy as fact, society loses its grounding in reality. Society would crumble altogether if we assumed others were as likely to dissemble as tell the truth. We are perilously close to that point.

~Ralph Keyes - *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*

4. "At this moment, as Führer of the German Volk and as Chancellor of the Reich, I can only thank the Lord for so miraculously bestowing His blessings on us in this our first, difficult struggle for our rights.

I implore Him to allow us and all others to find the proper path so that not only the German Volk, but all of Europe, may rejoice in the new happiness of peace."

~Adolph Hitler, September 1939

5. "I got the impression that here was a man that could be relied upon when he had given his word."

~PM. Chamberlain 1938 (said of Hitler)

Christ's Unique Qualifications

1:5 Jesus is the Faithful Witness - Martyr

μάρτυς martus {mar'-toos}

Meaning: 1) a witness 1a) in a legal sense 1b) an historical sense 1b1) one who is a spectator of anything, e.g. of a contest 1c) in an ethical sense 1c1) those who after his example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death

1:5 Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, Prototocus

πρωτότοκος prototokos {pro-tot-ok'-os}

Meaning: 1) the firstborn 1a) of man or beast 1b) of Christ, the first born of all creation
Origin: from 4413 and the alternate of 5088; TDNT - 6:871,965; adj Usage: AV - firstborn 7, first begotten 2; 9

1:5 Jesus is the ruler of the earth

ἄρχων archon {ar'-khone}

Meaning: 1) a ruler, commander, chief, leader
Origin: present participle of 757; TDNT - 1:488,81; n m
Usage: AV - ruler 22, prince 11, chief 2, magistrate 1, chief ruler 1; 37

1:8 God is the Almighty.

παντοκράτωρ pantokrator {pan-tok-rat'-ore}

Meaning: 1) he who holds sway over all things 2) the ruler of all 3) almighty: God
Origin: from 3956 and 2904; TDNT - 3:914,466; n m
Usage: AV - Almighty 9, omnipotent 1; 10

Roman Emperor History Summary (William Barclay)

Caligula (AD 37-41)

He insisted on divine honours

Planned to place his own image in the temple but died before he could

Caesar worship became an imperial demand

Claudius (AD 41-54)

Sought to control rather than encourage Caesar worship

Nero (AD 54-68)

Persecuted the Christians for the great Roman fire

Galba, Otto and Vitellius

Chaos in the empire

Vespasian (AD 69-79)

Titus (AD 79-81)

Destruction of the Temple

Domitian (AD 81-96)

A Devil

Cold Blooded persecutor

Took his own divinity seriously

Erected a monument to "the deified Titus son of the deified Vespasian"

He launched his hatred against the Jews and the Christians.

All Government announcements and Proclamations must begin: "Our Lord and God Domitian"

Everyone who addressed him in speech or in writing must begin: "Lord and God"

Nerva (AD 96-98)

Repealed the savage laws, but the damage was done

Christian Population 33-350 ad

Year	Christians
40	1,000
50	1,400
60	1,960
70	2,744
80	3,842
90	5,378
100	7,530

150	40,496
200	217,795
250	1,171,356
300	6,299,832
350	33,882,008

Statistics about the Growth of the Church around the World
Average Rating: Not rated [see ratings/reviews]

In his book *Witness Essentials*, Dan Meyer lists some encouraging statistics about the growth of the church around the world:

- In 1900 Korea had no Protestant church. Today, there are over 7,000 churches in just the city of Seoul, South Korea.
- At the end of the 19th century, the southern portion of Africa was only 3 percent Christian. Today, 63 percent of the population is Christian, while membership in the churches in Africa is increasing by 34,000 people per day.
- In India, 14 million of the 140 million members of the "untouchable" caste have become Christians.
- More people in the Islamic world have come to Christ in the last 25 years than in the entire history of Christian missions.
- In Islamic Indonesia, the percentage of Christians is now so high (around 15 percent) that the Muslim government will no longer print statistics.
- In China, it is estimated that there are now more self-avowed disciples of Jesus than members of the Communist party. Even the most conservative estimates suggest that China will soon have more Christians than any country.
- Across the planet, followers of Jesus are increasing by more than eighty thousand per day.
- 510 new churches form every day.

Meyer concludes: "The irony is that, except for the Middle East (where Christianity was born) and Europe and America (to whose civilization it gave birth), Christianity is expanding everywhere today."

Daniel Meyer, *Witness Essentials* (InterVarsity Press, 2012), pp. 32-33

International Bulletin on Missionary Research, January 2015

By 2025

Christians 2.6 Billion 33.7%

Christian Martyrs 100,000 per year

The CSGC estimates that there have been over 70 million Christians martyred in history. Over half of these were in the 20th century under fascist and communist regimes. In the early 21st century we estimate that on average over the 10-year period

from 2000–2010 there were approximately 100,000 Christians killed each year (1 million total). OCKENGA Institute

Christian Populations

Africa	704,000,000	27%
Asia	465,000,000	18%
Europ	546,000,000	21%
Latin	628,000,000	24%
Amer	240,000,000	09%
Other	27,000,000	01%

Congregations 7,500,000