



## YES, NO AND MAYBE

1. I probably have more weird dreams than the rest of the people here.
2. The book of Revelation makes me a little bit nervous.
3. "Apocalypse" sounds like the title of a scary action movie.
4. God inspired John to write the book of Revelation to warn us.
5. Our churches should be the light to a dark world.

### ➤ READ Revelation 1

« What is it about the book of Revelation that has interested you; and what about it has made you in some ways fearful?

» **Vs. 1: The Revelation** - (ἀποκάλυψις). The Greek word is transcribed in Apocalypse. The word occurs only once in the Gospels, Luke 2:32, where to lighten should be rendered for revelation. It is used there of our Lord, as a light to dispel the darkness under which the heathen were veiled.

• **Of Jesus Christ** - The phrase of Jesus Christ can be translated "from Jesus Christ" (source), or "about Jesus Christ" (content), or "belonging to Jesus Christ" (possession). Although all are true of the book as a whole, possession fits best, especially in light of the words that follow: which God gave him. Nobody else owns this revelation. It uniquely belongs to Jesus, not to angels or other human beings, and he is pleased to reveal matters to his servants.

« What does it say about God that He would want to reveal or uncover the mysteries of what is yet to come?

» **Vs. 4: To the seven churches in the province of Asia** - If the seven named in verse 11 were visited in order, one would traverse a rough circle. This is a figure of completeness, and seven is the number of perfection.

• **The one who is, who always was, and who is still to come** - The Greek is not grammatical (apo is followed by nominatives, and ēn is preceded by an article), this is because it is a translation from the original Hebrew phrase that describes the name God revealed of Himself just before the Exodus, **Yahweh** (Exodus 3:14).

« Why do you think that God would use the same language that echoes His name that he revealed just before the Exodus?

» **Vs. 5, 6: Who loves us** - In the present context, Jesus is worthy for three specific deeds: he loves us, he freed us from our sins, and he made us to be a kingdom and priests. The verb love is a form that could be translated "keeps on loving."

« Why do you think it's so important to John to let you know that God's reason for freeing you from sin is because he keeps on loving you?

» **Vs. 9: Your partner in suffering** - Here is the first mention of tribulation in Revelation. Tribulation is assumed to be the common experience of those who are in Jesus rather than something believers are to escape. The Roman emperor Domitian called himself "savior" and "lord," claiming divine worship from Roman citizens. He hated the Christians, whose worship of Jesus used these same words, so he persecuted them. He may have been the direct cause of John being exiled to the island of Patmos.

« Why do so many people read Revelation so that they'll know when it's time to run to the hills to avoid persecution?

## DIG DEEPER



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# NOTES

## DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

» **Vs. 13: Standing among the lampstands** - John sees Jesus among the lampstands. The one who “loves us and freed us from our sins” (v. 5) is first presented in Revelation not enthroned in heaven or fighting evil but present with and caring for his people. Suffering Christians throughout the ages have taken comfort in Jesus’ presence with them.

« What does it tell you about Jesus that he wants you to picture him among these things?

» **Vs. 13: He was wearing a long robe and a gold sash across his chest** - The robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest links him in appearance with the high priest of Israel (Exod. 39:2-4). This clothing symbolizes his ongoing work of representing his people before his Father.

» **Vs. 14: His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow** - In the ancient world, white hair symbolized the respect due to the aged for the wisdom of their advanced years (Prov. 16:31). This part of the picture points to Jesus’ wisdom. In traditional theological language, the “omniscience” of the exalted Jesus may be suggested. He knows what is best for his people, even when they are suffering.

» **Vs. 14: His eyes were like flames of fire** - This may mean that he sees everything there is to see (Ps. 139). In theological terms, this may refer to the “omnipresence” of Jesus. He sees the evil of this world; he sees his people in their distress; one day he will respond with righteous fury.

» **Vs. 15: His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace** - These powerful feet of Jesus point to his ultimate triumph over all the forces of evil, natural and supernatural alike. If his hair symbolizes “omniscience” and his eyes “omnipresence,” then the feet may represent “omnipotence.”

» **Vs. 15: His voice thundered like mighty ocean waves** - In verse 10, Jesus’ voice was compared to a trumpet that could not be ignored. Now his voice is compared to the sound of rushing waters, which also cannot be ignored. On Patmos, John likely could never get away from the insistent sound of the breakers coming off the Mediterranean Sea. The voice of Jesus is the Word of God that must be constantly heard and obeyed (vv. 2, 9).

» **Vs. 16: A sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth** - The sword described is a long sword for battle rather than a dagger. According to Revelation 19:15, “Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.” The sword stands for Jesus’ power to judge and conquer his enemies, thus protecting his people.

» **Vs. 16: His face was like the sun in all its brilliance** - Here John can only mean the glory of full deity. In Matthew 17:2, Jesus’ face “shone like the sun” at his Transfiguration. The Jesus that John saw both on the Mount of Transfiguration and on the island of Patmos, is none other than Almighty God.

« What do these visuals tell you about God?

» **Vs. 16: The Seven Stars** - The seven stars are explained as ‘the angels of the seven churches’ (v. 20). Their situation in his right hand indicates favor and protection. This is all the more interesting in view of the strong criticisms to be urged in the next couple of chapters against some of them. They have their defects, but the strong Son of God has not abandoned them. Rather he holds them still in his hand.

» **Vs. 17: Don’t be afraid, I am the First and the Last** - John was comforted by Christ himself, who put his right hand on him. The words Do not be afraid are Jesus’ immediate words of blessing to calm John’s terror. He then tells why he has a right to bless: I am the First and Last. This is similar in wording to “Alpha and Omega” (v. 8). Jesus is master from before the beginning of time until after the end of time and through all eternity.

« What does it tell you about God that his great concern is that you know He is in control?

» **Vs. 20: Mystery** - Mystery does not mean what is ‘mysterious’ in our sense of the term, but something that people could never work out for themselves but which has now been made known by God. Here it means that Christ makes known the meaning of certain symbols which we could not have guessed.

• **Lampstands** - The churches are no more than lampstands. The light is Christ, and they are to show him forth.

« What does God want us to know?

## MY PRAYER...

1. How has God revealed Himself to me in the past?
2. What does God want me to know today?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?



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