

Revelation 1:12-19

¹² I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

¹⁹ "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.

How to study

REVELATION

When was Revelation written?

- Evidence exists that supports either an early or late date. The two most likely dates are sometime during the reign of Nero (mid-sixties) or sometime near the end of Domitian's reign (mid-nineties).
- We will assume the later date in this lesson - not because evidence does not exist to the contrary, but because it is my belief and the opinion of most scholars that the later date fits the overall theme and content of the book better.
- Revelation's main focus does not appear to be Jerusalem's destruction, but the struggle between Rome and Christianity over the soul.

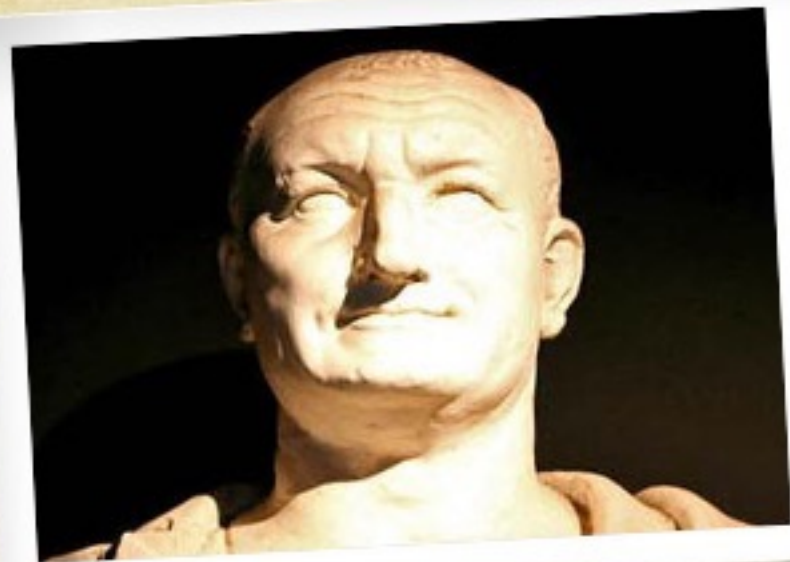
What Were They Facing?

- Tensions near the end of the First Century were very high between Christians and various other forces in the Roman Empire. The Jews, Roman leaders, proponents of the national cult, and apostate Christian sects were all waging a war against God's people.
- Under immense pressure, many Christians buckled and renounced their faith, while others were led away to torture and death.
- There were also false doctrines that were becoming increasingly popular (read John's epistles for a sampling of what he was combating near the end of the century).



Nero (54-68 AD)

Enjoyed the praise of his people, but was hesitant to be proclaimed deity until death.



Vespasian and Titus (69-81 AD)

Moderate leaders who nevertheless treated enemies with great cruelty. Titus was responsible for finishing the work of Jerusalem's destruction and completing the Colosseum.



Domitian (81-96 AD)

It was likely under his rule that the Revelation was written. He is remembered for his unevenness, often to the point of unrestrained madness and cruelty.

He had an insatiable lust for the worship of his subjects and hated those who refused to honor him as a living god.

“So what is the best way to tackle the Revelation? What if I don’t understand every detail and I miss something? This thing is just too intimidating!”

Scenes On A Stage

Try to keep in mind that not every detail is supposed to be filled with meaning. We should take the images as a whole and see them as John would have seen them – entire scenes laid out before our imaginations. It is not necessarily the props and window dressing that contain the lessons of Revelation, but the entirety of the scene.

Notice how frequently John says, “I looked and saw...”

Be prepared to see:

- Things that are grotesque, even terrifying;
- Things that seem discouraging at first;
- Elements from the natural realm employed to symbolize the spiritual – rocks, the land and sea, minerals, various animals, etc.;
- Elements from the political realm – kings, kingdoms, wars, armies, crowns, robes, thrones, etc.;
- Elements from the religious realm – temple, altar, incense, prayers, songs of praise, etc.;
- Colors – Black (foreboding, doom), red (bloodshed), grey/pale (death), purple (royalty), green (grace, mercy);
- Numbers – 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 100, 1,000, 144,000.

The Theme

- Christ is victorious, always!
- We can share that victory as a part of His church. No matter what happens to us in the flesh, we are guaranteed total spiritual victory through our Savior, who alone possesses the keys to eternal life.
- Satan and all of his followers, both spiritual and physical, are already doomed. The outcome of the battle was never in question, but the devil will try to take as many with him as he can.
- Therefore, persevere until the end!