

Lesson 1 . . . Write What You See

Revelation

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Suggested responses to questions about Revelation 1:1-20

Note: Be sure to respond to all the questions yourself before reading the suggested responses in order to make the most of this study.

1. In the opening verse of the book of Revelation, the author writes that God gave him this revelation of Jesus Christ “to show to his servants what must soon take place.” The vision is revealed to the apostle John by an angel sent from God.
2. In Revelation 1:3, readers learn that the prophecy recorded in this final book of the New Testament will bring blessing to those who read it aloud, which implies sharing this apocalyptic vision with others, as well as hearing and keeping the words that have been written down. Merely hearing the words isn’t enough to secure divine blessing—listeners also must obey these divinely inspired words of Scripture.
3. The image of the cloud indicates the presence of God. This cloud, or the glory that surrounds the throne of God, is the same cloud mentioned in Exodus 13:21 that guided the Israelites out of Egypt and that filled the tabernacle with the glory of God in Exodus 40:34. Paragraph 697 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that the images of cloud and light occur together in manifestations of the Holy Spirit. “The cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory.”
4. The book of Revelation is addressed to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Both the apostle John in the book of Revelation and St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans greet their audiences with the grace and peace of God the Father and Jesus Christ.
5. In Revelation 1:4, God is described as he “who is and who was and who is to come.” In Exodus 3:14, Moses encounters God at the burning bush and God reveals that his name is “I AM WHO I AM.” In both instances, God is seen as the Lord and Savior of the past, present, and the future.
6. Revelation 1:4-5 refers to the Blessed Trinity as he “who was and is and is to come,” as “the seven spirits,” and as “Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings on earth”—describing one God in three persons. Paragraphs 253 and 254 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explain that the Trinity is One, and each person is distinct from one another but all three divine persons are of the same nature or substance.
7. The author of the book of Revelation receives his vision from God on the island of Patmos. The voice the apostle John hears is loud like a trumpet, and belongs to “one like a son of man.” The vision is received on a Sunday. Paragraph 2174 of the *Catechism of the Catholic*

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Church explains that for Christians, Sunday “has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord’s day, because Sunday was the day that the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.”

8. John introduces himself as a brother because the baptized are all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ through the sacred family bond of the New Covenant. All Christians are called to share in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, who taught that to be his disciple, a Christian must be willing to take up his or her own cross.
9. Jesus Christ is described as “one like the son of man,” a messianic title from Daniel 7:13-14; “clothed with a long robe” like those worn by priests, an image from Exodus 28:4; and “his head and hair were white as white wool, white as snow,” a description borrowed from Daniel 7:9 that symbolizes Jesus is eternal. Hebrews 4:12 repeats some of the same images: “His eyes were like a flame of fire,” signifying the wisdom of God; “his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace,” symbolizing strength and stability; “and his voice was like the sound of many waters,” indicating that he’s great and powerful. “In his right hand he held seven stars,” representing the seven angels of the seven churches; “from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword,” the Word of God; “and his face was like the sun shining in full strength,” from John 12:45, shows that Jesus is the light of the world.
10. The disciples Peter, James, and John were present at the Transfiguration when the face of Jesus Christ “shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light”—“glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.” In his Gospel account, Mark records that the three disciples “did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid.” In the Old Testament passage from Exodus 19:16-24, the Israelites experienced a similar reaction when they encountered God on Mount Sinai—they heard “a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.” When confronted with the greatness of God, it’s a normal reaction to recognize one’s unworthiness and to be afraid, but Jesus reassures the apostle John with familiar words: “Fear not.”

Responses to the Questions for Reflection will vary.