

Revelation Chapter 1

The Four Views

- **Preterist:** Most events fulfilled in the 1st century (e.g., AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem).
- **Idealist:** Timeless spiritual truths about the battle between good and evil.
- **Progressive Dispensationalist:** "Already/not yet" fulfillment—some realized now, ultimate in the future.
- **Classical Dispensationalist:** Primarily future events, with a literal, futuristic reading.

Section 1: The Revelation and Its Timing (Rev. 1:1–3)

Key phrases: "The revelation of Jesus Christ... to show his servants the things that must **soon** take place" (v. 1); "the time is **near**" (v. 3).

- **Preterist:** "Soon" and "near" mean imminent 1st-century fulfillment, like judgment on Jerusalem (AD 70). Urges preparation. *Supporting Scriptures:* Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-24; Daniel 9:24-27; Isaiah 13:6.
- **Idealist:** Timing is eternal/God's perspective; emphasizes timeless principles of sovereignty and faithfulness. *Supporting Scriptures:* 2 Peter 3:8-9; Psalm 90:4; Ephesians 6:12.
- **Progressive Dispensationalist:** "Already/not yet"—inaugurated in Christ's coming, future consummation; encourages faithfulness now. *Supporting Scriptures:* Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-21; 1 Corinthians 10:11.
- **Classical Dispensationalist:** "Soon" after future rapture; previews end-times judgments. *Supporting Scriptures:* 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; James 5:8.

Section 2: Greeting and Doxology (Rev. 1:4–8)

Key elements: Greeting to seven churches; God as "Alpha and Omega"; Christ as "faithful witness," "firstborn from the dead," "ruler of the kings"; doxology on Christ's love/redemption.

- **Preterist:** Real 1st-century churches facing persecution; Christ's titles for judging Israel and vindicating believers. *Supporting Scriptures:* Exodus 19:6; Zechariah 12:10; Daniel 7:13-14.
- **Idealist:** Seven churches symbolize the complete church; titles show eternal sovereignty and victory. *Supporting Scriptures:* Isaiah 44:6; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:15.
- **Progressive Dispensationalist:** Inaugurated kingdom now, future hope; doxology celebrates current redemption. *Supporting Scriptures:* Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:9; Psalm 89:27.
- **Classical Dispensationalist:** Literal churches; introduces Christ as future earthly king. *Supporting Scriptures:* Daniel 2:44; Revelation 19:16; Romans 8:29.

Section 3: Vision of the Son of Man (Rev. 1:9–20)

Key elements: John's exile; glorified Christ (white robe, eyes like fire, voice like waters, holding stars, among lampstands).

- **Preterist:** Encourages believers before AD 70 judgment; symbols tied to 1st-century context.
Supporting Scriptures: Daniel 7:9-10; Ezekiel 43:2; Isaiah 11:4.
- **Idealist:** Symbolic of Christ's timeless presence/authority; "eyes like fire" for divine judgment.
Supporting Scriptures: Daniel 10:5-6; Hebrews 4:12; Zechariah 4:2.
- **Progressive Dispensationalist:** Christ exalted now ("already"), future return ("not yet"); symbols for church/leaders today.
Supporting Scriptures: Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 28:18; Exodus 25:31-40.
- **Classical Dispensationalist:** Future-oriented; Christ as judge for end times, churches represent church age.
Supporting Scriptures: Isaiah 49:2; Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Comparison Table

Element	Preterist	Idealist	Progressive Disp.	Classical Disp.	Example Supporting Scriptures (All Views)
"Soon" / Timing	Imminent 1st-century fulfillment	Timeless / God's perspective	Already/not yet	Future, post-rapture	Matt. 24:34; 2 Pet. 3:8; Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:2
Seven Churches	Literal 1st-century churches	Symbolic of complete church	Church in present age	Literal churches, church age	Exod. 19:6; Zech. 4:2; Eph. 1:7; Dan. 2:44
Vision of Christ	Encouragement before AD 70 judgment	Timeless authority over evil	Exalted now, future return	Glorified judge for end times	Dan. 7:9; Heb. 4:12; Phil. 2:9; Isa. 49:2
Application	Historical vindication	Spiritual faithfulness in trials	Kingdom living now/future hope	Preparation for future events	Eph. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Thess. 2:1-3; Rev. 19:16

Discussion Questions

1. How does "soon" in **Rev. 1:1** affect your reading? Which view best captures the urgency, and why (reference supporting Scriptures)?
2. How do Christ's titles in **Rev. 1:5–8** encourage believers? Discuss supporting Scriptures.
3. What does the vision in **Rev. 1:9–20** reveal about Christ and the church? How do supporting Scriptures add insight?
4. Which view resonates most with you? How do these views impact understanding Christ's return?
5. What encouragement does Revelation 1 offer today?

Key Takeaway

Revelation 1 reveals Jesus as sovereign Lord. All views affirm His victory and call to faithfulness, though they differ on timing and focus. Use supporting Scriptures for deeper study.