

This morning we're looking at the first eight verses of Revelation 6 – which is the vision of the four horsemen. But before we get there, a small introduction to this Book.

It was written by the Apostle John around AD 96, while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. And its title comes from the very first verse: *'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants (that's us Christians) things which must shortly take place.'*

The word 'Revelation' means an uncovering. Picture a great stage production. You arrive, the lights dim, and a massive, heavy curtain hangs across the front, hiding the stage. You know there is something spectacular behind it, but you can't see a single thing.

Revelation is God pulling back the curtain. It's the great unveiling of history and eternity. In the world, particularly today there is so much chaos and instability. Here we have God showing us what's happening backstage, so we aren't confused or afraid by the scenes we see on the world's stage. God shows us what's happening in the spiritual realm and what's coming, not to terrify us, but to give us peace and hope in the face of the world's chaos.

Why was this Book given? It was to equip Christians throughout the entire Gospel Age, which is the time between Christ's first coming over 2,000 years ago up to the time he returns in the future in power and glory, and when this world will be drawn to a close.

Revelation is a manual for spiritual battle. It shows us the church against the world, God against Satan, and Christ coming again in victory. The ultimate theme of the Book of Revelation though is the victory of Christ and His Church.

Now Revelation is a book of visions. John repeats the phrase *'and I saw'* over 50 times. From the very first verse of this Book, we're told it was 'signified,' or symbolized, through an angel to John. That means these visions are not literal, but picture-language – they are given as symbols that represent truth.

It was given in visions to John because obviously this is spiritual truth above human wisdom, and also that this visions for the most part are representing general characteristics to be experienced throughout the entire Gospel age.