

Revelation 1: Who's in charge?

Some people think all that happens is just random chaos; others think it's worse, that evil has gained control. When cruel, abusive powers are on the rampage we might be tempted to think the same.

Revelation was written at a time when Christians were being brutally persecuted by 1st Century Rome. John, Apostle, Pastor and writer of the Gospel and three letters bearing his name, himself suffering for the cause, is inspired to write to the seven congregations under his care to urge them to keep the faith.

He shares a vision he has received. In vivid picture language, much of it borrowed or revised from Old Testament prophets like Daniel and Ezekiel, John speaks about demonic beastlike dictators who will persecute God's people for a limited time before sharing Satan's doom.

But this is not a book about evil.

It's a God-given book of encouragement to assure Christians that our Saviour and Lord is not only risen triumphant over death, He is reigning from Heaven and returning one of these days for His Church. The present and future are safe in His hands! The last two chapters of the Bible give the most sublime picture of His followers' heavenly future in 'the *new* Jerusalem'.

But here in Revelation 1 observe:

Jesus is described as 'the ruler of the kings of the earth', 'coming with the clouds', 'the First and Last', same as 'Alpha and Omega' ie. God. He appears in royal robes and dazzling heavenly glory. This is He Who came to Earth, was crucified, 'was dead and...am alive for ever and ever'.

There's no doubt Who is in charge. Our Lord Jesus is!

Most importantly, He is pictured as being 'among the lampstands'. We are not alone. He is with His Church, His followers through every joy, every trial.

And *He* says, 'Don't be afraid.'