

Christ Amid His Church

Date: January 27, 2021

Series: Revelation, Part 3

Text: Revelation 1:9-20

Main Idea: The glorious presence of Christ amid His Church should cause us to not only fear, but be assured of His faithfulness to us.

1. The Prelude to the Vision: John describes how the vision came about. (v. 9-11)

- John was an _____ to believers in tribulation: a fellow brother in the Kingdom of God patiently enduring.
- John was banished to the island of Patmos by Domitian as punishment for preaching the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Sunday).
- John heard a loud voice like a _____.
(Ex 19:16, 1 Cor 15:12, 1 Thess 4:16, Rev 4:1)
- John was commanded to write to 7 literal, but also _____ churches.

2. A Portrait of the Risen Christ: Christ is standing in the midst of His Church. (v. 12-16, Daniel 7:13)

- **He is in the midst:** Christ _____ His Church. (v. 12-13a, 20b)
- **His robe & sash:** Christ _____ for His Church as a High Priest. (v. 13b, Ex 28:4, Lev 16:4, Hebrews 2:17-18, 3:1, 4:14, 7:25, 9:11-12)
- **His hair, eyes & feet:** Christ _____ His Church. (v. 14-15a, Dan 7:9, 13, 22)
- **His voice:** Christ _____ authoritative to His Church. (v. 15b)
- **He held:** Christ _____ His Church & His human messengers (angels). (v. 16a, 20a)

- **His mouth:** Christ _____ His Church with His Word. (v. 16b)
- **His radiance:** Christ reflects His _____ through His Church. (v. 16c)

3. The Pronouncement of the Risen Christ! (17-20)

- **Rightly tremble:** The holiness of God should cause even the godliest to be filled with _____. (Is 6:5, Daniel 10:8-9, Ez 1:28, 3:23, Judges 13:22)
- **But fear not:** Jesus is compassionate & _____ to those who are His. (Matt 17:7)
 - 1) Jesus is the first and the last.
 - 2) Jesus is the living one forevermore. (Rom 6:9, Heb 7:25)
 - 3) Jesus owns the keys of death and Hades.
- **Be faithful:** We must _____ Christ & pass on the truths from this vision.



the REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST

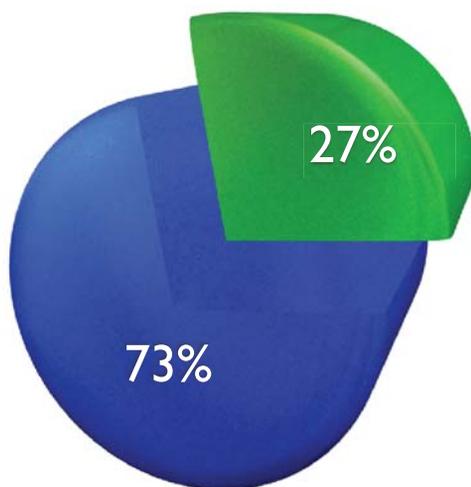
Session 1 - Introduction

Why study prophecy?

① Prophecy is a large part of the whole counsel of God's Word.

There are 31,173 verses comprising the Word of God. 8,362 of those verses are prophetic.

● Remaining Scripture ● Prophetic Scripture



“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
2 Tim 3:16-17 (NASB)

So what does prophecy have to do with making me adequate and equipped?

② Prophecy establishes our hope and gives incentive to believers to contend for the faith.

In 2 Peter chapter 3, Peter is addressing believers, who were being mocked by the “scoffer” concerning prophecy, reminding them of the transcendency of God and what their response to prophecy needs to be:

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,” 2 Pe 3:11 (NASB)

“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him {be} the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” 2 Pe 3:17-18 (NASB)

Session1 - Introduction

Why study prophecy?

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always {being} ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”
1 Pe 3:15 (NASB)

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Rom 15:4 (NASB)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;”
Hbr 10:23 (NASB)

“Now faith is the assurance of {things} hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
Hbr 11:1 (NASB)

So what is our hope?

“Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Titus 2:13-14 (NASB)

- There were over 300 prophetic details concerning Christ that were fulfilled in His first coming. visit <http://bibleprobe.com/365messianicprophecies.htm> for a detailed list. This calls for a look at the science of probability. What are the chances of just 8 of the 300 prophecies to have been fulfilled in any one man who might have lived down to the present time? The probability is 1 in 10(17). That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (1 in one hundred zillionth). The chance that any one man fulfilled 48 prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 157th Power! There are an estimated 10 to the 79th electrons in the entire universe. So according to probability, Gods word is more reliable than our very existence. A great book on this subject is “[The math of Christ](#)” by Stephen Bauer
- For every time His first coming is mentioned in the OT, His second coming is mentioned 8 times.
- In the OT there are 1,845 references to His second coming in glory to reign on the earth and 17 OT books give special attention to this truth.
- There are 318 references to Christ’s second coming in 23 of the 27 NT books.

Jesus Christ’s resurrection and personal, physical return to reign as King is the central theme of prophecy and the central theme of our faith. Paul, in defending the resurrection, gives the reason why it is so crucial and what the prophetic implications are for those who are believers:

“For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”
1 Cr 15:16-19 (NASB)

A special reward for Christians who look for His return

“In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2 Tim 4:8 (NASB)

Why study prophecy?

③ Prophecy authenticates scripture as the Word of God.

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; {I am} God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';" Isa 46:9-10 (NASB)

"Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded {it?}" Lam 3:37 (NASB)

"So when it comes to pass--as surely it will--then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst." Eze 33:33 (NASB)

④ Prophecy was used by Jesus Christ to launch His ministry.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luk 4:17-21 (NASB)

⑤ God holds us accountable to study prophecy.

Daniel's 70 week prophecy gave precise information regarding the appearing of the Meshiach Nagid (Messiah the King) in Jerusalem and Jesus rebukes Jerusalem for not knowing:

"When He approached {Jerusalem,} He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." Luk 19:41-44 (NASB)

"But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, '{It will be} fair weather, for the sky is red.' "And in the morning, '{There will be} a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?" Mat 16:2-3 (NASB)

A statement of precision from Christ:

“For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Mat 5:18 (KJV)

1) the Hebrew letter י, the smallest of them all

a) hence equivalent to the minutest part

iota, ee-o'-tah; of Hebrew origin (the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet); "iota", the name of the eighth letter of the Greek alphabet, put (figuratively) for a very small part of anything:—jot.

The 4 most common views of the Book of Revelation:

- ① **Preterist:** The view that Revelation is a historical record of the Roman Empire in the 1st century rather than prophetic and that most of the events described took place in A.D. 70.
- ② **Historicist:** The view that Revelation is a look at the entirety of church history from its beginning to the present. This view includes taking the prophetic events from chapter 4 onward as depictions of various events throughout history.

Some problems with these two views:

- Revelation claims to be prophecy (1:3, 22:7, 10, 18-19).
- Most of the events of Revelation did not take place in the 1st century or in any other century since.
- These views make the interpretation of all of Revelation subjective and arbitrary departing from the discipline of a strict and literal hermeneutic.

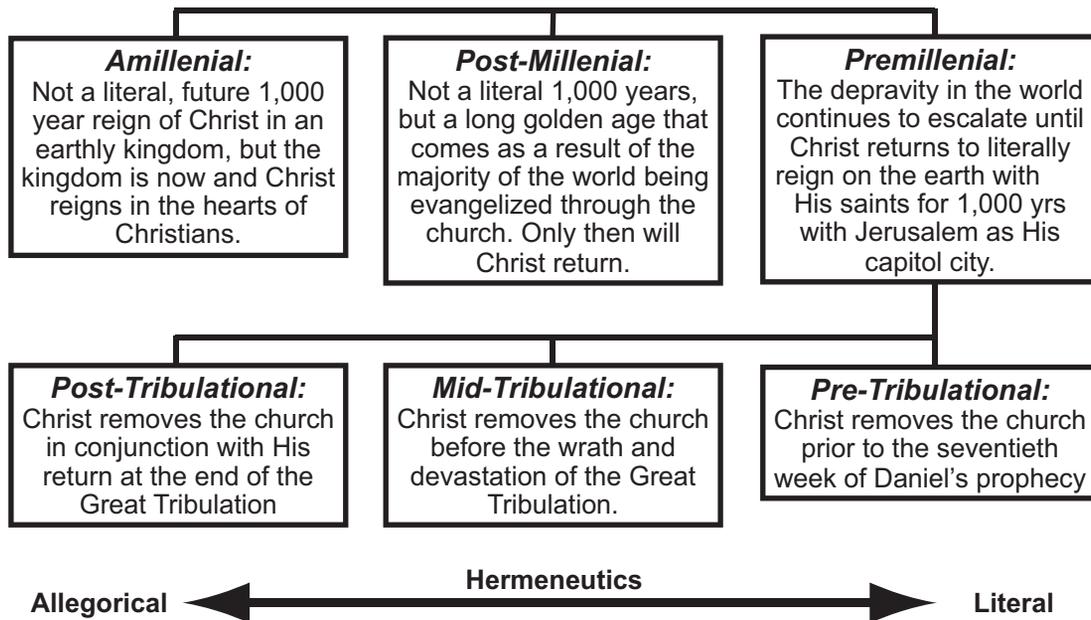
- ③ **Idealist:** The view that Revelation is mostly allegory depicting the timeless struggle between good and evil. While there is the belief that Jesus will return to judge the nations and redeem His people, this view does not see most of the events as literal historic or future events. This view, historically, is the most common view of both amillennialists and postmillennialists.

Some problems:

- The prophecy of Revelation is presented in very specific and detailed fashion and again claims to show events that “shall” take place.
- This view can only be derived from a loose hermeneutic that can't be defended when the exactness of fulfilled prophecy is considered.
- If Revelation is merely allegory, then what of the rest of scripture?

- ④ **Futurist:** The view that Revelation is prophetic, as it claims to be, and that the events described from chapters 4-22 are events that have not yet happened, but will.
 - Upholds Revelation's claims to be prophecy.
 - Adheres to a strict hermeneutic allowing for allegory and metaphor where contextually permissible and follows the same standard used for interpreting the rest of scripture.

Common eschatological views



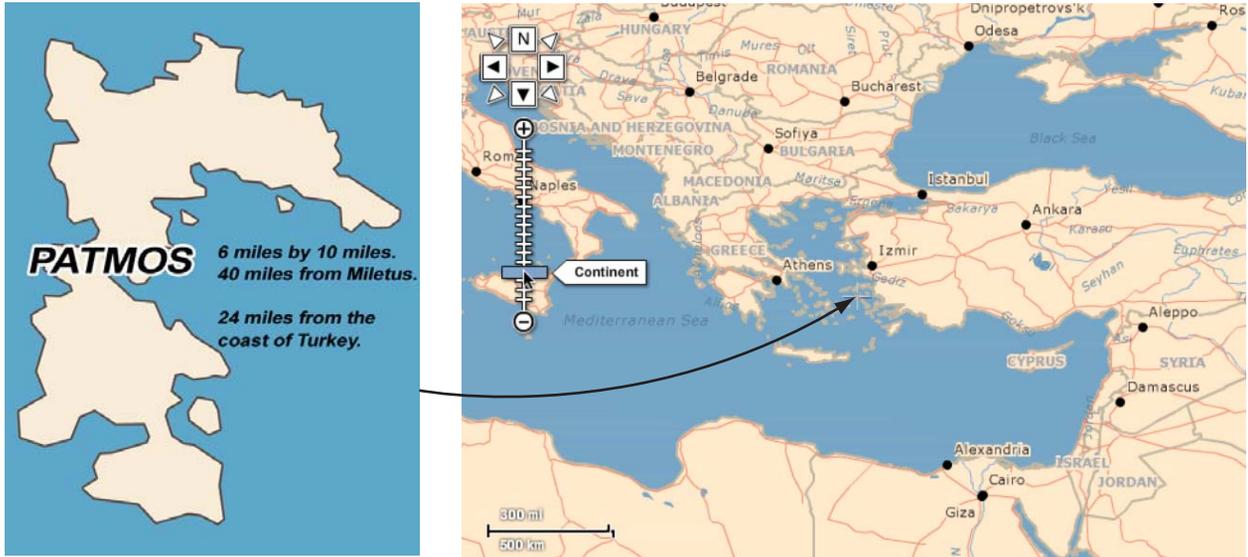
The “golden rule” of interpretation:

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate text, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise. - Dr. David L. Cooper

The author - John:

- Born at Bethsaida to Zebedee and Salome.
- Partnered with Peter and Andrew in a Galilean fishing business.
- He also wrote the Gospel of John and the three epistles of John.
- One of the three closest disciples of Christ who was privy to special insights and miracles:
 - Mt. of Transfiguration (Mt.17)
 - Raising of Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9:18)
 - Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24)
 - Gethsemane (Mt 26:37)
 - Jesus assigns him with the care of Mary (Jn 19:26)
- Exiled by Domitian to the Island of Patmos from A.D. 81-96 and many early accounts place the writing of Revelation during this time. John returned to Ephesus after his exile where he appointed leaders to various churches and was an overseer.

Patmos



The Revelation - Singular

VApoka,luyij = “Apocalypsis”- noun (19 times): to unveil or uncover.

VApoka,luptw - verb (26 times): “to reveal.”

The uniqueness of Revelation:

① A special promise.

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near." Rev 1:3 (NASB)

② It provides its own outline.

"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things." Rev 1:3 (NASB)

③ A book of sevens.

- Seven Churches 1:4,11,20; 2; 3
- Seven Seals 5; 6
- Seven Trumpets 8, 9
- Seven Bowls 15; 16; 17:1; 21:9
- Seven Lampstands 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1
- Seven Spirits 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
- Seven Stars 1:16, 20; 2:1; 3:1
- Seven Lamps 4; 5
- Seven “Title-pairs” 2; 3
- Seven Promises to the Overcomer 2;3
- Seven Horns 5:6
- Seven Eyes 5:6
- Seven Angels 8:2,6; 15:1,6,7,8; 16:1; 17:1;21:9
- Seven Thunders 10:3, 4
- Seven Thousand 11:13
- Seven Heads 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9
- Seven Crowns 12:3
- Seven Plagues 15:1, 6, 8; 21:9
- Seven Mountains 17:9
- Seven Kings 17:10,11

The seven “beatitudes” of Revelation

- Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear and keep those things... (Rev 1:3).
- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13).
- Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments (Rev 16:15).
- Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).
- Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (Rev 20:6).
- Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book (Rev 22:7)
- Blessed are they that wash their robes (Rev 22:14).

Other sevens:

- Seven Features of Christ 1
- Seven Letter Divisions 2, 3
- Seven Personages 12, 13
 - Woman, Man-Child, Red Dragon, 7-headed Beast, False Prophet, Michael, Lamb.
- Seven Years of Judgments 11:3; 12:6,14; 13:5
- Seven “I Am’s” of Christ 1:8, 11, 17, 18; 21:6; 22:13,16;
- Seven Doxologies in heaven 4:9-11; 5:8-13; 7:9-12; 11:16-18; 14:2,3; 15:2-4 ;19:1-6
- Seven New Things 20, 21.

A study on the significance of numbers in scripture reveals that the number seven represents completeness or perfection.

Genesis

vs.

Revelation

Earth Created 1:1
Sun, moon, stars 1:14-16
Earth’s government 37
Sun to govern Day 1:16
Darkness called night 1:5
Waters He called seas 1:10
A river for earth’s blessing 2:10-14
Man in God’s Image 1:26
Entrance of sin 3
Curse pronounced 3:14-17
Death entered 3:19
Man driven out of Eden 3:24
Tree of life guarded 3:24
Sorrow & suffering enter 3:17
Religion, art, and science separated from God 4
Nimrod founds Babylon 10:8-10
A bride for Abraham’s son 24
Marriage of 1st Adam 2:18-23
Promised Seed possess gate of enemies 29:8
Man’s dominion ceased and Satan’s begun 3:24

Earth Passed away 21:1
Sun, moon, stars 4:12; 8:12
Earth’s judgment 16:8
No need of sun 21:23
No night there 22:5
No more sea 21:1
A river for New Earth 22:1,2
Man Headed by Satan’s Image 13
End of sin 21, 22
No more curse 22:3
No more death 21:4
Man restored 22
Access to Tree of life 22:14
No more sorrow 22:4
judged, destroyed 18
Babylon falls 17, 18
A bride for Abraham’s Seed 19
Marriage of Last Adam 19
Promised Seed possessing 19
Satan’s domain ended and man’s restored 22

The goals of this study:

① Exhortation

- To make sure of your relationship with Christ.
- Grow a deeper devotion to Christ and be about His business.

② Encouragement

- To bring some clarity and understanding to this book.
- To have hope in the midst of troubling times.

② To be like the Bereans

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17: 11

the REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST

Session 2 - Revelation 1

“The Revelation” – Singular

VApoka,luyij = “Apocalypsis”- noun (19 times): to unveil or uncover.

Examples of use of “Apocalypsis” for further study – “revelation”- 12 (Rev 1:1, 1Pe 1:13, Eph 1:17, 3:3, Gal 1:12, 2:2, 1Cr 14:6, 14:26, 2Cr 12:1, 12:7, Rom 2:5, 16:25), “be revealed”- 2 (1Pe 4:13, 2Th 1:7), “to lighten”- 1 (Luk 2:32), “manifestation”- 1 (Rom 8:19), “coming”- 1 (1Cr 1:7), “appearing”- 1 (1Pe 1:7)

The Nature of the Revelation – The summing up of all things

Psalm 40:7 and Hebrews 10:7 say “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me”. The world was spoken into existence by the Word who became flesh (John 1). All of history is “His” story and through human history the Lord has revealed himself to man by way of His choosing through His Word and His people.

The ultimate way that God reveals Himself to us is through His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things (Heb 1). But when the Light came into the world the darkness comprehended Him not(John 1), yet all things will be summed up in Christ (Eph 1:10) and that is what the Revelation account given to John is all about.

So why so much confusion?

Understanding divine revelation begins with a relationship with the source who is Christ.

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” 1Cr 2:14 (NASB)

There are 278 direct references or allusions to the Old Testament, so studying The Revelation outside of the light of the wrest of scripture is not rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2Tim2:15).

What is revealed?

- The omniscient eye of Christ on the church and His expectations for her.
- The climax of human history and the final political, economic and religious set-up under the short reign of Satan’s seed - Antichrist.
- Mass deception and unrestrained wickedness like no other time in history.
- The ultimate battle of all time - Armageddon.
- The pouring out of God’s wrath on man.
- The total depravity of man who rebels against God while either under His wrath or under the provision of His perfect Kingdom.
- The victory of Christ as He defeats His enemies, both human and demonic.
- The total destruction of all things and the creation of a new heaven and earth.
- The eternal state established gathering all of the redeemed of God into the kingdom of heaven and all of the rebellious who are against God and His Christ into the lake of fire.
- The glory of God and the majesty of His throne accompanied by constant praise and worship.

Session 2 - Revelation 1

Who is revealed?

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1a)

The first time that Christ dwelt among us, He was veiled in flesh in order to fulfill the law and to secure redemption for the many (Mat 20:28; 26:28; Joh 1:12, Act 2:39, 13:48; Rom 5:15,19; Heb 9:28) as preordained by the counsel of God (Acts 2: 22-23).

Leviticus 16 introduces the “scapegoat” which symbolically bore the sins of Israel and was sent into the wilderness in utter rejection in order to demonstrate the provision of God in the removal of sin. In like manor, Jesus became the scapegoat for the sins of the redeemed. As He hung on the cross, the world’s last vision of Him was that of a miserable criminal; despised and rejected. But is this the last that mankind shall see of Him? The book of Revelation provides a detailed insight into:

- Christ’s ascended majesty and provides a glimpse of His glory in the second coming (1:5-20).
- Christ as the exalted head of the church (Chap 2-3).
- The throne room in Heaven and the worthy Lamb (Chap 4-5).
- The Tribulation week (Daniel’s 70th week) (Chap 6-19).
- His glorious kingdom; in both the millennial reign on earth and in the final eternal state (Chap 20-22).

**For further study - look up and list the names of Christ in Revelation:*

(1:5) _____

(1:8) _____

(1:17) _____

(1:18) _____

(2:1) _____

(2:12) _____

(2:18) _____

(3:1) _____

(3:7) _____

(3:14) _____

(5:5) _____

(5:6) _____

(6:10) _____

(19:11) _____

(19:13) _____

(19:16) _____

(20:6) _____

(22:16) _____

Session 2 - Revelation 1

“which God gave to Him” (1:1c)

What would Jesus Christ need the Father to give to Him?

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”. *Phil 2: 5-11(NASB)*

The book of Revelation is therefore a gift from the Father to the Son as the just reward for His sacrifice. But this just reward is moved from written promises into the actual fulfillment specifically in the handing over of the seven sealed scroll, the title deed to the earth, in chapter 5. Here we see that Jesus Christ is the only man who is worthy to take possession of and open the scroll.

The intended audience

“to show to His bond-servants” (1:1d)

“But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.” *Ex 21:5-6 (NASB) *see also Deut 15:17*

The book of Revelation is intended for those who are His “doulos” and have surrendered their life to Christ from a heart of love and admiration. Again, according to 1 Cor 2:14, the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God.

**For further study, read Matt 13: 11-13*

A prophetic claim

“the things which must soon take place” (1:1e)

The word “soon” comes from “tachos” and can mean in a brief period of time or quickly. This is a declaration not only of events that will happen, but also of the nearness of them. All throughout scripture, and primarily in Revelation, the idea of the imminence of Christ’s coming is commonly presented in connection with comforting believers and warning unbelievers.

An angelic delivery

“and He sent and communicated it by His angel” (1:1f)

Revelation is unique in that the entire book was transmitted through an angel. This is stated by Christ again in 22:16. The ministry of angels to men is seen all throughout scripture.

- They were involved in the giving of the law to Moses (Act 7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2).
- The angel Gabriel brings direct word from the Lord:
 - To Daniel concerning future events (Dan 8:16; 9:21)
 - To Zacharias concerning his future son John the Baptist (Luk1:19)
 - To Mary concerning her son Jesus (Luk 1:26)
- The archangel Michael appears 5 times in scripture (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; jud 1:9; Rev 12:7).

Session 2 - Revelation 1

Angels play a prominent role throughout Revelation:

- The word “angel” or “angels” appear 71 times in Revelation.
- They appear in every chapter except for 4 and 13.
- 25% of references to angels in the Bible appear in Revelation.

The human eyewitness and author

1e-2) *“to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, {even} to all that he saw.”*

John was a faithful witness to the first coming of Christ and in his gospel never makes a direct reference to himself. In Revelation, the direct use of his name is important for several reasons:

- It places him as the direct recipient of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- It makes him an eyewitness (“he saw” and later “I John”) to the events of Revelation verifying them as real, tangible, future events.
- At the time of the writing of the Revelation, John was the last known eyewitness of Christ’s earthly ministry and his name would have been significant to the seven churches that Revelation went out to because they would have respected him as an elder.

The special blessing

3) *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*

Revelation is the only book of the Bible which marks itself out as a source of blessing. There are three mandates to receive this blessing:

1. The word of the prophecy must be proclaimed.
2. The word of the prophecy must be personally received.
3. The word of the prophecy must be personally applied.

This is not a level of sincerity that is to be put off or ignored. Since “the time is near”, the response of believers needs to be immediate and continual.

The trinitarian benediction

4-5a) *“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.”*

- Him who is and who was and who is to come speaks of the everlasting father.
- The seven Spirits is the seven fold Holy Spirit as seen in the following: (see also Rev 5:6, Zech 4:1-10).

“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”

Isa 11: 1-2(NASB)

- Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness,
“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jhn 1:14(NASB)

Session 2 - Revelation 1

He is the firstborn of the dead.

prōtotokos or “firstborn” is used here not to mark Christ out as the first resurrection, but really is a statement of His preeminence among all of the resurrected (psa 89:27).

He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Simply put, Jesus Christ is sovereign over all things. In Revelation, we will see Christ as throned in heaven and on the earth as He is exalted in both the material and spiritual realm. He is the God who became flesh.

What do all three of these titles of Christ point to?

They all have particular relevance to the realm of man on earth:

- Christ would only need to be a “faithful witness” in this fallen world; only the truth exists in heaven.
- His resurrection is the first unto eternal life and verifies His fulfillment of the law.
- It is because of the first two titles that the title of “ruler of the kings of earth” is justly given to the the only perfected Man who is also God.

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

Heb 2:10 (NASB)

A doxology with Christ in focus

5b-6) *“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (KJV)*

The word “agapao” here is in the aorist tense and is commonly rendered as a simple past tense. Christ “loved” us refers specifically to what He did on the cross. He “washed us” from all of our sin in the historical moment of His sacrifice on the cross.

OT law prohibited kings from being priests or even performing priestly duties. Saul was rebuked for performing priestly duties as a king. In only three cases are kings priests at the same time; Melchizedek, Jesus Christ and the church. This is important to keep in mind for Chapters 4 and 5.

A flash forward to the glory and sweep of the second coming.

7-8) *“BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

Idou (behold) is a strong call to attention and is used 25 different times in Revelation. Our attention is called to the theme of the book; “He is coming”.

These clouds are not ordinary clouds, but clouds of glory that are present in the visible manifestation of the glory and presence of God. They are seen in:

- The wilderness wandering (Ex 13:21-22; 16:10; Num 10:34).
- The giving of the law (Ex 19:16; 20:21; 24:15-18).
- The tabernacle (Ex 33:9; 34:5; 40:34-38) and the temple (1Kin 8:10-12).

Christ ascends on a cloud (act 1:19) and here descends with the clouds. **see also Dan 7:13; Mat 24:30*

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After His resurrection, Christ appeared several times to His disciples (not just the twelve) over a period of 40 days. In the future, the body of Christ will see Him:

“Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.” *1Th 4:18 (NASB)*

“**Those who pierced Him**” is Israel. Many Jews will be saved during the Great Tribulation beginning with the 144,000 witnesses who will convert many, both Jew and Gentile. At the actual time of Christ’s return Israel as a nation (the remnant) will repent. **see Rom 9-11*

“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” *Zec 12:10 (NASB)*

“**and all the tribes of the earth**” is a reference to the Gentile nations and their mourning will not be a mourning of repentance (9:21). In fact, the word “mourn” comes from *koptō* which literally means to cut or smite.

The “**Alpha and the Omega**” is the first and the last. Every language has an alphabet which has a first letter and a last letter. In between these letters are all of the other letters which are combined to communicate all knowledge. So Christ is the beginning and the end of all knowledge.

The setting of the vision of the Son

9-11) *“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance {which are} in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like {the sound} of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send {it} to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ”*

“**I was in the Spirit**”: John was transported by the Holy Spirit to a dimension of experience beyond the dimensions that the natural man is confined to. It is important to note that John constantly referred to himself in the first person as an eyewitness and so this is not merely a dream or vision. **For further study see (Ezek 2:2; 3:12,14; Act 10:9; 22:17-21; 2Cor 12:1)*

The sound of the trumpet is a significant component in the great events of the Lord. It is present here and at the giving of the law at Mt.Sinai (Ex 19:16). The trumpet also sounds at the catching away of the church (1Cor 15:12; 1Th 4:16) and the calling up of John to heaven (4:1). It shows up two more times in Revelation. (8:13; 9:14). These examples are associated with the voice of God unlike the 7 trumpets “blown” by the angels in association with judgment.

The vision of Christ unfolding

12) *“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;”*

“*lychnia*” meaning lightbearers.

·Christ is - (Joh 8:12; 9:5)

·Believers are supposed to be - (Mt5:14; Phil2:15,16)

Verse 20 identifies them as the seven churches.

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- 13) *"and in the middle of the lampstands {I saw} one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. "*

The term "**son of man**" shows up many times in the OT when the Lord is speaking to his prophets. It shows up in Daniel in reference to the vision of Christ (Dan 7:13). Christ uses this term of Himself 83 times in the gospels and He stands in the midst of the Churches as He promised to do. *For further study see Mat 18:20; 28:20; Joh 14:18,23; Heb 13:5

The **robe** mentioned here, specifically reaches down to the feet and could be used to describe royalty, and certainly Christ is. But it was also used to describe the robe worn by the high priest (6 out of 7 times in the Septuagint). The **golden sash across His chest** solidifies the image presented here of Christ as our Great High Priest. This is the main theme of the epistle to the Hebrews.

- 14) *"His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. "*

The white head and hair speak of the purity and Holiness of Christ. Daniel saw the Son of Man the same way (Dan 7:9, 13, 22). As Christians we are:

- Positionally perfect (Eph 5:25-27).
- Actively perfect (Matt 5:48; 1Pet 1:15-16).

- 15) *"His feet {were} like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice {was} like the sound of many waters. "*

Bronze or brass is an idiom for judgement especially when it is used with the adjective "fiery". In Numbers 21: 6-9 we read about the serpent of brass raised up for the Israelites, who were bitten by the vipers, to gaze upon in order to be healed. Christ gives the meaning for it to Nicodemus:

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." *John 3:14,15 (NASB)*

The **feet like burnished bronze** means that Christ's entire ministry and kingdom are built on His righteousness. The **voice of many waters** speaks of His authority.

- 16) *"In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. "*

In verse 20 we will see that the seven stars are representatives of the seven churches. Here Christ is holding the church in His hand. The sharp two edged sword is the word of God:

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.." *Heb 4:12 (NASB) * see also Eph 6:17*

We see the glory of God as light. The disciples saw a small fraction of His glory at the mount of Transfiguration and the glory of God shines through His church. (2 Cor 4:6)

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17a) *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man."*

The holiness of God is overwhelming and invokes instant fear. All throughout the OT, we see the prophets of God fall to worship Him when they see Him. (Dan 10:8-9; 8:17; Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 43:3; 44:4). Isaiah and Job both retreat to instant feelings of unholiness in the site of the Lord (Isa 6:5; Job 42:5-6). Paul not only falls off of his high horse, but he is made blind when he is confronted by Christ Jesus (Act 16:13-14).

17b-18) *"And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."*

The first and last appears seven times in scripture (Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12 Rev 1: 11, 17-18; 2:8 "was dead and am alive"; 22:13). The "keys of death and Hades" is a declaration of the authority of Christ over life and death. He is the resurrection and the Life (John 11:25; 14:19) and He is the one who brings judgement to the lost (Mat 10:28).

19- 20) *"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."*

The word for "angel" is *aggelos* and means messenger. Since angels don't rule or shepherd over the church, angels here are best understood as messengers to these churches; elders.

The seven churches: "The things which are" (Chap 2&3)

Why these seven churches? Close examination of these seven churches and the letters to them reveal 4 points of application:

- Each individual church: These were real churches that actually existed at the time of John's writing. This was researched archaeologically by Sir William Ramsey.
- Applies to all churches: "...what the Spirit says to the Churches."
- Applies to every Christian: "he that hath an ear..."
- A prophetic outline of the church: not so if in any other order.

There are seven design elements to each of the letters:

- The name of the church: The meaning of the names ties in with the character of the church.
- The title of Christ chosen: Directly addresses the character of each church.
- Commendation: Two churches have nothing good said about them.
- Concern: Two churches have nothing bad said about them.
- Exhortation: Direct challenge for "winning" the race.
- Promise to the overcomer in each letter.
- The closing statement: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches."

Read chapters 2 and 3 for next time.