

Revelation Chapter 1

Tonight we are beginning our verse by verse study in the book of Revelation.

A)The Uniqueness of the book of Revelation

B)We saw in our introduction that the book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that has a promised blessing attached to it V.3

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

C)And it is the only book in the Bible that contains a Divine outline V.19

¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

D)Seen - The Vision in Ch.1 / Are the letters to the churches in chapters 2-3 - 7 literal churches - the church age - personal app

E)the things that take place after this - After the church age is complete

I believe that V.19 is really a key to understanding the book of Revelation

A)Different approaches to studying the book of Revelation in the Christian church today.

B)There are those who take what is called the allegorical approach to studying the book of Rev

C)The Allegorical approach believes this book is simple a story to illustrate the ageless struggle between good and evil

1)they believe the events in the book of Revelation haven't happened, **are not going to happen**, they are just there to illustrate a story

Problems with the Allegorical View

- **The Revelation contains the events of the second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the saints from the dead and those two events are not allegorical**

A)To believe that way is not just misguided, it is actually heretical

- for the second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead are not take it or leave it Bible truths, but foundational biblical doctrines

The Historicist Approach:

A)This approach believes that Revelation is a sweeping, disordered panorama of all church history

B)In the Historicist approach, Revelation predicts the future, but only the future of the "church age" 1)not the future of end-time events.

C)In the Historicist view, Revelation is full of symbols that describe what we are currently experiencing within the church.

D)John's visions are strictly allegorical. Not literal, and are supposed to be interpreted figuratively.

Problems with the Historicist approach

A)How do you interpret the pictures?"

B)The four horsemen, the stinging locusts, and the star falling to the earth are all spiritual pictures of something. But of what? Who knows!

1)It becomes very subjective

C)So there is no limit to the number of theories depending on where you live and what you experience.

D) This method leaves the interpretation too broad to be helpful or cohesive for the believer.

E)And what we are currently experiencing as the church in the world

1)Or even what the church has experienced in its toughest seasons of persecution

2)is nowhere near - what Revelation describes

The Preterist View - very popular

A)The Preterist view - believes that everything that John wrote about was fulfilled during the reign of Nero AD 64-AD 70

B)They put the writing of the book before AD 64 and believe that John was cryptically describing the events of his current day

1)and wrote them in a symbolic “code” that only the believers in his day would understand.

C)The Problems with the Preterist view are many:

- #1 Nero, who was Caesar in 64 AD did not banish Christians to Patmos, that process started with the Emperor Domitian who was ruling 30 years later in 96AD
- #2 if Revelation was written in 64 AD, Paul was the pastor of Ephesus at that time and he is not mentioned, and as we will see on Sunday, the church of Ephesus is rebuked for their lack of love.

D)Now a lack of love did plague the early church as a whole but not early Ephesus, for you can read in Ephesians 1:15-16,

1)Paul commends them for their love for one another and the Lord

A 3rd problem with the preterist view is there are many things mentioned in Revelation

A)that simply did not happen between the years 64 AD and 70 AD, no matter how hard you squint and try to make things fit

B)For example

- one third of the human population did not die
- **All sea life did not die**
- and Jesus has not returned visibly to the earth

C)Now some Preterist would say, oh those events are allegorical,

but to pick and choose what God is saying in each passage makes you the authority of the Word and you and I are simply not that

The Futuristic and literal approach:

A)This view believes that chapters 4-22 of the book are speaking of events that will take place in the future.

B)This approach allows you to take literally what is conveyed literally and figuratively what is conveyed figuratively.

- 1)It pays careful attention to the language that John uses in the book and when he uses phrases such as
- 2)like or as - Voice as of a trumpet

C)For that reason I am not going to be doing a lot of speculating in this book -

1)For instance: When we get to Chapter 9 and John describes unusual flying locust that sound like horses

D)I am not going to speculate that those are Apache Helicopters or some other military air craft -

(We just don't know)

1)It is simply some weird creature that God is allowing to plague the earth.

Why the Futuristic or literal approach makes the most sense.

A)Jesus calls this book a prophecy in v.3 and five times in the book.

B)It is never referred to as a book of history, and never an allegory.

Bb)Jesus tells us in the Divine outline in V.19 that a huge portion of this book is dealing with the future:

1)The things that will take place after this

C)The Bible in many places teaches a literally return of Jesus to the earth.

1)The Bible a literal new heaven and new earth.

Pause here and say this: I get the perspective of those who want to allegorize everything in Revelation.

A)I think they struggle with a loving God who would allow such devastation as the book of Revelation describes -

B)That will happen on planet earth and to humanity 1)It just is really hard to compute in their minds.

C)It is not fun to preach: - I agree whole heartedly!

But let me say a few things about that.

A)First when we are reading of the events that will take place during the tribulation - Horrific - unless shortened no flesh survive

B)The events of the tribulation also magnify for us - something that is hard for us to understand -

1)The Holiness of God

C)God is light and in him is no darkness at all -

1) We see God coming against the darkness of this world in a prolific way.

But the events of the Tribulation really magnify for us what happened at the Gospel -

A) God became a man - entered our darkness

B) It magnifies The Cross- Jesus took the punishment that we deserve

C) Jesus bore the Wrath of God the Father - so we could escape it -

D) Which is why Jesus exhorts us to pray..... worthy to escape.

1) Believing in Jesus and walking with Jesus is what makes us worthy.

E) The events of the tribulation also magnify for us the patience of God -

1) that he continues to wait to judge the world.

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

So let's dive into our study of the book tonight

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.

A) There are 4 things I want us to see tonight in this opening verse

B) #1 A Revelation of Jesus: The word Revelation is apokalypsis - we get our English word - apocalypse from that

1) Apocalypse - the end of the world -

C) But the word means - Revealing or unveiling - The Purpose of the book is to Reveal Jesus to us.

D) Main focus of our Sunday Am studies

#2 A Revelation that comes from a heavenly vantage point: which God gave Him

A) Have you ever looked down on the world from a higher perspective? Maybe from an airplane?

B) It can really change your perspective doesn't it - things can look smaller from a higher vantage point -

1) LA - car seems huge right

C) Not so big from an airplane.

The book of Revelation is giving us a glimpse of the events that will take place on earth from God's perspective

A) Much of what we read - originates from Heaven - from the throne of God.

B) Looking down from heaven at the events taking place on planet earth

1) Then there will be moments where we zoom in - pause to look at a scene in detail.

C) And There are several instances where we are taken into the heavenly realm -

1) seeing what is happening on earth - From the vantage point of Heaven

D) So it is a Revelation that comes from a heavenly vantage point

#3 It is a Revelation for us. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants

A) Are you a servant of Jesus? He doesn't want you to be in the dark.

#4 A Revelation of the Future. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.

A) Please don't get sidetracked by the word shortly."

B) The word shortly is the word in Greek is the word Tachos from which we get the word tachometer

1) Tachometer measures velocity.

C) So the idea of this is simply, once it starts, it's going to take place within a very brief period of time.

D) It's like history drops into high gear as these things happen.

1) Picture dominoes that are set up and once you trip one of them they will all fall in rapid succession.

The Author:

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God,

and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

A)John identifies himself as the writer 4 times in the book V.1 - V. 4 - V.9 - Chapter 22:8

B)John was a faithful witness of Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. V. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-4, 14

C)John Bore witness again in 1 John 1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 1 John 1:1-4

THE PROMISED BLESSING

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Read it in difference translations

Hear - Be here: Barna: Average Christian - once every 3 weeks - Don't be Average

Keep - Doers of the word not just hearers

The Audience: 4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

A)Seven literal churches -

B)Seven is the # of Completion - Church history -

C)Picture of the church throughout the ages Get into that more next week -

His Greeting

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, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

Grace and peace was a customary Jewish greeting - almost always in that order -

A)can't experience peace apart from God's grace

In these Greetings we see a wonderful picture of the trinity - Triune Godhead

A)The Father: from Him who is and who was and who is to come

B)God the father is revealed to be outside of our time and space. John speaks of God as being in 3 different spaces of time -

1) from Him who is - Present

2) and who was - Past

3) and who is to come- Future

C)John is describing God as eternal and omnipresent, without beginning or end.

D)APP: Think about it. If God was not before, you would not exist.

1) If God is not now, you are alone.

2)If God is not always, you have no eternal hope.

Then he describes the Holy Spirit and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

A)Now We can be honest about the difficulty of the terminology used here to describe the Spirit of God.

B)It's clear in Scripture that there is only ONE Holy Spirit. He is personal, emotional, and individual.

C)Yet, in the spirit of the vision, seven again representing the number of perfection/ completion,

D)So we are seeing that the Holy Spirit is not partially God, but completely.

1)He embodies the perfect nature and the full characteristics of God.

When Isaiah spoke about the Messiah and His mission and identity,

A)He tells us how the Spirit would empower Jesus the Messiah in a sevenfold way.

B)“The (1) Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the (2) Spirit of wisdom and(3) understanding,

1)the (4) Spirit of counsel and (5) might, the Spirit of (6)knowledge and of (7) the fear of the LORD.”

C)This is also how the Holy Spirit works through us, the Church -

1)He brings the very presence of the Lord in our hearts

2)He supplies us with wisdom,

3)He supplies us with understanding,

4)He brings counsel,

5)He gives us power and might,

6)He brings us knowledge,

7)He instills in us the fear of the LORD.

D)This picture of the Holy Spirit also correlates to the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:1,

1)where He describes himself as "The one who has the seven spirits of God."

E)So we see in this opening verses God the Father - God the Holy Spirit and God the Son -

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

John gives us a 3 fold description of Jesus in V.5 as the Ultimate truth teller the faithful witness - He spoke for the father

A)As the Ultimate grave robber - the firstborn from the dead

B)The word firstborn in this context means trailblazer

C)Paul refers to Jesus in this same way in Colossians 1:18 - the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

D)Jesus was the first human to be physically raised from the dead, never to die again

1)so He might have the right to offer eternal life to any who choose to come to Him.

E)Notice In verse 18, Jesus introduces Himself as "...He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen."

So John describes Jesus as the Ultimate truth teller, the Ultimate grave robber and #3 the Ultimate Ruler and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

Here John is giving us a hint and what is coming - A)there is a day coming when Jesus will lay claim to planet earth.

B)He has purchased it - but he hasn't laid claim to it yet - so he is allowing mankind to run his world

1)Allowing Satan the god of this world - to do his thing

C)But one day and I believe very soon - that is all going to come to an end -

1)Jesus returns and lays claim to planet earth

Paul penned these words about Jesus: 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-10

One day, he will forcefully subjugate every ruler to bow their knee to Him.

A)It will be a good day for planet earth when evil rulers and ill-driven politicians have to submit themselves to the will of Jesus.

B)But what about now? Jesus is still the ruler,

1) but he manifests his authority over the secular governments of nations through the power of the gospel

C)being carried by the Spirit-filled, obedient Christian.

Listen Friends, you and I express Christ's authority over the powers that be.

A)By not living for the gospel and the Kingdom and not yielding to the powers and forces of this world

B)Our politicians might be able to ruin the economy, but they can't stop the gospel.

Jesus exercises his authority through the gospel in that no king has successfully silenced the voice of truth.

A)They have killed Christians, they have persecuted the church,

B)they have written every kind of unrighteous legislation you can imagine,

1)but they cannot stop the gospel because their authority is limited.

C)Jesus said the gates of Hell what not prevail against his church - and his gospel.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

I love what John does here: He combines a picture of Jesus that we will see many times in the book of Revelation - Lamb and the Lion

A)He is the lamb who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, - **The Power of the blood.**

B)He is the Lamb who has made us kings and priests to His God and Father

C)Our change of Status - Outsiders to insiders - enemies to friends -

1)poor and destitute to having power and authority

Kings represents Authority:

A)Our destiny is to rule with King Jesus -

B)When he comes - He'll end the long-running revolt of Satan and strip the devil of all authority

1)... then He'll share it with us.

C)As Kings we have power and authority over darkness and to stand strong in this world for Jesus

Priest - represents access.

A)The priest had access to enter into the Holy Place and minister.

B)In Christ, we have unhindered access to the grace and presence of God.

⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Peter 2:9

C)Our mission is to proclaim him and the proclaim his praises.

John portrays him as the Lamb - but also the Lion - the Victory 7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

A)We will talk about this more in future studies, but John here is referring to Christ's final return

B)when he will physically step foot on the earth, judge the nations and establish the throne of His kingdom on earth.

C)John says and every eye will see Him - even those who pierced him

Jesus' return will not be done in secret.

A)Despite what the JW watchtower society might say, Jesus did not secretly return in 1914 and set up His headquarters in Brooklyn to begin His kingdom.

B)If this is the kingdom of Jesus - I want a refund

C)When Jesus returns at His second coming,he will transcend the physical laws of our universe
1)the entire world will see him come simultaneously.

²⁶ "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also

will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:26-27

D)Jesus' second coming will not be a time of rejoicing for this world. They will mourn!

Zechariah 12:10 "...then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

E)Jewish people eyes are going to be opened to see him. -

1)They will mourn because of their failure to believe
-They finally will embrace Jesus as their messiah

F)The World - the followers of Anti-Christ will mourn because they know that they have been defeated.

Next we see that Jesus makes this declaration of Deity! 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

And to magnify this declaration of Deity -

A)Jesus gives John a vision of himself that is unlike anything John has ever seen before. V.9

9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

At the time of this writing John was the last of the Disciples alive - the rest had been martyred for their faith

Their refusal to deny that Jesus was Lord - So they were killed

A)The Romans tried to boil him in oil - John would cook -

B)so they banished him to this island in the Med - Patmos

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,

C)Now that could mean one of two things. It was Sunday when he gets the vision-- the Lord's Day.

D)Or-- as some think it ought to be translated-- and I was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord.

1)The day of the Lord is a synonym-- a word picture-
- for the coming, end time events.

E)The tribulation period, the rapture, the second coming.

1)All-encompassing time period known as The day of the Lord.

and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.

A)Now we spent our entire study on Sunday morning looking at this vision in detail

B)We zoomed in- Revealed Series - Beholding Jesus in the book of Revelation

1)We took a detailed look at this 8 fold description of Jesus

C)Sunday's we are zooming in - Wednesday night zooming out - looking at the whole picture

So before Jesus gives John any other aspect of the Revelation -

A)Before going into the details of the end times events - Tribulation - 2nd coming

B)Jesus wants John and us to see him in His glory - to behold him in this way

C)To remember that he is the central figure of the book - and everything that we will read is orchestrating from his COMMAND

D)So since we looked at this in detail on Sunday morning - not going to dissect it tonight

But for our purpose tonight I want to key in on 4 things that Jesus wants John and us to grasp in the beginning of this book

A)His Position -- His Preeminence- His Power - His Prominence

B)His Position And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

C)His Position: In the midst of the Seven Churches V.20

D)We will see on Sunday that 5 of these churches had serious problems but Jesus doesn't abandon them -

1)There in their midst - to confront - to care for - he wants to restore them - help them overcome

He is in their midst as their Kingly High Priest - His robe and his Sash

A)Our priest - ¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

B)Our King ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

His Preeminence

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

Daniel 7:9 The Ancient of Days

His Power - ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

A)Feet like fine Brass or bronze - Able to endure intense heat - Jesus stood strong in the fiery trial of the Cross -

B)Hebrews 11 Who for the joy set before him he endured the Cross

1)His Joy was us

C)Voice like many waters - Powerful voice -

D)Voice that spoke the world into existence and Sustains the World by the word of his power

His Prominence

16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

A)Stars = messengers of the church - He is the head of the Church - holding the leaders in his hand

B)His mouth sharp two edged sword - He is the final authority

C)His countenance like the Sun - Brilliance - of his Holiness his glory and his majesty

D)He is prominent - like none other

Consider- John's response

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

A)He is wrecked - blown away - afraid

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom

A)I admit - there are too many times in my life - In lose sight of this -

B)Morning Devos are lackadaisical - not taking into consideration the one who is inviting me to come

C)Worship lacks passion - forget who I am singing to

D)Hear people say things like Jesus is my home boy - my BFF - I understand the sentiment
1)But come on - He is the King!

But notice Jesus response:

But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus doesn't want us to be afraid of him - but he does want us to Fear Him - Reverence Him!

A)Revere - realize - He alone holds the Keys to life and death.

B)You tonight ?

C)Wrap up - the outline - Pick up next week

19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 20 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 which you saw are the seven churches.