

Study 2: Revelation chapters 1 to 3

The Vision of Chapter 1

Before John can deliver these letters he receives a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrected and ascended glory.

1. The Writer

John – the apostle. The place – a penal colony.

2. The Subject

Chapter 1:1-3.

2.1 Stated

“*The revelation...*” the unfolding of that which was hidden. The unveiling, the apocalypse.

“*...of Jesus Christ.*” The first great need of the believer who is suffering wrongfully is a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son.

2.2 Conveyed

> Its origin is from God Himself. Verse 1

God communicates this to John, who bears witness to all that he saw – verse 2. So blessing comes to those who read and understand and keep the words of this prophecy – verse 3.

2.3 Explained

“*...to show His servants things which must shortly (quickly, speedily) take place.*” Verse 1.

And, “*...for the time is near (soon, at hand)*” – verse 3.

3. The Recipients

Written to the seven churches of Asia.

4. The Person

His coming is an undeniable fact – verse 7.

Who comes? Verse 8.

The emphasis is on judgement rather than salvation.

For the true believer, the comfort and close reality of an experimental relationship with God, the Almighty One.

4.1 The Voice

Verses 10-11, 17-20

(a) When He spoke – On the Lord’s Day – verse 10.

(b) How He was heard – “in the Spirit” – verse 10.

(c) What He said:

i. The Language of His Humanity – “*Fear not*” – verse 17.

ii. The Language of His Deity – “*I am the first and the last...*” – verse 17. An overwhelming awareness that He is God.

iii. The Language of Sympathy – “*I am He who lives and was dead...*” – verse 18.

>> The **Conqueror** of death – literally, ‘I became a corpse and lived!’ Better to be a corpse for Christ than a traitor to His Name!

>> the **Controller** of death – “*I have the keys of Hell and of death.*” The symbol of authority. He is Master even of life and death.

iv. The Language of Mystery – “*The mystery of the seven stars...*” verse 20.

>> The seven lampstands are the churches

>> The seven stars – the pastors of the churches.

4.2 The Verdict

Verse 17. “*I fell at His feet as dead.*”

See Exodus 3:3-5; Joshua 5:15; Isaiah 6:5.

5. The Key

Revelation 1:20

The Mystery – not what is mysterious, but that which cannot be known by natural revelation. Only by spiritual revelation. Only from God Himself. See Colossians 1:26 with Colossians 2:2-3.

The Seven Stars – the angels, the messengers.

The seven lampstands – the churches.

The Church cannot make the truth, nor improve the truth – but simply to display the truth. How?

1. By Her Preaching

2. By Her Worship

3. By Her Government

Study 2a: Revelation chapters 1 to 3

The Pattern of the Letters

Each of the Seven Letters contains (not always in the same order):

1. A SALUTATION: “*To the angel of the church.*”

a. The Angel – see 1:20

b. The Church – see 1:20

God’s first concern is not with the world, but with the church (John 17:2, 9; Romans 8:30-31; Revelation 5:9)

2. A DESCRIPTION of Christ quoted from the introductory vision and related to the church to which the letter is addressed. (Except Laodicea)

3. AN EXPECTATION of reward for the ‘Overcomer’ – again has relevance to the church to which the letter is addressed.

The danger was with false prophets and subtle heresy – see 1 John 4:1-6; 1 John 5.

4. A REVELATION – “I know”

Used tenderly (2:9; 2:13)

Used reproachfully (3:1; 3:15)

Used commendably (2:2-3; 2:19; 3:8)

5. A COMMENDATION (Except Laodicea)

6. A CONDEMNATION (Except Smyrna and Philadelphia)

7. A CAUTION For example: “*Remember... ..or else.*” (2:5)

8. AN EXHORTATION “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*”

“He...” – personal and individual.

“Churches” – the body of believers.

The Method we shall adopt

1. The characteristics of the City – the secular State

2. The Condition of the Church – the Spiritual State

The Principles we shall apply

1. The conditions described belong not to one particular age of church history, but to every age.
2. The contents disclosed compose a first century message to Christians in EVERY century.