

Revelation 1:1-8

Revelation

By Charlie Frederico

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Grace Bible Fellowship
P.O. Box 1164
Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

Website: www.gracebibleidaho.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/gracebiblebf

Well, we are here at Grace Bible Fellowship and we are as most people are, most churches are, we are in the position of attempting to do what is right before God and before man, we are trying to honor the government and we're trying to honor their desire to try to protect its people. We're also, more importantly, trying to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew and Luke, they both are recording Jesus as saying it's not right for Christians to needlessly offend the government or the world, and so we want to honor that by following the recommended guidelines of not holding services, especially for groups of 10 or more until further notice. So if you're tuning in, you're on Facebook with us, Facebook Live, we are beginning a series through the book of Revelation today and the Lord's providence is something I get as a result of trying to catch the wave of the hysteria or be a prophetic voice or anything like that, it is something that we as a church planned to do weeks ago even before the virus was even known, it was in our schedule, and so we take that as the Lord's will and the Lord's promise to us to inform us of how to react in these last days.

If you are joining us for the very first time on Facebook, be aware that we primarily use Facebook at this moment, at this time to record our services. There are multiple services prior to on our feed, you'll see it there of other passages through the book of Luke and Galatians in the evenings, and this is a brand new study starting today and going through the end of the summer, going into fall most likely, and then we'll get back to the book of Luke.

One other adjustment I want to make is on our second service, our evening service, we were planning to continue in the book of Galatians but I made the decision that it would be most profitable, especially given the timeframe that we're in and the information in the book of Revelation, it would be best for us to continue in the evenings as well through the book of Revelation. So essentially in chapter 1 of Revelation, we will cover that today both in the morning service, which is what you're seeing now, and in the evening service which begins at 6 PM Pacific Standard Time.

I also want to say that there is just no better time to explain the end times events and the return of Jesus Christ than right now. I am not here to add some kind of a voice to others, there are definitely more capable men preaching the word of God and explaining things

more than I am, but at the same time I'm not willing to just do a preachy sort of service. I'm not really willing to subject the time that we're in to something so superficial as promoting an agenda that I have or trying to make people feel better because of words of comfort that I have. The only words of comfort that I really have are to remain true to Jesus Christ. For true believers, for those who are truly regenerated by God, for those who are being called by God to believe in him, that is the only thing that I can comfort you with. I can't comfort you with sort of superficial offers of peace or comfort or compassion or mercy. This is not the time for that. This is not the time for having words of comfort and soothing psychological terms of calming down our fears, this is a time for our fears to realize, to become realized; this is a time for our fears to remind us that time is short, life is short, it is a vapor and there is a day when both Christians and non-Christians stand before the throne of God. This is not a time to pretend that the world will go on as it always has, as mockers in the last days will say according to 2 Peter. This is only a time, as any other time, to preach Jesus Christ and to preach him clearly and loudly by every means possible so that the church of Jesus Christ is upheld and the church of Jesus Christ is encouraged and equipped, and the truth of Jesus Christ is made known.

In this time in which we live, in which I find myself, it's a surreal time. It's a difficult time. It's a hard time to raise children. It's a hard time to be married. It's a hard time to watch loved ones even across the planet, people that I know who are in Italy or in Africa, those friends of mine who are concerned and worried even in some portions of the United States. What's going to happen? Where are we headed? Why is this happening? What will happen to America? Is the government becoming a one world government? Is the world funneling towards some sort of end times apocalyptic scenario by this very virus? The book of Revelation answers all of that. It really does. It is the most relevant and up-to-date news article you could ever read. Not only does it explain what's going to happen as if it had already happened but it's going to interpret it for you, why it's happening.

This is, to my knowledge, the greatest level of upheaval that the world has ever seen. There have been wars, there have been tragedies, many of them throughout time, there have been plagues, this is not the first, there are many before us, there have been many wars, very blood wars, there have been holocausts, there have been famines, there have been floods, there have been rumors of wars, but because of the global reach via internet and television and cameras and social media and individual reaching to the ends of the earth literally, this is probably the most incredible plague that has hit the world ever. Technologically, everybody is more aware of these tragedies than ever before in history. This may be what Daniel meant when he said that information will increase, knowledge will increase in the latter times. It may be that. It may be the perpetuation of technology allows us to be aware in real time of deaths that are happening because of the plagues that we've had, because of the virus that we have currently, which is not a new virus by any means.

The concern of the world becomes a worldwide concern via technology and I'm glad for technology because I'm allowed to talk to you right now, I'm allowed to explain the word of God to you right now, and I'm glad that I can do this and I'm glad that I have the

strength and the ability to study the word of God, the revelation of God, and bring this to whoever will listen. I'm really glad I can do this but I want you to know for those who do not know Jesus Christ, for those who do not know the living God, the true and living God, for the mockers, for those who maybe have accidentally tuned into what I'm saying and are laughing at me right now, it needs to be heard that God's people do not wish for anybody's suffering; we're not in a position to wish that our enemies would die and die a miserable death; we are not wishing for anybody to not be able to breathe and to suffocate while standing in place; we're not wishing for anybody's body to decay; we don't want to see people suffering, that's not our intent, that's not our motive, that's not our desire. It's a horrific thought, however, we do not by any means as the church of Jesus Christ, we do not want people to be confused about what's actually happening.

So before we go any further, I want to open in prayer and I want to commit our time to the Lord in prayer so that you will, rather if you will join me in that, I'd appreciate it.

Father, please, I pray that You will be glorified today. I pray that today's teaching from Your word would give You honor and glory. I pray, Father, for my own strength to be able to bring all the information of Revelation 1 down to being understood and being clear. I would ask, Lord, that for Your mercies on those who are suffering right now. We have no desire to see anybody suffering; we have no desire to see anybody failing in their health; we have no desire to see anybody destroyed. We are not interested in the destruction of the wicked or even the righteous in any way, shape or form, but at the same time, Father, I do not and I'm very compelled to say very clearly, I do not want anybody to be ignorant. Much like Paul, Lord, this is no time to be deceived. This is no time for weak pastors to get up and to offer solace and comfort when there is none. These are serious times, very serious, so serious, in fact, that, Lord Jesus, You said when the tower of Siloam fell on those men and they died, You did not offer compassion but rather, Lord, You said in the book of Luke, You said, Luke 13, You said, it is recorded, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." This is not a time to mourn the loss of life, this is a time to warn of the loss of a soul, the one who can kill both body and soul in hell. Fear Him. Give Him glory is the message of the angel in Revelation 14. That is the gospel.

Father, take Your words today, take my words today, take Your truth, take the things that I say that are true and drive them deep in our souls. The things that I may be inaccurate at and maybe have not studied out fully, somehow erase the influence of those things so that only truth is spoken. I pray that there be no distractions, Lord, in the households that are watching; that the word of God would arrest everybody to stop and sit down and listen. I pray this, Father, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The fantastic reality is, as the church of Jesus Christ, we are loved of God. We are directly in the path of his salvation. We are directly in the path of his rescue. We are directly in the path of his care and his protection. His wrath is coming. His wrath is coming and the world cannot escape it. Your money, money cannot remove the wrath of God. Money does not hide the wrath of God. Money is a horrible substitute for God and protection.

There is no reality greater than the return of Jesus Christ. There is nothing greater than that. There's nothing to come that is more horrific if you do not know Jesus Christ, and there's nothing more wonderful for those who do know the Lord Jesus Christ. The focal point of this is repeated in Revelation 19:12-16, "His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." That's where we're headed historically. That's where we're going.

Now I do realize that certainly our church, everybody is at home, much of the church is at home over our nation, even around the world many are at home, some in lock-down, mandatory lock-down. Thankfully you have maybe access through the internet and you can catch a number of services all from the comfort of your home or your office or your bedroom, if you're in quarantine, and I'm really glad that you can do that. There are also some more belligerent pastors who are calling for the church to see the CDC's guidelines of quarantine and lock-down or even just recommendations for separation as a personal religious attack, and even persecution. They're calling for the church to continue a symbol and show some sort of defiance of their imagined persecution and, of course, they always bring the New Testament instructions of the commands and instructions to assemble in. However, the more mature and more loving and more appropriate way to understand all this is that we should not offend the world, we should never give the world a cause for accusation against Christ or against us, and so it is best and it is right for us as Christians to support our government and their desire to do their job, which is to protect its citizens, and to follow the guidelines and submit to them with joy in Christ. Why wouldn't you? This isn't persecution, this is protection.

However, persecution in the end times is very real but this is not that. Of course, we're in the end times. Nobody can dispute that. That happened when Jesus Christ left his first presence, his first appearance and his death and burial and resurrection. That began the end times, the church age, and the end times will end when he returns and the final age will begin. But more importantly than any of that, more importantly than the church's argumentation which is going to happen, it's going to happen, the church argues about everything, what's more real and pertinent than all the bantering about whether a church should gather, whether it should defy the government or whether it should fight or resist or whatever sort of self-imposed wisdom they want to show, or whether it should submit and sheepishly go along with the guidelines of the CDC and the President of the United States or other countries and be submissive and all that, more important than all that bantering that's going to happen, it's happening already, is this and mark this down: Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth and each day that passes, his return is closer than ever. Let me say this again: Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth and each day that passes, his return is closer than ever before.

My question is: does it matter? Does it matter when he returns? Will it matter? Does it matter about his return? His coming back again to the earth, does it matter to you right now? Does it matter to me right now? Does it matter to the world right now in the face of such misery and death tolls? Every hour thousands are dying around the world, that is not an understatement.

Well, think about it in this way. Let me separate the thoughts into two different categories. 1. For the church. Here are the instructions for the church. 1. In the face of any calamity, in the face of any misery, in the face of any challenge or trial, and in the face of successful living in peace time, we are called to faithfully carry out Jesus' preaching to the world. In Matthew 24:14 it says, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." That's what we're supposed to be doing. The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations and then the end will come, Matthew 24:14.

Secondly, we, as the church, we are called to faithfully look for him believing all that he has said about himself. We are called to faithfully look for him, waiting for him, longing for his return, believing all that he said about himself. Luke 18:8, "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes," Jesus says, "will He find faith on the earth?" That's very different in the context from the silos of grain and the nice homes. He is saying here in the context, more valuable than anything in the world is are you waiting for him expectantly in faith? Do you believe in his return?

Thirdly, we are called to endure persecution for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ. Luke 21:12-19, listen to this, "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls," Luke 21:12-19.

And finally, very clear command about the meantime. We are called to live our lives in this world free from the worries of life in this world. We are commanded to let go of our money, we are commanded to let go of our possessions, we are commanded to let go of our comforts, we are commanded to let go of our dreams and our plans for the future, and we are commanded to let go of our very own souls and to give all of it into the care of God. I don't understand Christians who don't want to do this. I don't understand Christians who are ashamed to let go of their plans for the future. I don't understand the fear of people who say they are Christians who are afraid to rest themselves in the hands of God when he commands us to let it all go.

Beloved, if you hang onto the things that you love and you know the things you love because if you could imagine them being ripped from you, how you would feel, that will tell you what you love. If you can't imagine life without your car, if you can't imagine life without your marriage, if you can't imagine life without your money or your health, if you're afraid of some sort of a tumor on your lung, or if you're afraid of some cancer, or if you're afraid of dying itself, Jesus says if you hold onto your life, you will lose it. Rather, we are called instead of holding on and hoarding our lives, we are called to let them go and to be under the care of God so that we can be free to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ to this world before the end comes. We are to be on guard, Jesus says, praying so that our hearts are not blind to his coming.

Luke 21:34-36, he says, "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation," that is being filled up with life or any extravagance, "so that your heart will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth." Jesus says, "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and," here it is, "to stand before the Son of Man."

For Christians, that's what we're about. We are called to faithfully carry out the preaching of the word of God to the world. We are called to faithfully look for him, believing that he's about to come at any moment. We are called to endure persecution for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ. And we are called to live our lives free from worry of life in this world. You can't preach Christ and hold on to your possessions at the same time.

Now the instructions to the world are very clear. It's really simple, in fact, there's only one. It's the same thing that Jesus said when he first came. The world really only has one responsibility, only one. It's the same responsibility that Jesus first announced to Israel when he came in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and it's this: repent from your sins and love God. You can't hold onto your sins and love God at the same time, and you can't love God and hold onto sins at the same time. Your love for God will distance you from your sins. Your love for sins will distance you from your God, and they have.

I hope there are a lot of unbelievers watching right now. I hope my family is watching, my relatives. I hope people that know me and have known me, or maybe my own family, my wife and my children, and maybe don't know Christ. I hope you're watching. You're commanded to repent and to love God more than you love your soul.

Listen to Acts 17, it says, an extended quote here, "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said,

'For we also are His children.' Being then the children of God," Paul says, "we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

So now the church and the world together are facing a plague, a virus. It has not taken the lives of past plagues, in fact, very short of that, but it's a virus nonetheless and it is taking lives. It's a really interesting virus, by the way. As of 7:43 AM this morning Pacific Standard Time, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Tracker, there were at that time 316,000 confirmed cases worldwide. To date, as of that time of the morning, 7:43 AM, 94,175 cases have recovered, fully recovered. However, at that same time, 13,592 have died from this virus as of this morning. It's a very interesting study. The virus looks like a little ball and it has all these spikes coming out all the way around, and hence the name coronavirus, spike or crown virus, and what it does is it gets into the cellular level and attaches and starts to dissolve the cell lining and go inside and pull out information from your RNA and replicates itself in order to do harm, to kill your cells primarily in the respiratory system, and if it can take your life and suffocate you, it will.

So it is a deadly virus and it is no time for Christians to treat it any other way. Therefore I believe if there ever was a time of the need to know and understand the last book of the New Testament, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, it is now. It is now. To the degree that we understand this book and listen to its teaching, and to the degree that we preach Jesus Christ until he returns in the sky, snatching up the church and seven years later coming back to judge the world, it is to that degree that Jesus will find faith on the earth when he comes.

Now for those who are watching who are familiar with the issues surrounding the book of Revelation, let me address them so you know how I'm approaching this. Let me give you some interpretive guidelines, the ones that I will follow. Many will argue about particulars in the book of Revelation, they have been arguing about this book since the day it was written, I think, in the late 90s AD, but I'm convinced, and this may offend some, but I am absolutely convinced that their argumentation about the book of Revelation is due in every point because of their ignorance of the book of Revelation. There's just something weighty about the argumentation of a fool. It's heavy. It's like concrete. It's like a bag of sand, it weighs you down because you know they don't really know what they're saying. Those who argue, and reject based on that argument, the certain particulars of the book of Revelation are ignorant of its very content.

Although this book is difficult, it's not like it's a cakewalk to pull together all the details because there's a lot of work and it's very tiring, however, it is written in the most simple of New Testament Greek. It is amazing how simple it is. I have been studying and interpreting and translating the book of Luke for months now and Luke is very complex; he uses words that only Luke uses and it's a very complex arrangement, a very refined, high literature level. You come to the book of Revelation, as I did these last few weeks

and especially this last week, and I come in there and I'm refreshed at how easy the Greek there is to interpret and to translate. It's simple, if I may say. It's not hard to do a translation of the book of Revelation, I did the whole chapter in one sitting. It's not hard and the interpretation is not hard. It practically tells you. It takes you by the hand and walks you through the entire book and you know point by point exactly what it's saying.

So the question then is: why are there so many people confused? I'll tell you what I think is the reason, because of the ignorance of men, because of the love of philosophy, because of the pride that comes from being accepted in the academy, whatever academy it is. Men will twist this book. They will deny its very clear teaching to a very large degree, an unacceptable degree and instead of being applauded by God, their own ignorance is on display. The result of that is a hopeless church, a church that has no hope. It doesn't understand. It doesn't know what's coming. It cannot interpret the times nor the future and as a result of all that, you have or maybe you're even the source of all of that, is a confused pastorate. Pastors are afraid to handle the book of Revelation and so they invite speakers to come in and teach it for them because they're convinced that the book of Revelation is impossible to understand. So I have as my personal goal to correct all of that. I have to do my part for that. I want to do my part. I'm very serious about that. So I will do my best.

So let's talk about hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the rules of the proper exegesis, the rules of interpretation of the biblical text, and there really is only one rule for biblical hermeneutics and this summarizes everything. It's very simple: interpret the Scripture in the manner it was written. Interpret the Scripture in the manner it was written. It was written in language, number 1: grammar; syntax; letters; words; organization; context. You examine every word in its context. You examine every word as it's being used by the author, not as it's gonna be used 200-300-400 years later.

Secondly, you look at the history surrounding the author, the history surrounding the audience, the history surrounding the language, the historic condition of the writer and the audience, and in the historic condition of the content as well, especially in the prophetic literature. If you do that, historical, grammatical language interpretation, rather, the book of Revelation will open up to you and it will teach you. At that point, Scripture becomes our teacher and we are its student versus us telling the Scripture what to say and somehow look educated and erudite in front of more ignorant people who are unwilling to read it for themselves.

I'll just say it again: language and history, that's how the book was written and that is the way we interpret it. If I wrote a letter to my wife and I had her interpret it the way some so-called exegetes interpret the book of Revelation, she would absolutely be hopeless as to understanding what I was saying. Why do we treat the Scripture that way? We should never do such a thing.

Dr. Thomas wrote, quote, "Because in broad perspective the Apocalypse is prophetic in nature as is the rest of the New Testament, a difference set of hermeneutical principles is not needed to interpret it. A normal, grammatical, historical methodology is the natural

necessary interpretive framework." Further, "A literal interpretation is required and does not forfeit the use of symbolic language. Let me say that again: a literal interpretation is required and does not forfeit the use of symbolic language. I write that because I want you to understand the normal catch-all, the normal pit that we all fall into is the book of Revelation is hopelessly symbolic. No, not at all. Literal interpretation is required and does not forfeit the use of symbolic language. In fact, only literal interpretation is able to identify symbolic language where it is legitimately found." Listen to this quote, "Literal interpretation sees a distinction between symbols and symbolic or figurative language." Again from Dr. Thomas who is now with the Lord. Let me read that again, "Literal interpretation sees a distinction between symbols and symbolic or figurative language."

In other words, there's a very big difference. When I speak of one of my children in symbolic poetic language, it's a very big difference then for the people that hear me say that think that my child is just a symbol of something. We should never approach the Scripture symbolically. We should never approach the Scripture as if it is figurative. Although it uses symbols, it tells you where. Although it uses figurative language, it tells you where and it's percentage-wise a very low percentage of the entire book of the book of Revelation.

So what does it matter? What does it matter to study this book? Well, I have some thoughts on that too. In short, it matters to study the book of Revelation not so much by what it means to us. We don't study the book of Revelation because of what it means to us, rather we study the book of Revelation because of what it teaches us about Jesus Christ. Think about this: no other religious leader claims resurrection from the dead. No other religious leader claims divine nature of holding the universe by a word. No other religious leader claims a bodily return with innumerable numbers of saints and angels. No other religious leader claims that the world was created for him or by him. Those are all claims of Jesus Christ and his followers. Isn't that amazing? So it does matter because he has given us a record of what that return will look like. He has given us a record of what the earth will be like then whenever that might be, and we would do well to pay very close attention. Very close attention.

So now I'd like to turn to the book of Revelation 1. That's all just introductory matter. We will finish our hour here in half of the book of Revelation 1, and then this evening at 6 PM Pacific Standard Time, we will finish the other half of chapter 1.

Let me read verses 1 through 8 in Revelation 1. This is out of the New American Standard Bible.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 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. 4 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, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood-- 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 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. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Wow. That sets the tone, doesn't it? That sets the tone for the rest of the book.

Let's just look at this very carefully in the few minutes we have remaining. Look at verse 1 again. The very first word in the Greek text is "Revelation, Apocalypsus." It is a word that means "an unveiling." The curtain is pulled back and what is behind the curtain is now on full display. So what you have here is the process of that unveiling. What is it going to look like when Jesus Christ is visibly seen by all the earth, as it says at the end of that section I just read. It says, "Behold, He is coming and every eye will see Him," that's the unveiling, that's the unraveling of everything so that everything is prepared for his presence on his planet. What will it be like? That's the book of Revelation. It's in the emphatic position. In the Greek it's the first word and, therefore, I believe the most important aspect of the entire book of Revelation.

Mark Wilson wrote an essay that I found very interesting. I haven't finished it but one part that he does write is very fascinating about the book of Revelation. He says that, quote, "Christopher Lim," another scholar, "examined whether this assertion could be proven by doing a word count." Now the assertion he's talking about there is what is the central point of the book, and Mark Wilson says that the central point of the book is chapter 12 of the book of Revelation. Now listen, "Christopher Lim examined whether this assertion could be proven by doing a word count, counting the words in the New Testament Greek." He says, "Using the 2010 edition of the SBL Greek New Testament, he calculated that Revelation 1-11 had 4,658 words. Revelation 12 had 437 words, and Revelation 13-22 had 4,722 words. Revelation's exact middle point is the phrase," and he quotes it in Greek and it's in Revelation 12, he says, "After making this study, Lim observes that I was," and he quotes Lim here, "I was quite convinced by your assertion," speaking to Mark Wilson, "that Revelation 12 is, indeed, the heart of John's vision."

Central portion according to the statistical study of the book of Revelation by word count is this, Revelation 12:10-12, "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to

the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, beloved, means this: the salvation of God has come; the power of God has come; the kingdom of God has come; the authority of the Messiah has come; and the destruction of the devil has come. The coming of Christ hits at the very heart of all that creates the reality of every person in the world. Who has salvation? Who delivers? Power, money, government? Your own ability? Your education? Who has power? Who has power to do things in life? Whose kingdom is it anyway? Where's the authority come from? All of this is wrapped up in the very presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, for him, and to him, and through him are all things. The world cries for salvation, it vies for power, and is trying to build a kingdom and is under the dominion of Satan, and it rejects the authority of Messiah in everything it does. It legislates this to the level of virtue. When he is unveiled, beloved, when he is unveiled the reality of the futility of all these things will become true. They're futile. Futile. If you are not prepared for that very moment which is irreversible, and out of your control, and no one can stop it, then you will be judged by this same Jesus Christ and he will cast you into the eternal lake of fire forever, and on your way there, you will curse God because that is what you do now if you don't repent. His kingdom is coming for it was given to him by the Father. That is the Apocalypse. That is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Back to chapter 1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants," that's the word "slave." It's wonderful. The church is a steward of this information. Listen to Ephesians 2, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 3:8-12, "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in," Christ or, "in Him."

God is showing the Revelation of Jesus Christ not to the world, he is showing this to his servants, the saints, and these things must soon take place. "The time is near," at the end of verse 3. These things are gonna happen. Why live our lives as if they're not going to happen? That's sheer idiocy. You prepare for your retirement, you prepare for contingencies of life, you probably even have a spare tire in your car just in case, but you won't prepare for the inevitable which has eternal consequence? That's insane.

It says that these things must soon take place and he testified these things and communicated it to John by his angel, and we'll meet this angel two or three times throughout the book of Revelation and we'll see who this is. And he, our God, takes the

information in vision form and by vision communicates it supernaturally to John by his angel so that he would then, verse 2, "testify to the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ," it says in verse 2, "even to all that he saw." Now that verb "see," or at the end of verse 2, "saw," past time, that particular word occurs 56 times in the book of Revelation. It is the Greek verb "horao." It means "to look or to look at something." It is very often referring to perception, understanding. One writer years ago in Greek context, Greek culture says "to see, horao is to take part in life itself." It's the very part of life. It's perception such that it can even be replaced for other perceptions of the senses. For example, horao can even be used as a synonym for the verb that means "to hear, akouo; to take note; to see to; to be on guard about; to watch carefully." So that verb horao is what he uses at the end here, verse 2, "even to all that he horao," everything he saw and put into place, and everything he perceived and took in perceptually.

Then there's another verb that's used 13 times for the word "to see," another Greek word "blepo" and it means "to see," and has, quote, "a stronger emphasis on the function of the eye than horao." Horao means "to look with understanding; to perceive and to carefully calculate and think through." Blepo means to, it's the ocular ability to go through the senses and actually functionally work in the eyes. Thirteen times that's used. The central aspect is what blepo refers to more than the other word, horao.

So we hear John as saying that he is going to testify of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus even to all that he understood, even to all that he perceived, even to all that he even heard. The entire experience is going to be written down. There's even one point in the book of Revelation, he's about to write something and the angel says, "No, seal it up. Don't write it."

And in verse 3, "Blessed is he," it says, "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." That verse is huge. Blessed. Now fear is a blessed thing. It's fear that keeps you from walking in the middle of the road during rush hour. It's fear that keeps you away from poison on the shelf. It's fear that keeps you out of harm's way and fear is a friend, in that sense.

When you read the book of Revelation, you're gripped with fear but here it says blessed. Blessed. And notice what it says, "Blessed is he who reads." Literally, "Blessed is the one who reads and then blessed is the one, is those who hear." This assumes that there's going to be somebody reading and somebody listening to this book. There is the man reading, singular. The man reading. I take it to be the messenger of chapters 2 and 3, the pastor, the elder, the preaching/teaching elder in these seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. He is the one who is going to read this apocalyptic prophetic literature, this prophesy, it's called, and those who hear from his reading much like what I'm doing right now where I am testifying, I am explaining, I am one man doing this, but there are multiple people listening. That's the idea, and if you're paying attention and you're not fiddling with things, and if you're not playing with your computer or reading the headlines of CNN while you're listening to me at the same time, which I hope you're not, it says blessed are you. Blessed are you for the things that are written in it and the time is near.

Then very quickly, our time is about gone and I'm not so worried since we don't have people sitting here who might be uncomfortable or maybe have some physical needs that they need to take care of. A lot of times I'll preach for about an hour but I don't mind going over since we have that luxury technologically. I do want to get down to verse 8.

It says going on, "John." Thus begins the formal prologue to, or the introduction rather to the book of Revelation. "John." This is the same John that it says at the end of verse 1 that God "communicated by His angel to his slave John." This is the same John, John who has historically spent more time in Asia than anybody else.

It says, "to the seven churches that are in Asia." I always wondered why didn't he write to the church in Jerusalem? Why didn't he write to the church in Antioch? Or why didn't he write to the collective churches of Paul? Rome. Galatia. Philippi. Macedonia. Why to Asia? I don't know. I do know the first mention of Asia in the New Testament is Acts 2:9, and there are Jews who came to the Passover from Asia. But to really get a feel for the spiritual condition of Asia, I want you to listen to two passages sort of comparatively. 1 Corinthians 16:19-20, and then 2 Timothy which I'll read in a moment.

1 Corinthians 16:19-20, "The churches of Asia greet you." That's writing to the Corinthians. "Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss." That's a wonderful passage. The churches of Asia greet you. But then you get to 2 Timothy which was written many years later, the last book Paul wrote, writing to Timothy who was ministering in Asia. He says in verse 15, 2 Timothy 1:15, "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." That's kind of the position of the Asian church. "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." It would be about another 25 years later that the book of Revelation after 2 Timothy was written.

Notice the origin of the prophecy. It says, "Grace to you and peace, from," do you see the preposition? "From," number 1, "Him who is and who was and who is to come," that is speaking of the Father. He is the source of all revelation, by the way. God the Father is the source of all revelation. "From Him who is and [Him] who was and [Him] who is to come."

Secondly, conjunction, "and from," it says, "the seven Spirits who are before His throne," His referring to the Father. This is referring to the Holy Spirit, the sevenfold, the seven Spirits. And if you have a problem with that, then understand that God is three-in-one. It's not hard although impossible to just take it at face value that the Spirit of God is seven-in-one, and we'll look at that more as we see that ministry unfolding from the Old Testament as well.

"Before His throne," and then lastly, thirdly, "and from Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ. The very one about whom this Revelation is made, verse 1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." This is not the Revelation of Mohammad. This is not the Revelation of Hare Krishna. This is not the Revelation of any shaman anywhere. This is not the Revelation of

Brigham Young or Joseph Smith or Mary Baker Eddy. This is not the Revelation of any other man, or woman, or angel, or spirit. This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ and it is from him that this book comes as well.

Notice these descriptions and this will take us through the end of this section. Jesus Christ, it says, "the faithful witness." Paul says that Jesus was faithful to witness before Pontius Pilate a good confession. Faithful witness. He never wavered. We waver, he never wavered.

"The firstborn of the dead." The firstborn. He is the preeminent one of all those who will be raised from the dead.

"And the ruler of the kings of the earth." He is right now the ruler of all the kings of the earth. He rules the rulers. That's why it'll say later on that he is the King of kings. He is the head of all heads of the earth. Every President, every dictator, every monarch, every Congress, every Senate, everyone everywhere is under the headship of Jesus Christ, believer or unbeliever. He rules them all. They do his bidding. Every vote that is cast is a vote from Jesus Christ, Romans 13 says.

He is "the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us," he favors us, "and released us from our sins by His blood-- and He has made us to be a kingdom," he made us to be a kingdom, "priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." Jesus Christ deserves all glory and honor and dominion forever and ever, and in 1 Corinthians 15:26, he will take that dominion, he will absorb all that worship, and then he will turn around after all enemies have been destroyed, he will turn around and take you and I, his kingdom, and he will turn and offer us back to the Father. He deserves all glory and honor and dominion because he will honor the Father forever because he loves the Father.

This doxology in verses 7 and 8 continues, comes to a crescendo, and I'll close. "Behold." Wow. "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him." I personally don't believe that we will need internet or satellite television to see him. He will unravel all that is naturally held together by the power of God in creation so that the entire world will see Jesus Christ at one time, even all the way around the world. And we know from the book of Revelation, which I will show to you, that Jesus Christ will return to this earth on the Mount of Olives and he will walk through the Eastern Gate of Jerusalem, his city, and every eye will watch that happen.

They will see him, even the Jews will see him. It says, "even those who pierced Him," the Jews, "and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." And so it is to be. Every person on this planet knows that Jesus Christ is God. Some hate it, some love it. The people that I know in my very own circle of relatives who reject Jesus Christ, they know for a fact that he is God and deserves to be worshiped, they just don't like it. Every unbeliever I've ever worked with, every unbeliever I've ever known, that day they will scream and cry and mourn when he comes to the earth and all their fears are known.

And the preaching that you're hearing right now will be vindicated on that day, by the way. And so it is to be, it says. It will happen. Amen.

Finally it says, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" God, the Lord God, I take it to be the Father, he is the Alpha and the Omega, both ends of the Greek alphabet, the Alpha the beginning, and the Omega the end. Everything is from him, and to him, and through him, both through the Father and the Son and the Spirit. God the Father is the one who initiated the entire plan according to Psalm 2:5-7, and God will be the one who in the end is honored so that he is all-in-all, according to 1 Corinthians 15:26 and following. He is who is. He is who was. He is the one who is to come. The Father, according to Revelation 20-21, the Father himself will come and dwell on the new earth. He is the Almighty. You'd be a fool to work against him.

This is the book of Revelation, beloved. This is the book of Revelation. This is what needs to be said here. We don't need platitudes. We don't need preachy preachers. The world does not need to be calmed down, it needs to be worked up. You think a virus is bad, wait until Jesus comes and spreads his law. This is the book of Revelation and it is as clear as it could be.

So I hope you'll join us. I hope that you have felt something of the anticipation of the coming of Christ because that's really what the book is funneling your attention to. Remember the central point of Revelation 12:10-12, that the dominion and the power and the glory is to come and Jesus will come and reign, and the devil will be kicked out and he'll be destroyed forever, and the false prophet and the beast and every messenger of Satan will be destroyed. And if you do not know Jesus Christ, if you don't know him as he's revealed in Scripture, you must know him immediately, today, right this second. You need to stop your sinning and love God and repent and follow Jesus Christ.

Let me close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, I'm a little out of my element preaching to a camera but Your words are never out of element. Your words are true. They are faithful and altogether right. Every man is a liar and You are the truth-teller. Thank You, Father, for this word. Thank You for this word of Your Bible and the book of Revelation so we can know it. Thank You for the privilege that I have to study it. And now, Father, as we turn off the camera and Your word will penetrate the hearts and lives of whomever You have sovereignly decreed should hear it, I pray that we would go back to our families and our lives and fear You and give You glory. I commit this to You, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you.