

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

1 - The Introduction #469

Now let's get quiet for the message this morning, the first message on the book of Revelation. If you'll open your Bibles, at the first chapter, verse 1, of the book of Revelation, the last book in your Bible. We begin today, as we said, a series of Bible studies on the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, the one book of the Bible that is probably less read than all other books of the 66 that compose the canon of the Scriptures. This book seems to be and is a sealed book to the average church member today, including the average preacher. I've talked with thousands across the nation regarding this book, and so many turn it aside, lightly saying, no one can understand it, and yet the book opens with these words, get it now, **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.**

How could the book of Revelation be a blessing to, or the individual be blessed, in reading this book, or hearing this book read, or by keeping the truths revealed in this book, if the book of Revelation was a sealed book?

Now let me call your attention, my friends, first to the title of this book, as set forth in Revelation 1.1, **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**. Now, hold your seat now. This is the key that unlocks the entire book. It is not the revelations, plural, of Jesus Christ, but revelation, singular. It is not a revelation, but The Revelation. It is not the mystery of Jesus Christ, but **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**. This book is not a puzzle book, but a revelation. The word revelation means to reveal, make manifest, uncover the view. Then the book of Revelation must be, therefore, a disclosure or a revealment, an appearing or manifestation of Jesus Christ. This book was not written to confuse or drive a person insane. but to make him wise unto salvation, 2 Timothy 3:15.

It is revelation, not mystification. It is the book of which Christ is the great subject and center. It is not primarily a revelation of coming events, of judgment upon the wicked, but the appearing of the Lord himself. It is a book of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in his own person, his offices, and his future administration, as when he shall be seen coming from heaven, as the disciples on Mount Olivet once

saw him go into heaven. Let me emphasize emphatically, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed and uncovered to mortal view.

It is not Christ revealing or making known hidden things, but it is the revelation of Christ himself to mortal man as our Lord and our Redeemer. It is the consummation of Jehovah Jesus of Genesis, and paradise regained in Christ. The title of the book is the key that unlocks the entire book.

Personally, I think it is one of the easiest books of the entire Bible to understand because it is the unveiling of my Lord. Now you hold that. Oh, I like to read it and delve into it and meditate upon it and sit there and see my Lord revealed through the pages of that book.

Let us first notice the theme of the book, which is Jesus Christ. He is presented in a threefold way, Revelation 1.4, **him which is, and which was, and which is to come**. This signifies the time element of the book. It is all summed up in Christ, who he is, from everlasting to everlasting.

First, he is presented in his relationship to the churches, first three chapters.

Second, he is presented in his relationship to the tribulation period, chapter 4 through 19. And he is presented in his relationship to the kingdom and his rule upon the earth and the consummation of the ages, chapter 20, 21, 22. Now, let us look briefly at Christ in the revelation from this angle, keeping in mind the title of the book, that it is not a message he is communicating to his people, but it is the coming, appearing, manifestation, uncovering, and presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ in person. We see him as the risen, glorified Son of God, walking among the churches, in the first three chapters. He is the Lamb slain in heaven, vested with all authority to carry out the judgment upon men during the tribulation period before he takes up his personal reign on earth. This covers chapter 4 through 19.

Third, we see him as he comes to earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the great day of his wrath and judgment upon the Antichrist. Revelation 19: 11-21.

Fourth, we see Christ reigning on this earth with His glorified saints as King over all the earth. Revelation 21:6.

Fifth, then we behold the Lord Jesus Christ as Judge upon the great white throne in the midst of holiness, righteousness, and truth as Deity of very Deity.

Revelation 20: 11-15.

Then we see him as the Lamb, upon the throne of God and of the Lamb, Revelation 21, 22.

Then seventh, at the close of the 22nd chapter, we behold him as the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Let us all fall at his feet crying, my Lord and my God. He is your Lord, and you're going to fall at His feet, whether here or at the Great White Throne Judgment.

My friends, any way we look at this book that we call Revelation, we see the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the key to the book, and if we will read it with this in view, our hearts will be lifted and raptured by the Holy Spirit of God. Yes, it sets forth the personal coming of our Lord from his present invisible position as our high priest, as our surety of the covenant, and as our mediator to receive his bride, judge the wicked, and set up his kingdom on this earth.

Now, let's pause just a moment and compare the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, with Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In Genesis, we have a beginning of things. In Revelation, the consummation. Genesis gives us the story of the creation of the heavens and the earth, while Revelation presents to our view the new heavens and the new earth, wherein there is no sin. Genesis presents the earthly paradise with the tree of life and the river of blessing, which was lost through sin. Revelation gives us the picture of paradise regained through the atoning blood of the Son of God poured out on Calvary's tree.

In Genesis, we have set forth the first man and his wife, and we see them as they rule over all of God's creation. As we pass to the book of Revelation, we behold the second man, the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, and his redeemed bride, ruling over a redeemed world, and Christ is all in all.

In Genesis, we have set forth the slain lamb as a type of Christ. In Revelation, we behold the lamb, once slain, risen and glorified in the midst of the throne of God. In Genesis, we first behold Satan as he leads man astray. There we see the beginning of sin and the trail of the old serpent which winds his way through all

the centuries, blasting, damning, and destroying. But thanks be unto God in Revelation, we see that old serpent called devil and Satan is cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, for complete victory over every evil in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Genesis, man begins to taste of the bitter fruits of sin, which is sorrow, pain, tears, and death. In Revelation, we see God wiping away all tears from their eyes and bringing his redeemed into the city of God, where there is no sin, nor death, nor pain, nor sorrow, nor anything that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but where Christ is all in all, where he is the light of the city and the temple thereof.

Genesis closes with a coffin in Egypt, Joseph's bones. Revelation closes in complete victory, the consummation of all things in Christ. That's why the Father gave us the book of Revelation, to let us see that there is no defeat in Christ, nothing but sure victory. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. We are more than brethren.

Brethren! Get this one truth, how that all of our labors then are not in vain in the Lord. And then I want you to notice this. Now you listen. Just look at the author of the book. There is something strangely peculiar about the authorship of Revelation that I want to call your attention to before we go any further.

Let's read that first verse, **The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him (that is, God gave to Christ) to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.** And he sent and signified it by his angel, the word angel means messenger, unto his servant John.

Without the shadow of a doubt, we know that the apostle John is the writer of the book of Revelation, because verse 11 says, What thou seest, write in a book. But in the strictest sense of the word, get it now, get it, hold it, in the strictest sense of the word, John could not be called the author of the book. Now then, who is the author? The author of the book of Revelation is no one but the Lord Jesus Christ himself. God gave what is written in this book to the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus gave it to his angel, the messenger, and the angel, his messenger, came and presented it unto John, and John wrote it down. You say, how do you know that Jesus Christ is the author of the book? In Revelation 22:16, the Lord Jesus fixed his signature to the book in these words, I want you to get it. Revelation 22:16, **"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel or messenger to testify unto you these**

things in the churches”. Now my friends, the Lord Jesus Christ himself is the author of the book. He dictated that book of Revelation. And John wrote it down. And at the close, Jesus fixed his signature. I, Jesus. Just like any other official would do today. That's the reason, now you get this, that's the reason the style of the book of Revelation differs very much from the other writings of the apostle John. And it has puzzled commentators throughout the years. Why there's such a difference?

And many critics have rejected John as the author of the book because of the different style and every way in which it was written. And it's puzzled commentators, and they fail to see that Jesus said, I, Jesus, have dictated this book. All right? And once you see that the book of Revelation differs from all other books and is far above them in many respects, which reveals its divine authorship.

I, Jesus, have sent mine angel (messenger) to testify unto you these things in the churches. Here he affixes his signature at the close of the book. Who this angel was, the scripture does not say. But listen, turn to Revelation 22:8 and 9. We find these words which throw some light upon it. Listen, Revelation 22: 8, 9. **And I, John, saw these things, and heard them. And when I heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God.**

We see here that the angel is called thy fellow servant, and he is called thy brethren the prophets, which signifies that he was at least a special messenger sent from heaven, because the word angel means messenger, and could have been one of the old prophets raised up for that purpose. And I would venture to suggest that that old prophet was Daniel. Why? I'll give you that for food for thought, because of the close connection between the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, God told Daniel to seal his book until the time of the end, and Revelation is a prophetic book with the seals open at the time of the end, or at the end time, or the time of the end. And my own personal conviction, and I have no scripture to prove it, I give you that for food for thought, that one of the old prophets, and no doubt was the prophet Daniel.

Listen, now we come to the division of the book, wherein also lies another key that will help us understand the contents of this book. You'll find it in Revelation 1:19. Let's read it. **Write the things which thou hast seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter**, or after these things. Things which thou hast seen are found in chapter 1, which sets forth the vision of Christ in glory walking amid the churches. Then the things which are, take in chapters 2 and 3, the letters that Christ dictated to John to be sent to the seven churches in Asia. Then the things which shall be hereafter or the things which shall take place shortly after these things, referring to that which follows the church age. This comprises the fourth chapter through the remainder of the book.

The book opens with a blessing, closes with a curse. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book. So, God blesses those who read or hear and curses those who add to or take from the prophecy of this book. God pity the individual who will add to or take from this book. I guess that's one reason Satan scared many people off from it, because I'm afraid to add to or take from it.

Now let's notice the outline of the book is built around the number 7.

7 churches, 7 sealed books, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, the 7 signs of personages, the 7 last plagues, the 7 dooms, the 7 new things.

The number 7 symbolizes perfection or consummation. Read the book of Revelation prayerfully with these thoughts in view this week, will you? It's built around number 7.

Now to whom is the book written? Now we face the question, to whom did the Lord Jesus Christ address this great prophetic book? Let's read Revelation 1:1. Listen, **The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.** And he said it and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. I've often stood amazed in the presence of pastors and laymen because they do not understand this book. So many take this attitude, "I don't know anything about the book of Revelation. My folks don't

know anything about the book of Revelation. Nobody can know anything about the book of Revelation. Therefore, I leave it alone.”

I believe the answer is found in this first verse we have just read to you, because we see to whom Christ wrote this book, **unto his servants**. Servant means bond slaves of Jesus Christ. Are you a bond slave of Christ? To be a bond slave of Jesus Christ, you must first be his disciple. To be his disciple, you must be born again, made a new creature in Christ. To be born again, you must first be awakened by the Holy Spirit to your lost condition, and as a lost sinner, be brought to Christ, realizing that Christ died for you and paid your sin debt in full. This becomes experimental to your heart. You come to know Christ as your salvation. You recognize that the price was paid for you in the death of the Son of God on the cross. You recognize the Holy Spirit indwells you, that you are not your own. You belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who bought you. In appreciation and love for such redemption in Christ, you sell out to him, voluntarily become his bond slave. And as a bond slave, you are taught of the Lord because you have no will of your own.

Therefore, this book was written to the bond slaves of Christ, and only the bond slaves of Christ can understand it. Are you a child of the living God? Do you know Him as your Lord and Savior? If you do, this book was written to you, my friend. You do not have to know history to understand it. I've had many preachers say, “Oh Pastor, I'm sick, I don't know anything about history”. You don't have to know history to understand the book of Revelation, because you don't have to go to history to interpret the Bible. The Bible is its own interpreter by the Holy Spirit. You don't have to have any man to interpret the Bible to you. I'm literally amazed at people who are saved across this nation, as I visit them, and see how the Lord has taught them by the Holy Spirit. You let that soak in.

This book was written by the Lord Jesus Christ to comfort, encourage and inspire and lift up the heads of His people in victory because our Lord lives and moves and reigns and is supreme and He's coming again in all of His glory and majesty and honor and blessing and power. My friends, I believe it's timely that the Lord's laid on our hearts to bring you these studies. So, you folks who have been contending, especially you preachers, saying you can't understand the book of Revelation, go examine your Christian experience in the light of that first verse. There's a blessing pronounced upon those who read it and hear it and keep it.

There is a woe and a judgment pronounced upon those who add to it or take from it. And how can you add to it and take from it if you don't understand it? How can it be a blessing to you if you don't understand it? That's right.

Let me give you a running summary of the book of Revelation with what time we have left, showing you that it is the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the first chapter, we behold him coming forth with clouds, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, that he has loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. We also behold him walking amidst the churches, clothed with a garment down to the foot, girded about the breast with a golden girdle, with flaming eyes afar with the keys of death and hell, buckled at his side, saying, I'm he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I'm alive for evermore. That's our Lord.

In the second and third chapters, we behold the Lord Jesus as the judge-priest as he lives among them, judges the churches, and sees them with an all-seeing eye. Would that every one of us lived in the consciousness of the fact that we are under the all-seeing eye of the Lord Jesus Christ moment by moment, day and night.

Then, in the fourth chapter we behold him in the rapture, coming for his bride. In the fifth chapter we see him as the lamb that has been slain, claiming the title deed to the world which he hath redeemed with his own precious blood.

In the sixth chapter we behold him as the lamb of wrath angry because of sin, sitting in judgment on a Christ-rejecting world. Woe be to the individual who thinks only of Christ as a lowly Nazarene. He is the God of love, yet he is at the same time the God of wrath. For the great day of his wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?

In the seventh chapter we behold him redeeming a multitude which no man can number, calling out from the four corners of the earth. Praise the Lord for his redeeming grace. All the powers of Satan, earth and sea, cannot keep God from calling out and delivering his elect and preparing them for heaven. From the 8th chapter on through the 18th chapter, we find him meting out judgment after judgment upon the forces from hell and those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ. We also see him sitting in judgment upon apostate Christianity, which includes the uniting of Romanism with all Protestantism and the idolatrous worshipers of the entire earth.

At the opening of the 19th chapter, we see the blood-bought redeemed of heaven crying, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Hallelujah! Then beginning with the 7th verse of the 19th chapter, we see him as he comes forth, not as a high priest now, but decked in the garment of the bridegroom, walking down the corridors of the new heaven with all the nail scars of his body, with his beautiful redeemed bride, which he has redeemed with his own blood, and presented spotless to himself. I'll be there, will you?

In Revelation 19:11, we behold him upon a great white stallion as the warlord, leading the armies of heaven back to this earth with his eyes as a flame of fire, his vesture dipped in blood as king of kings and lord of lords. Then we see him meet the Antichrist in the closing part of the 19th chapter and the false prophet with the armies of the nations of the world gathered together to make war on him, first, he cast the Antichrist and false prophet into the lake of fire, defeating them. And then we close the book with this saying, Surely, he says, I come quickly. And old John takes up the refrain saying, **Come, Lord Jesus, come.** Amen and amen.