

REVELATION – SERMON 3

I, JOHN

Revelation 1:9-12

INTRODUCTION

- Previously we have pointed out that the main character in this book is the Lord Jesus Christ
- It is a Revelation of His glorious Person and His gracious and mighty works; of His return, His judgments, and His kingdom.
- A much lesser character in Revelation is the apostle John, who was given the task of writing an account of what he saw.
- He very deliberately keeps himself in the background while relating the glorious visions.
- Like his namesake, John the Baptist, John the Revelator does not seek to magnify himself, or take any glory away from His Lord: *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* (John 3:30)
- Yet in the little that John writes of himself in Revelation, we are given an insight into this aged disciple’s life; this “apostle of love” who was especially loved of the Lord, and who faithfully loved and served his Lord until the end.

I. THE WITNESS HE MAINTAINED (9)

A. "I John"

1. This echoes the prophet Daniel: "I Daniel" (Daniel 9:2; 10:2)
2. It is a display of humility

B. Your brother

1. There was a plethora of credentials John might have listed of himself
 - a. An apostle
 - b. The "disciple whom Jesus loved"
 - c. A "pillar" of the church (Galatians 2:9)
 - d. Inspired author of four other books of the New Testament
 - e. The last remaining apostle, and therefore the most exalted Christian upon the earth
 - f. But his greatness was only surpassed by his meekness
2. In calling himself "brother" he showed his equality and oneness with other believers (1 Peter 5:1)
3. Contrast this with his youthful coveting of glory, honour and riches in Christ's earthly kingdom (Mark 10:35-40)

4. In time, as he walked with the Lord, John changed, and became more and more like Jesus (Matthew 11:29)

C. Your companion

1. In tribulation

- a. This word means “to press, to oppress, to squeeze”
- b. Even the greatest apostle suffered for his faith
- c. We should expect it ourselves (1 Peter 4:12-16)

2. Kingdom

- a. We enter this kingdom by faith (John 3:3; Colossians 1:13)
- b. We labour and suffer for the kingdom now (Acts 14:22)
- c. We look for the glorious manifestation of this kingdom as Christ’s coming (Matthew 6:10)

3. Patience

- a. This refers to endurance, continuance
- b. Patience is a grace that God gives to His servants

- c. It is in tribulation that patience is particularly needed (Romans 12:12; cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:5)

D. Exiled on Patmos

1. He refused to worship the Roman Emperor and was banished to the barren island of Patmos for some 10 years
2. John understood he was in that place at that time because God had put him there
3. It was there he became the recipient of the Revelation.
4. Throughout history we can find many examples where God has used the affliction of His people accomplish His greatest works.
5. Affliction is one of God's greatest tools to educate us, to perfect us, to draw us nearer to Himself (Psalm 119:71)
6. Patmos teaches us that our outward circumstances do not determine our spiritual state, or our usefulness to God.

E. For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ

1. A "Christianity" that never suffers opposition, ridicule, persecution, and the hatred of this world, is utterly foreign to the Scriptures; it is a counterfeit

(Luke 6:26)

II. THE WORSHIP HE OFFERED (10)

A. He was in the Spirit (cf. Revelation 4:2; 17:3; 21:10)

1. This can be understood to mean that John was transported in his spirit into a trance-like state or “ecstasy” in order to receive visions
 - a. Such was the experience of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12,14), Peter (Acts 10:10-11;11:5), and Paul (Acts 22:17-18)
 - b. The Holy Ghost was the source of the prophecy, as with the rest of the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20-21)
2. It also can indicate that he was in a spirit of worship, and praise, and adoration; enjoying communion with the Holy Spirit
 - a. The believer to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:1); to be led of the Spirit (Galatians 5:18); and to live in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)
 - b. All our worship, including prayer is to be “in the Spirit” (John 4:24; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20)
 - c. John did not let his age, infirmity, location, or any other difficulty hinder him from fervently worshipping God in the Spirit

- d. On that day, for John, Patmos became Paradise (cf. Acts 16:25; Daniel 6:10)

B. On the Lord's Day

1. Some interpret this to mean the "Day of the Lord" to which John was being transported in his vision. He first addressed the situations in the seven churches at that present time.
2. It refers to Sunday, the first day of the week, which had become the day of Christian worship soon after Christ's resurrection (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2)
 - a. It is Christ the Lord's own day because on it He rose victorious over sin, death and hell (John 19:30)
 - b. John shows us that the Lord's day is to be sanctified by a setting aside of fleshly thoughts and actions, and to be wholly taken up with things of a spiritual nature

III. THE WORD HE RECEIVED (10-12)

A. A great voice

B. As of a trumpet

1. Trumpets in Scripture attend events of great importance
2. This voice, likened to a trumpet, indicates authority and power, and commands attention

C. Alpha and Omega, the first and last

1. This is a clear declaration of Christ's deity, identifying Him as "the Almighty" in v.8
2. Note that modern versions omit "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last", removing Christ's deity, as in many other places

D. Write...to the churches

1. These seven churches are listed in clockwise order, beginning with the closest to John, his own church at Ephesus
2. That such a momentous message would be entrusted to seven churches shows the centrality of the church to God's work on earth in this age
3. Rather than change the world by directly addressing world leaders, God uses His vessel for truth, His church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15)
4. "As goes the church so goes the nation"

E. John's response to the voice (v.13)

1. He turned to see
2. This ought to be every person's response to hearing the word of God (Psalm 119:59-60)
3. But most would rather "stop their ears" (cf. Acts 7:57)

4. The Bereans are known for their diligent and daily searching of the Scriptures, but they first “received the word with all readiness of mind” (Acts 17:11)

CONCLUSION

1. Like John, may we have a spirit of humility that recognises that we are nothing without the grace of God
2. Like John, may we stand for God’s truth, even if it means suffering for it
3. Like John may we true worshippers of Christ regardless of the circumstances we are found in (cf. Habakkuk 3:17-19)
4. Like John, may we be attentive to the word of God, receive it, and turn to it in obedience (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13)