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How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Revelation 1:2-6

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In Revelation 1:2, let's read that. It says,

“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

Well, in the Greek, the word for “bare record” which I cannot pronounce, is translated more specifically, maybe, “martyred” because John was martyred. Where was John? Where are we going today? Well, he was on the island of Patmos. He wasn't there by his own doing. He wasn't having a nice vacation with the palm trees and everything like that. No, he was banished to the island of Patmos because they couldn't kill him when they boiled him in oil. So, this is martyrdom, if you will.

The second part of the verse, “of the word of God, and of the testimony,” again, “testimony” comes from a similar Greek word. You can see there, it looks like the first seven letters are all the same, the only two letters that are different is the ending there. So, this is still talking about his martyrdom, his last days of his life. He's bringing his last days of his life with still significance. I think so many times I imagine that some day I'll be, I'm not going to throw a number in there because I might offend somebody, some day I'll be old and just be able to just sit back and do nothing, but is that what the Bible teaches? No, of course not because the Bible teaches that even all the way to the end, Paul was baring record, giving his testimony and becoming a martyr for Jesus Christ. The last book in the Bible, written by John, is his testimony, his personal revelation that he received from an angel, from Jesus, from God the Father. So, that's an important relation there.

Where is John in all of this? Again, “Who bare record from the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The same words are used again later on in Revelation 1:9 and it says, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Again, later in 6:9, “for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” Chapter 12:11, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” John is giving us this testimony

again and again and again. The word of God through a person but half the time, or most of the time, Jesus wants someone to physically communicate the Bible to them.

Well, sevens. Sevens are important because I said there was at least three sevens that we are going to talk about this morning, but we know that sevens are important all throughout the Bible. So, how about the seven blessings in Revelation? Or maybe earlier in the Bible when we talk about Matthew, the beatitudes, blessings, same idea. Seven blessings. Well, that's in verse 3, so let's keep reading there with, "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." We'll get to that last part here in just a minute. So, we've got a blessing there: blessed is he that readeth, blessed is he that heareth, blessed is he that actually keeps these promises that we're about to study throughout the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ through an angel through John.

That phrasing you can hear later on in the book when it says "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." And then their bodies will be resurrected and glorified. So far, that's only happened to one person. In 16:15, it says, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." So, another thing that's blessed. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb," another blessing, number 4.

Number 5, finally, "Blessed and holy is he that had part in the first resurrection." So, in the first resurrection, that's when it says "on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years." That's kind of nice. Those people that get to be blessed with the first resurrection, that's another blessing. Chapter 22:7, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Again, being blessed for keeping these sayings, and I think that's number 6.

Lastly, number seven, another blessing at the end of the book, "Blessed are those that do his commandments." Well, we found that throughout the whole Bible. When we keep God's Word, we are blessed.

Seven blessings. Particularly I want to dwell on just the reader, hearer and keeper today because it said right at that verse, "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." This is another one of those translations that we talked about earlier. We talked about "shortly" a lot last week. There was "shortly" used again and then "shortly" used in the second part of the verse and "shortly" is used later on in the book of Revelation. Well, is this another "shortly?" Let's see: it says "for the time is at hand." Well, "shortly" was one Greek word that was translated. The word "for" is a Greek word. The word "the time" is a Greek word. "And is at hand" is another Greek word. So, I don't think it's the same word as "shortly."

If they took the time, or John took the time when he was writing it in Greek to make three separate words that translated into "for the time is at hand" he was being kind of specific. Well, then maybe this is more leaning towards the beginning of the movement of the

ministry of Jesus in heaven as well as here on earth. The time is at hand because when he's writing this book, we're talking about just about when Pentecost happened here. The church is getting started, the time is at hand because Jesus left the earth so the time is at hand for him, he's starting his ministry in heaven, "I go to prepare a place for you." Remember when Jesus said that? And here on earth, the church is started. So, the time is at hand because the time is now. This is when I've given you all these instructions and I want you to go preach the gospel. So, blessed is he that readeth, heareth and keeps now. And forever, up until he comes again. This is the beginning of a movement.

Next verse, Revelation 1:4 says, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia." We talked about that last week on the map. Asia is a great big place. It's somewhere we would refer to as probably Asia Minor is where he's at right now, but still Asia. "Grace be unto you, and peace." We'll come back to those words. "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne." So, this is our second appearance of the word "seven" or the number "seven." Seven in this case, let me teach you something here because a lot of people say that seven is the number of perfection or perfectness. Sometimes it is, but I would argue that the Bible uses the number seven more often for completeness. Completeness because it's when things are done. Think about it: all the way back on the first seven days of creation, the seventh day he rested because he was done. Not because he was tired, but because he was done. That was the age of completeness. He did it as a sign. He did it as an example. So, completeness, not perfection. Think the word "completeness" as we go through this.

So, the seven churches, seven Spirits. Let's break down some sevens in the Bible. The seven days of creation, and this is not an exhaustive list, by the way, this is just the quick ones that I could think of and the ones I studied real quick. Seventh day is the Sabbath. The seventh time that they marched around Jericho was when the walls fell. Seven times Naman dipped in the Jordan River to get himself healed of leprosy. Seven years of plenty in Egypt. Seven years of famine followed that, that's talking about Joseph's time. Seven years of Nebuchadnezzar when he went insane, when he literally became as the dogs or became as a bear in the wilderness. Seven beatitudes in the book of Matthew. Seven petitions in the Lord's prayer. So, seven parables in Matthew 13 that are told by Jesus. Seven loaves of bread that fed the multitudes as one of Jesus' miracles. And seven sayings that Jesus said on the cross.

Is it an accident that the Bible uses sevens? No, of course not because sevens is a number of completion. Now, today we probably think of numbers as more of a superstition. You know, "Seven is my lucky number. I'd better play seven on the lottery or something like that." But back in Bible days, we're talking about sevens being an important number. Just like everybody's name meant something. Noah's name meant "salvation." We studied that when we were studying the book of Genesis. So, the numbers meant something, too. And if seven is the number of completeness, then I want you to remember that when we study verses that say things like seven churches, seven Spirits. What are we talking about here?

Now, let's get sevens in the book of Revelation. There are seven churches in verse 4. Seven Spirits in verse 4. Seven stars. Seven lamps. Seven seals. Seven horns. Seven eyes. Do you get the idea? There are a few sevens in this book. So, we're going to get to a lot of completeness in this book. That's just a few of them there.

In verse 4, there are seven churches. It's interesting to me, the more you study about the churches during the time of Pentecost and thereafter, there wasn't just one church, there wasn't just seven churches, there were lots of churches. Think about it today, if you drive down the road are you just going to run into seven churches? No. If you drive a little further, are there more than seven churches? Sure. So, why were there seven churches in the book of Revelation thinking back to what we just learned? Completeness.

So, we are going to cover the complete history of the church or the complete history of what every church could and possibly be when we study seven different churches because there were churches next to Laodicea that weren't the church of Laodicea. They weren't all the church of Laodicea and we're going to study that. So, seven being here representative churches that show everything that we need to know for today that we can use in today's study. So, seven the number of completeness here.

A little bit later on in that verse we read about grace and peace. I said we'd see the Trinity today, that's one verse that has the Trinity in it. Let's take it another step further and I'm going to leave plenty of times for questions here because I don't want to talk the whole time. Hold that question, come back to it. I will answer it.

Seven titles of Jesus. So, the last thing that I want to talk about today is about the seven different titles Jesus has in these verses. Let's follow along here as we read verses 5 and 6 in your Bibles. Chapter 1:5-6, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." That's as far as I'm going to get today so you can already take relief. I'm not going to talk much longer.

"Amen" is an ending sound as in a completing word, since we're talking about completeness. We're going to stop right there and talk about the completeness in these titles of Jesus. There are seven of them. First of all: a faithful witness. You see that in the first one that is mentioned. If Jesus is not a faithful witness, then what is the point of reading the Bible? If Jesus didn't get one thing right, he got it all wrong. So, if he's a faithful witness, then he is a trustworthy person. He is trustworthy because he wrote the book. Or, he's trustworthy because of the sayings that he said that got put into the book by John in this case. So, he's a faithful witness.

Second of all: he's first begotten of the dead. This one gets me. I had to think about it, too. First begotten of the dead. First born of the dead is literally what that's translated. How do you be born of dead? Well, there is only one person in all of history that's ever died, rose again and got the glorified body. Now, when I thought about it, I was like,

“Wait, there were some people that were raised from the dead. Jesus raised them. Lazarus for example.” When he was raised from the dead, he didn’t get his glorified body, he got his little junky one back. So, he had to die again and finally when he got to heaven after that. To me, I can’t imagine being in heaven and having to come back, but at the same time, think about that. The only person that’s ever had the glorified perfected body, then raised from the dead, was Jesus Christ. So, the first person to be gotten of the dead, born from the dead, born away from death because death doesn’t mean anything anymore when he takes away its keys, now Jesus has reason to tell us something. So, he has that glorified body.

Number three: he was the prince of the kings of the earth. Well, this is his position in the millennium. He’s the prince of the kings. Well, you have read about how we’re going to be made into kings over the earth during the millennium. Those that are saved that are ruling on earth, will actually be in control of what’s going on in the millennium and we’ll study that a lot more later. But, more specifically, who is over them? Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is the Prince because the real King, the King of kings, not only is Jesus Christ but is God the Father. So, we’re seeing the Trinity yet again, talking about God the Son, God the Father, the Holy Spirit working through the believers. Trinity again. So, that’s his position in the millennial reign.

Number four: it says very simply if you remember back in the verse here where it says that “unto him that loved us.” Unto him that loved us. Well, he’s the one that cared enough to tell us these things. He’s the one that cared enough to die on a cross. If he didn’t die on the cross, I had a student ask me that the other day, “Well, what if Jesus didn’t die on the cross? He didn’t really want to because he was actually upset by it. I mean, his body was frail and it hurt. What if he didn’t do it?” And the very simple answer is: we would not be saved; we would not have the possibility of getting saved because there wouldn’t be a Savior to trust in, there wouldn’t be a dying Lamb of God who shed his blood for our sins. So, he loved us enough, he has that constant attitude toward us and he would actually give his life to save us. So, he’s not just anybody, he’s the one that died for us.

Number five: washed us from our sins in his own blood. Not only did he die, but that blood that he died with was the blood that was able to cover up our sins because he was perfect, he never committed any sins and if he wasn’t perfect, then it wouldn’t cover up our sins. He took that perfect blood, covered up our sins and now that life is given unto us so that we can have that glorified body and be the second, the third, the fourth, the 3,069th born of the dead. I want to be born of the dead because some day I’ll die probably, I mean, 1/1 people usually die. I think those odds still hold out true, so when I die, at least then I know that I can be born again from the dead through Jesus Christ because he’s given his blood for me.

Number six: hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. I think it’s interesting, first of all, that it says “his Father.” I mean, when we are born again, we are made sons of God, so isn’t he our Father? He is, but talking in the position of the Trinity, God the Father is Jesus’ Father specifically. We’re adopted. He is the Son of God; we are

sons of God. That's a wonderful and a blessing and a wonderful thing to think about but not as important as "the" Son of God. So, it's his Father and also we will reign with him is what it's saying. Remember, we talked about this millennial kingdom that is coming sometime after a tribulation. We're not going to get into the specific years just yet, but some time after tribulation, a millennium will come and the Bible doesn't say "millennium." That's the word we use for one thousand years.

The Bible says there will be a thousand year period where Jesus comes down to earth and reigns as the ultimate judge. He's not just going to be a King, he's going to be the ultimate Judge and people will still do things that are wrong? I can't imagine. When Jesus sees all and you do something wrong and you know you're going to get punished for it, and you do it anyway. Isn't that the sad state of the sinful human condition? That we would do sin even when the King is on the planet? I mean, a lot of people tell me today that, "You know, well, when I meet Jesus some day, then I'll believe in him." Or, "When I die, that's when I'll know for sure and then I'll make my decision." Too late. Not only is it too late but even if he was standing in front of you, you would still sin. You would still have that problem in our life that we have had since the beginning back in Adam's day. So, we will reign some day, those of us that are saved with Jesus on earth during the millennial reign. That's his next position.

Last of all, the seventh title of Jesus here is that: he will be glory and dominion forever and ever. I think I mistranslated that. Let me go back to the verse here. It says, "and to him be glory and dominion forever." So, to him be the glory and dominion forever. In other words, again, all of this whole Bible is for him. It's not a coincidence that, I think, Pastor Bill started with Genesis and now we're in Revelation because everything in between is about Jesus Christ. The beginning, when we read in Genesis 3:15 that some day a Savior would come and would crush Satan with his heel, there it is, that's Jesus Christ and then in the next book is Jesus Christ and in the next book is Jesus Christ and finally we get all the way to the end, which hasn't even happened yet. Remember we said who was and is and is to come?

It's still about Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is going to come back and that day we'll finally understand that the glory was for him, every knee will bow, every mouth will confess and admit that Jesus Christ was Lord and then he'll have dominion over the earth because right now he's given us dominion. We read that in Genesis, that we're in control of the earth for good or bad. If we don't take care of the earth, then the earth gets corrupted. If we take good care of the earth, the earth is doing well. If we take care of the economy, the economy does well. If we do bad things with the economy, the economy does bad because God gave us charge over it. We can't point the blame at him. We're in control because he gave us dominion. But some day, Jesus will take dominion over the world, especially the new earth and the new heaven and everything will be perfected towards him.

Now, I'm sure I've at least sparked one or two questions there. Do we have any questions that I could answer real quick? Well, it doesn't have to be real quick. We still have ten minutes. Think about your questions. What could of happened during that time when

John was sitting there on an island and an angel has come into him and for lack of a better explanation, the first television was invented and he was shown the things that were about to happen. Now, we know a lot of things through interpretations and through signs, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to happen. They will be physical occurrences. There are a lot of things that we don't understand but that doesn't mean that they're not going to happen. I don't understand a lot of things about the wind, but we know through hurricanes and tornados, they do a lot of damage. Just because I don't understand it, or I'm given a sign that there was destruction doesn't take away its realness. All of the things in the book of Revelation are real and physically going to happen in some way, shape or form.

Your question is: why did he use different languages? Because we do it all the time. (is there something symbolic in there...Hebrew...foreign language) We use French all the time, that's true, if you think about it, and Latin and a little bit of Greek mixed in with our language and that's true.

Did you have a comment there? (Gentiles and the Jews) Right, and I will kind of agree with both of you in the fact that, yes, John used language that would've been common to him and it wouldn't have been a big deal to him at all, to use both Greek and Hebrew just intermingled with his speech. But, again, nothing happens by accident as Brother Dick is saying here, that there is some reasoning to think that why would I mention grace, peace and then the seven Spirits if I wasn't kind of giving comfort. Let me back up here: I'm not going to say that it's the Trinity necessarily, but I am at least saying when you study this book, some people are afraid." So, peace be unto you. When you study this book, some people think, "I'm not good enough. I'm going to be punished." Grace be unto you. "Well, I don't want to go through this tribulation." Well, spirits be unto you because you have the Holy Spirit in you. I don't even believe that you'll have to go through all the tribulation.

Question in the back. The comment is: just because Revelation is the last book doesn't make it the last thing ever to happen. Our book is not necessarily chronological because I believe Job took place or was written down before Genesis, yet the book of Genesis talks about the first things. So, that took place before that and chronological order doesn't necessarily influence the verse in such a way that it has to happen in this specific order as much as it does speak to all of these things which were, which is and is to come, in different orders.

Good question there about: how do we get other religions then, like even Judaism which is similar to Christianity and Moslem which, if you've studied it, is actually kind of similar to Christianity in many other ways other than the book of the Koran. It says that the Bible is one of the holy books, so how do they take it as something else then when we say that the Bible points to Jesus Christ the whole way? Well, we know that at least in the New Testament, especially through Matthew's writing because Matthew was a tax collector and a Jew, and he understood that all these things that were taking place were difficult for the Jew to understand because all his life he's taught to look for a Messiah. Look for a Messiah because some day there is coming a lamb because they spread blood

on a door one day for the Passover, so that they'd be passed over by the death angel and they didn't understand necessarily what did that lamb mean? What did that blood mean? What did the Messiah coming mean? And yet, I believe that some of them did trust in a Messiah to come which was good enough for salvation up until Jesus actually came and then if they didn't realize that Jesus was that Messiah, that lamb, that blood, that they were celebrating in the Passover, because it's funny, the Passover celebration kind of died off. Now, some Jews still celebrate the Passover today, but it certainly is not as big a deal as it was back before the gospels that were written because the Passover lamb had come.

Did I answer your question there or not so much? (not really) It's mostly, to me, is what I rationalize that thought is, they missed it. It's there and they want to believe it's true because I knew a lot of Jews growing and they want to believe that there is still a Messiah coming but there's no way possible that it could've been Jesus. He was just some guy that came and he didn't reign. He didn't become a ruler, and that's what the Messiah is supposed to do, so he couldn't have been the Messiah. So, that kind of confused them. (...) Right, they point to some Messiah coming.

(...) Right, and then that's speaking to God's sovereignty here. God designed it in such a way that Jews can't see Jesus and yet some can still receive salvation. That's hard for me to think about because I know some day in the tribulation their eyes will be opened and they'll understand, "Oh, Jesus was the Messiah and I need to get saved." But right now, there's a veil over our eyes. In other words, I would say it's hard for them to understand salvation but if a Jew dies today and doesn't accept Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is just as much unsaved as any one of us. I say any one of us but I'm also part Jew so I feel like I'm on both sides of the argument here.

We'll close with a word of prayer. I thank you for your attention. I appreciate that. I know it wasn't a long lesson and somewhat vague but I think the Revelation is somewhat vague but not on purpose in such a way that it's supposed to make us wrack our brains until it hurts. I think the book of Revelation is vague in such a way because it causes us to wonder and wondering is much, much different than living in fear and worrying about what's about to happen. When we wonder, we get excited, we anticipate. We make plans for the future that hasn't happened yet and I pray that's what we're doing today. We make plans for this future. If this is really going to happen, all of these things that we're talking about here, that should change our point of view and change what we want to say to others because someday I don't want you, and I don't want you, and I don't want you, to go through this horrible time that's coming so I'm going to tell you about Jesus Christ and to save you from such horrible things that could come.

Let's pray.

Dear Lord, as we come to you today, we thank you for this time that we could get around Revelation and study a little bit more of your word. I pray that my words would just ring true throughout this day and throughout this next week that they'll dwell on them and come back with more questions and that, hopefully, Pastor Bill or I will come up with

more answers and that we'll just be living our lives in wonder, Lord, and not in worry about what is about to happen. We thank you so much that you've blessed us, keeping us safe, bringing us here. Keep those safe as they travel home and those in the next service. Bless the Pastor as he preaches, Lord. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.