

WHAT DOES JESUS WANT TO SAY TO OUR CHURCH?

Introduction to the Book of Revelation ~ Part One

Revelation 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION: The human author of this book of prophecy is the Apostle John, the beloved Apostle. He was one of the very first to follow Jesus after John the Baptist pointed Jesus out as the Messiah. Of course, the real author of this book is God, and the correct title of the book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (vs. 1).

The occasion and the place of the giving of the Revelation are as follows:

- 1) John had been banished to the Isle of Patmos during the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Domitian, almost at the close of the First Century A.D. (Revelation 1:9).
- 2) Patmos was a prison island, a small island of rock in the Mediterranean Sea that was inhabited by snakes.
- 3) John had been exiled to this island because of his faith in Jesus Christ and because of his preaching about Jesus.
- 4) This Revelation was given to John by God while he was worshipping God on the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10).

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ" is a book of prophecy. It is the only prophetic book in the New Testament. It takes the message of Jesus Christ in the gospels concerning the Last Days and it gives us a step-by-step account of what shall come to pass. In the book of Genesis we are told how the world and man came into existence, and in the Revelation we are told how this old world shall come to its end.

I. IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION, GOD ALLOWS US TO SEE BEYOND THE PRESENT (VERSES 1-2)

A. Here in these first verses, the purpose of the Book of Revelation is given.

1. The purpose is revealed by the name of the book. "Revelation" means unveiling, to uncover, to remove the curtain.
 - a. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ.
 - b. We have seen Him in His humanity in His earthly ministry.
 - c. His deity and royal majesty have been clouded by humanity.
2. His Revelation unveils Christ in His exaltation on the throne at the right hand of God as the "Worthy Lamb."

B. We need a vision of Jesus Christ coming in all His glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

1. A vision of Christ in His glory will transform lives. It did for:
 - a. Enoch
 - b. Abraham
 - c. Moses

- d. Isaiah
 - e. Paul (Man is never the same after he sees Jesus in His glory.)
2. We think of Jesus as Saviour, or as the babe in the manger, but we need to see Him as He is today – exalted and the coming King.

C. God desires to show unto His servants things “which must shortly come to pass” (verse 1).

1. In verse 19 of this chapter, our Lord gives a three-fold outline of the Book of Revelation.
 - a. “The things which thou hast seen . . .” (Revelation 1:1-20)
 - b. “The things which are . . .” (Revelation 2-3)
 - c. “The things which shall be hereafter.” (Revelation 4-22)

D. He has “signified it by His angel unto His servant John” (verse 1).

1. The word “signified” begins with the word “sign” and could be pronounced “sign-i-fied.” The future passed before John’s eyes as though it were a pointed sign.
 - a. A sign tells where you are going and how far it is to your destination.
 - b. A sign tells the conditions of the road ahead – curves, crossings or danger.
2. God signified things (verse 1).
 - a. Things of the entire church age (Chapters 1-3).
 - b. Events in Heaven after the rapture (Chapters 4-5).
 - c. Events of the Tribulation as referred to in Daniel’s 70th week (Chapters 6-19).
 - d. Events of the Millennium (Chapter 20).
 - e. Events of the eternal Heavens and the New Earth (Chapters 21-22).
3. These things will “shortly come to pass.” The word “shortly” not only means soon, it also means “certainly will come to pass.”
 - a. It does not mean that it will begin that day or that year.
 - b. It does mean it will certainly come to pass in God’s time.

II. CONSIDER THE DIFFERENT WAYS THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS INTERPRETED

A. Preterist Interpretation. This view interprets the events in Revelation as being already passed, occurring in the days of Nero and Domitian.

B. Historical Interpretation. This view sees the Revelation as a history of the struggle of the church through to the end of time. This view was held by the reformers.

C. The Spiritualizing Interpretation.

1. The things in Revelation are only symbolic of the great struggle between good and evil.
2. Revelation is an allegory, a fable or parable referring to certain truths.

D. The Futuristic Interpretation.

1. This is what the Pre-Millennial Fundamentalist believer holds to. This is what we believe as a church.
2. We believe that, beginning at the fourth chapter through the remaining chapters, God reveals things which must come to pass.
 - a. Most of what occurs in the Revelation has not yet come to pass.
 - b. The Resurrection, Rapture, Marriage Supper, Judgment Seat, Anti-Christ, Millennium, binding of Satan, etc., all have yet to happen.
3. God said it; that settles it; I believe it. It must come to pass.
4. The Lord does use symbols in this book to depict real events, persons, and nations. God tells us when it is symbolic. Otherwise, it is real.

III. GOD USED A MAN TO RECORD FOR US THE GREAT TRUTHS OF FUTURE EVENTS

A. John was the one used to "bare record" of:

1. "The Word of God" (John 1:1; I John 1:1).
2. "The testimony of Jesus Christ" (John 20:31).
3. "All things that he saw" (the Revelation prophecy).
Note: Prophecy is history recorded by God before it takes place in time.

B. John wrote the following:

1. One gospel. It presents Jesus Christ as God's Son. The key word is "believe" – believe on Jesus Christ.
2. Three epistles. They present Jesus Christ as the Eternal Keeper of the saved. The key word is "abide" – abide in Christ.
3. One prophecy. It presents Jesus Christ as the Coming King. The key word is "overcome" – only the saved can overcome this world.

IV. GOD GIVES TO US A SURE WAY TO BE BLESSED

A. Some say it is wasted time to study Revelation because:

1. It cannot be understood. If this is true, then the Holy Spirit is falling down on His job to reveal truth.
2. We are just to preach the Gospel. However, the scripture tells us to preach "the Word" – the whole counsel of God. We are told to preach Jesus Christ, which includes the Revelation.
3. It is too deep. The reason the Revelation may be too deep for some is found in I Corinthians 2:14 and I Corinthians 3:1-3.

B. Notice to whom God promises a blessing.

1. Those who are saved and ready for Jesus to come are the happiest people in the world.
2. Circumstances of the present cannot keep the Christian who is ready and looking for Jesus to return from being happy.

3. God always seems to bless the church who studies this book and upholds it.

CONCLUSION: There are many things that Jesus Christ wants to say to our church. We will see them in future messages as we continue this study. You will not understand it if you are not saved (1 Corinthians 2:14)! Tell how to be saved. Christian friend, every time the Word of God is opened, would you be willing to pray something like this, "Lord, speak to my heart. Teach me what you want me to know. Help me to obey what I have learned"?