

Revelation of Jesus Christ Study 2

Back to the Future 2

Rev 1:1-6

1The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3Blessed 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.

4John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5And 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,

6And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Last week we began our study with an introduction and then we took a look at the first of eleven characteristics of the book as given to us by John.

1. The essential nature
2. Its central theme
3. Its divine source

Tonight we want to follow on with this study of the characteristics given us by John in the order he gave them.

The next being:

4. Its Human Recipients

“to show to His bond-servants (1:1d)

To further exalt and glorify His Son, the Father has graciously granted to a special group of people the privilege of understanding the truths found in the book.

John describes these people as His (Christ's) bond servants (*Doulois-bond-servants*) literally meaning slaves

Matt 22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

5. Its Prophetic character

“the things which must soon take place; (1:1e)

This book, (Revelation) is set apart from all other New Testament books by its emphasis on the future.

The first five books of the New Testament are about the past, and the next twenty one about the present

The last book, though it contains some information about the past (chap 1) and the present (chap 2 & 3), focuses on the future (chap 4-22)

As in all prophetic literature, there is a dual emphasis in the book of Revelation.

- A. It portrays Jesus Christ in His future glory along with the blessedness of the saints.
- B. It also depicts the judgment of unbelievers in Jesus Christ leading to their eternal damnation.

Read Commentator Charles Erdman

The profound and compelling truths in the book of Revelation are thus bittersweet (Chap 10:9-10)

“9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.”

The word soon here means in a brief time, quickly

This is not the speed but the nearness of His coming.

Christ's disciples are not in the business of setting the time which the Father has fixed by His own authority (Acts 1:7) but instead they are at all times to heed their Lord's warning to "be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming (Matt 24:42)"

The knowledge that the events depicted in the book of Revelation are soon to take place has and should motivate Christians to live holy, obedient lives (2 Pet 3:14)

6. Its Supernatural Delivery

"and He sent and communicated it by His angel (1:1f)

Again the book is different and unique in that it was sent and communicated to the author by angels

In Chap 22:16 Jesus reaffirmed the truth taught here, declaring:

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the Churches"

Angels were involved in the giving of the book of Revelation as well as playing important parts in the scenes depicted therein

The words angel or angels are used seventy-one times in the book of Revelation.

7. Its Human Author

"to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw (1:1g-2)"

This is John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.

It was given on the Island of Patmos while John was in exile.

8. Its promised blessing

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it. (1:3a)"

The book of Revelation is bracketed by promises of blessing to those who read and obey it.

But those are only two of the seven promises of blessing the book contains:

- a. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!” Yes, says the Spirit, so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them” (14:13)
- b. Behold I am coming like a thief, Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame” (16:15)
- c. “blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9)”
- d. “blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection (20:6)
- e. “blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city” (22:14)

The three participles translated reads, hear, and heed are in the present tense.

Reading, hearing, and heeding the truths found in the book of Revelation, and in the other books of the Bible, are to be the way of life for the disciples of Christ.

It was common practice in the first-century church service for one to read the Scriptures aloud for all to hear(1 Tim 4:13)

13 “till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

The book of Revelation is God’s final word to man, the culmination of divine revelation.

Its scope encompasses the entire future sweep of redemptive history (Rev 1:19)

Therefore it is imperative that believers pay diligent heed to the truths it contains.

9. Its compelling Urgency

“for the time is near (1:3b)

This phrase reiterates the truth taught in 1:1 that the events depicted in the book are imminent.

The word “time” here does not translate *chronos*, which refers to time on a clock or calendar, but rather *kairos*, which refers to seasons, epochs, or eras.

The next great era of God's redemptive history is near!!

10. Its Trinitarian Benediction

“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, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, and the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth (1:4-5a)

Unlike modern letters in which the senders put their names at the end of the letter, ancient letters sensibly named their writers at the beginning.

Thus John identifies himself as the writer and names the seven churches (1:11) in the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey)

The greeting was a standard greeting in the New Testament letters, and reflects the order of finding peace with God.

First Grace is introduced and then when accepted it produces peace with God.

This greeting introduces a benediction from the exalted trinity (2 Cor 13:14)

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen.”

- 1. God** = Him who is and who was and who is to come identifies the first person of the Trinity, God the Father, described here in anthropomorphic terms. Because it is the only way we can understand the threefold description (1:8; 4:8) views God in time dimensions (past, present, and future), although He is timeless. The eternal God is the source of all the blessings of salvation, all grace, and all peace.
- 2. Holy Spirit** = The seven Spirits who are before His throne refers to the Holy Spirit. Obviously, there is only one Holy Spirit; the number seven depicts Him in His fullness

Isa 11:2 **“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom, and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”**

Gal 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

3. **Jesus Christ** = from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. He too is seen in the glory of His exaltation. It is only fitting that John mentions Christ last, and gives a fuller description of Him, since He is the theme of the book of Revelation.
- a. He is seen here as the faithful witness, as one who always speaks and represents the truth
 - b. The firstborn of the dead, not the first one to be raised from the dead for He Himself raise some from the dead before He was crucified and then raised up. But God has given Him the preeminence among all who have been raised or will ever be resurrected.

Psa 89:27 “I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth”

The book of Revelation records the unfolding of that promise.

- c. The ruler of the kings of the earth. This shows Christ as absolutely sovereign over the affairs of this world to which He holds the title deed.(5:1)

That Jesus is the Sovereign King of the earth is repeatedly taught in Scripture

Phil 2:9-11 “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in heaven and of those on earth, and of those under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

He is Lord indeed.

11. Its Exalted Doxology

“To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood, and hath made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever Amen (1:5b-6)

The work of Christ on behalf of believers caused John to burst forth in an inspired doxology of praise to Him.

In the present Christ loves believers with an unbreakable love (Rom 8:35-39)

35 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: “for your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”

Here is the heart of the Gospel.

Sinners forgiven, by God

Set free from sin and death, and hell by His sacrifice.

God made Him our substitute, killing Him in our place so the penalty was fully paid.

God’s justice was satisfied and so now He was able to grant righteousness to repentant sinners

He made us a kingdom, (not the millennial kingdom, but the sphere of God’s rule which believers enter at salvation Col 1:13) in which we enjoy His loving, gracious rule and almighty, sovereign protection.

Finally He made us priests to His God and Father. Granting us direct access to the father (1 Pet 2:9-10)

John concludes his doxology with the only proper response in light of the magnitude of the blessing Christ has given believers

“To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

And that is to be the response of all who read this marvelous book in which that future glory and dominion is clearly presented.