

The Revelation – An Introduction

This week I want to begin a study on the last book of the Bible, The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Let's begin by looking at the first three verses of this book. This Scripture says:

- (1) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:
- (2) Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.
- (3) 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.

There are several things that I want to notice in this introductory lesson. First of all, this is not a series of revelations, but one revelation. I think that this is important as we get further into this book because often people get sidetracked into thinking that the Revelation is a series of revelations for different people in different times. If we keep focus on the fact that it is one Revelation it will help us to more fully understand how this Scripture applies to us today.

Next we see that these things “must shortly come to pass.” Now I realize that it has been over 1900 years since this was penned, but in the grand scheme of things this is shortly. I believe that what we're really seeing here is that these things are those which will come to pass during the present age, the Church Age. We'll talk about this more as we get further into the Revelation. Just keep this in mind as we go further in the study.

Next we see that God “signified it” to his servant John. This simply means that he gave the message to his servant John. This is of importance moving forward because God did not signify this message until the present age. Certainly there are Old Testament prophecies which parallel the prophecy here, but in Daniel 12:9 we see that a portion of prophecy was “closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” In Acts 2 we find that Peter talked about the present age as the end time discussed in the Old Testament. So, in the Revelation those things which are revealed are the things which were sealed up in the Old Testament Scriptures.

John then bare record of the things that he saw, the testimony of Jesus Christ. You see, this book is about those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Next we see that there are several special blessings which are associated with this book. First, you are blessed when you read the book. Next, you are blessed when you hear the words. Finally, you are blessed when you keep the words. This means that you should not only read and hear but you should take time in remembering these words. It seems that God put a special importance upon the words of this book for the Church.

The Revelation is divided into several parts. First, there is the introduction to the churches, which is in the remainder of chapter 1 and we'll discuss next week. This basically introduces Jesus Christ and tells us exactly who this book is written for. Next, there are letters to each of the individual churches in chapters 2 and 3. We'll discuss

these briefly the week after next. This is followed by three series of judgments. First there are the seven seal judgments. We'll look at these in detail in the coming weeks.

Next there are the seven trumpet judgments. Finally, there are the seven vials of the wrath of God.

This will bring us to the end of the discussion of the tribulation period and to the beginning of the millennium. At this transition we'll discuss the battle known as Armageddon. At the end of this battle Satan is bound during the millennium until the final battle, called Gog and Magog. At the conclusion of the Revelation we'll finally get a glimpse of the Holy City New Jerusalem, the city that most people associate with Heaven. I'll end the series with a brief review of what we've learned in our study of this book.

This is not going to be a short study. I want to take time to really get into much of the prophecy of this book because of the significant importance that God has associated with it. Let us read, and listen, and take the word into our heart and life so that we may be ready when the time is right.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich