

**07/11/21 “An Introduction to the Revelation of Jesus Christ”
Revelation 1:1-3**

Welcome...

This morning we begin a journey into what is probably the most intriguing, and mysterious, and powerful but comforting book in the entire Bible. The book of Revelation has often been avoided because many seem to believe that it cannot be understood and that reading it, studying and preaching from it will only lead to confusion.

But this book is not the hiding; this book is the revelation. The word revelation in the Greek is “apocalypsis”, which literally means unveiling. It is the sense of pulling back a veil or curtain to show something that would not have been seen any other way.

And what does the book of Revelation reveal? What does it uncover? What is so significant about this last book in the Bible?

Revelation reveals God the Father in all His glory and majesty, describing Him as holy (4:8), true (6:10), omnipotent (4:11), wise (7:12), sovereign (4:11) and eternal (4:10).

It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ as it reveals the preeminence, power, honor and glory of Jesus. He is the Alpha and the Omega (1:8; 21:6) The first and the last (1:17) The living One (1:18) The Lion that is from the tribe of Judah (5:5) The Root of David (5:5) The Lamb of God (5:6; 6:1; 7:9–10; 8:1 and others) the King of kings, and Lord of lords (19:16) The root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star (22:16)

Revelation reveals Christ’s ultimate victory over Satan, it describes the final political setup of the world, and explains the career of the final Antichrist. It also discusses the rapture of the church (3:10) and the seven-year time of tribulation. It explains the three and one-half years of the great tribulation (7:14), the second coming of Christ, the climactic battle of Armageddon, the thousand-year earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ, the final great white throne judgment, the final state of the unbelievers in hell (the lake of fire), and the final state of the redeemed in the new heaven and new earth.

Revelation is God’s last word and it reveals that what began in Genesis now ends in Revelation. In Genesis you have the commencement of heaven and earth; in Revelation the consummation of heaven and earth. In Genesis you have the entrance of sin and the curse; in Revelation you have the end of sin and the curse. In Genesis you have the dawn of Satan and his activities; in Revelation you have the doom of Satan and his activities. In Genesis you have the tree of life relinquished; in Revelation the tree of life regained. In Genesis death enters; in Revelation death exits. In Genesis sorrow begins; in Revelation sorrow is banished. In Genesis paradise is lost; in Revelation paradise is regained. But most central, in Genesis the Savior is promised; in Revelation the Savior is preeminent.

It has taken me 21 years here at Cornerstone to now arrive at preaching thru this book. Someone asked me this morning how many weeks, or months, or years that we would be in Revelation. I have absolutely no idea, but I promise you this... it will be less than 21 years! And I can promise you that we are in for the journey of our lives, to see the glory of what is to come as God brings all of redemptive history to its great climax.

This morning we will begin with an introduction to the revelation of Jesus Christ by reading Revelation (notice there is no ‘s’) verses 1-3...

We need to begin by briefly explaining the four methods of interpretation people take when they approach the book of Revelation. How you approach this book will determine how you interpret it; and how you interpret it

will determine what you will receive from it. There are four primary interpretations of the book of Revelation. They are:

1. The Preterist Interpretation – This view sees the events recorded in Revelation as being a historical record of the events of the first century. The preterist view (the Latin word *praeter* means “past”) sees the words about Christ’s second coming as fulfilled in the destruction of the temple in a.d. 70, even though He did not appear on that occasion.
2. The Idealist Interpretation – This is the liberal view. The idealist looks at the Revelation as a collection of allegories and stories designed to depict the struggle between good and evil. This view does not see the events of the Revelation as actual events, but as spiritual principles and ideas to encourage believers in their current trials.
3. The Historicist Interpretation – This view considers the Revelation to be a sweeping overview of church history. It sees this book as a timeline of church history from the apostolic era down to this present day. Most of the events in the book are considered to be past events. The historicist view takes the events of Revelation that happens is period of three and a half years and tries to spread it out over all of church history.
4. The Futurist Interpretation – this view holds that the book of Revelation is mostly prophetic in nature and takes a literal approach to interpretation. The futurist interpretation allows all of the events of the Revelation to be actual events. Everything the book says from the rapture of the church to the second coming of the Lord Jesus to a literal millennial kingdom is seen as a real, actual, future event.

Generally speaking, proponents of the first three views are postmillennial or amillennial, while futurists are premillennial. Postmillennialists believe that the spread of the gospel will lead to a golden age of peace on earth followed by the return of Christ; amillennialists believe that the Christian’s present heavenly position in Christ is the true “millennium,” not an earthly kingdom; and premillennialists believe that the six appearances of “a thousand years” in Revelation 20 are to be taken literally as the duration of the earthly kingdom that Christ will establish between the return of Christ and the creation of the new universe.

It should not surprise you that the futurist interpretation is the path of interpretation that we will follow for our study. I will use the same hermeneutic that I have used for every passage of Scripture that I have preached through and that is the literal, historical grammatical approach of interpreting Scripture. In this approach we see chapters Revelation 4-22 as describing literal people and places and literal events that will be fulfilled in the future. When it comes to Bible interpretation someone has well said “If the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense.”

Advocates of all four interpretive approaches to Revelation agree that it was written to assure the recipients of the ultimate triumph of Christ over all who rise up against Him and His saints. The readers of Revelation were facing dark times of persecution, and even worse times would follow. Therefore, they needed to be encouraged to persevere by standing firm in Christ in view of God’s plan for the righteous and the wicked. Revelation was also written to challenge complacent Christians to stop compromising with the world.

Revelation had a word of blessing for the 1st century church just as it has a word of blessing for the 21st century church.

This morning, in the first three verses of chapter one, we will see four essential principles are given that govern the great revelation of Jesus Christ written to inspire and motivate us to faithfulness and obedience.

The Person of the Revelation	Verse 1a
The Purpose of the Revelation	Verse 1b
The Penman of the Revelation	Verse 1c-2

The Promise of the Revelation Verse 3

Friends, the heavens are opened in this book, and we are going to see the Lord Jesus in His sovereign majesty, power and eternal glory. In the gospels, we saw Jesus in humility as the one who is made in the likeness of men in order to suffer the death on the cross. In the book of Revelation we will see Him in power as the resurrected Christ who is coming to judge the world and make an end of sin.

In the gospels, we saw Jesus as the lamb without spot or blemish who has come to be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind. In the book of Revelation we will see Jesus as the “lion of the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5) who will open the book of the 7 seals which contain judgments to come upon the earth.

My prayer is that you will know Jesus, the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, the King of kings and Lord of lords and worship Him now and find great comfort, strength, and courage to be His witness.

I. The Person of the Revelation

Verse 1a...

The word “revelation” is a translation of the Greek apokalypsis. The Greek word “apo” means “away” and kalypsis means “a cover.” So literally revelation is an “uncovering, or unveiling.” Unfortunately our English word apocalypse is today a synonym for chaos and catastrophe. But the Greek verb simply means “to uncover, to reveal, to make manifest.” In this book, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain and gives us the privilege of seeing the glorified Christ in heaven and the fulfillment of His sovereign purposes in the world.

John’s prophecy is primarily the revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of future events. You must not divorce the Person from the prophecy, for without the Person of Christ there could be no fulfillment of the Revelation. While all Scripture is revelation from God (2 Timothy 3:16), the book of Revelation is of Jesus Christ. While this book is certainly revelation from Christ (22:16), it is also the revelation about Him.

In Revelation 1–3, Christ is seen as the exalted Priest-King ministering to the churches. In Revelation 4–5, He is seen in heaven as the glorified Lamb of God, reigning on the throne. In Revelation 6–18, Christ is the Judge of all the earth; and in Revelation 19, He returns to earth as the conquering King of kings. The book closes with the Jesus the heavenly Bridegroom ushering His bride, the church, into the glorious heavenly city. You might say that Revelation is a “Him” book. It is a book about Him – Jesus our glorious Savior!

Notice again verse 1, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him” – notice the capital H. God gave this book to whom? To Jesus Christ. Why did God the Father give this book to Jesus Christ?

Look at Philippians 2:5-11 with me...

John MacArthur writes, (quote) “Christ’s exaltation, promised in Philippians 2, is described in detail throughout Revelation. The book of Revelation is the Father’s gift to the Son in a deep and marvelous sense. As a reward for His perfect, humble, faithful, holy service, the Father promised to exalt the Son. The book of Revelation chronicles the Son’s inheritance from the Father, ending in the showing of the full glory of Christ.” (end quote)

The book of Revelation, then, details the Son’s inheritance from the Father. Unlike most human written wills, this document can be read because it is not a sealed, private document. But not everyone has the privilege of understanding it, only those to who know Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit in them.

And so as we move through this book in the coming months, we should always be asking, not only What is this passage revealing?, but also, What is this passage revealing about Jesus? How can I know, worship, and honor Jesus as my Lord and Savior?

Because the Person of Revelation is Jesus Christ.

II. The Purpose of Revelation

Verse 1...

Many people read verse 1 and see the words “must soon take place” and think of shortness of time. But it has been 2,000 since these things were written and most of them have yet to be fulfilled.

The word “soon” in verse 1 comes from two Greek words. They are: “en” which means “in” and “tachos” which means “quickness; swiftness”. We get our word “tachometer” and “taxi” from this word.

The purpose of the words “must soon take place is that the action will be sudden when it comes, not necessarily that it will occur immediately. Once the end-time events begin, they will occur in rapid succession.

If you are in a city and need to get somewhere in a hurry, so you flag down a taxi, you hop in and take off. That is the way the end time events will take place. Once they begin, they will “take off like a speeding taxi.”

The return of Christ is imminent, once these events begin, they will not cease until they are all fulfilled!

We also need to remember that God is not limited by considerations of time in the same way man is. 2 Peter 3:8–9 says, “But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

We all must be grateful to the Lord for His patience - if you became a Christian 20 years ago, you thank God that Christ did not return 21 years ago!

Revelation’s emphasis on future events sets it apart from all other New Testament books. The first four books of the New Testament Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are about the past, especially the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the next twenty-two New Testament books (Acts and the Epistles) are about the present, especially the life of the church.

Revelation, though it contains some information about the past (Revelation 1) and the present (Revelation 2–3), it primarily focuses on the future (Revelation 4-22).

Look at Revelation 1:19...

This verse is an outline for the whole book. The Book of Revelation may be divided into three parts based on Jesus’ words in Revelation 1:19 to record “what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.”

The things which you have seen (Past) in chapter 1

The things which are (Present) in chapters 2-3 addressing the seven churches of Asia Minor

The things that will take place (Future) in chapters 4-22.

Acts 1:7 warns us to not to try to set the “times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.” Instead, we are at all times to heed their Lord’s warning in Mark 13 that Adrian read, we are to “be on the alert, for you do not know which day or hour that your Lord is coming.”

The knowledge that the events depicted in the book of Revelation are soon to take place has and the purpose is to motivate us to live holy, obedient lives.

We have seen the Person of the Revelation is Jesus Christ and the Purpose of the Revelation is to recognize the things which must soon take place to motivate us to live holy, obedient lives. Next we see:

III. The Penman of the Revelation

Verse 1c-2...

Revelation is a blessed gift from God the Father which He gave to His Son which the Lord Jesus graciously shares with us.

**Notice the divine or heavenly chain of communication of this great unveiling:
God → Jesus Christ → angel → John → His slaves or servants (Gr. doulos).**

The book of Revelation is unique because it is the only book sent and communicated to its human author by angels. Not only were angels involved in transmitting the book of Revelation to John, but they also play a prominent role in the scenes of Revelation.

Angels appear in every chapter of Revelation except 4 and 13. The words “angel” or “angels” are used seventy-one times in the book of Revelation - more than in any other book in the Bible. In fact, one out of every four uses in Scripture of those words is in the book of Revelation. This book, then, is an important source of information on the ministry of angels.

But notice how verse 1 continues and goes into verse 2...

The human agent to whom the angelic messengers communicated the book of Revelation is here identified as “His bond-servant John.” This was John the apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James. John is the disciple whom Jesus loved, one of the inner circle, a close friend of our Lord. He had beheld Christ’s glory on the Mt. of Transfiguration. He was there at the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension. Now, exiled on the island of Patmos (1:9) and writing this in the year 95 AD he is the penman of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Imagine how the enormity of the visions John received on that barren island must have staggered him. In the Gospel of John, John never directly referred to himself. Yet here he starts Revelation by mentioning how he received the revelation and in verse 9 where he was when he received it and he ends in 22:8 with, “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.” – which really expresses his amazement that he was receiving such overwhelming visions.

As he had loyally testified to the first coming of Christ in the Gospel of John and in his letters of 1, 2, and 3 John, so John faithfully proclaimed all that he saw concerning His second coming.

We have seen the Person of Revelation, the Purpose and the Penman. Lastly, we see:

IV. The Promise of Revelation

Verse 3...

The book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible that distinctly begins (1:3) and ends (22:7) with the promise that there is a special blessing for everyone who reads and heeds the prophecy of this book.

There are five other blessings in the book.

Revelation 14:13, “ ‘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’ ”

Revelation 16:15, “Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes on, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”

19:9, “blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

20:6, “blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection.”

Revelation 22:14, “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.”

The three participles in the promise of verse 3 are translated reads, hear, and heed and are in the present tense. Reading, hearing, and obeying the truths taught in the book of Revelation (and in the rest of Scripture) are to be a way of life for believers.

The purpose of Revelation is not to stir our imagination to wild speculative interpretations. It is to inspire and motivate us to faithfulness and obedience.

John wants us to read, hear and take heed to what is written in Revelation. Why? Because 1) we will be blessed and 2) the time is near. What we hear we need to obey. What we believe we need to live. The nearness of the Lord’s return is meant to challenge us to live faithful lives.

The phrase “the time is near” in verse 3 is like the phrase “what must soon take place” in verse 1 and refers to imminence. As believers we must be ready for Christ’s second coming. No one knows when these events will occur, so all believers must be prepared. We are called to live decisively and completely for God. Will you do that?

If you do not have a living relationship with the risen Christ, it is not too late for your repent and believe in Him. Revelation 22:17 says, “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

This is the wonderful invitation extended to you. If you recognize your sin, how you sin and fall short of the glory of God, and you realize that Christ is the only provider of salvation – then you need to come to repent and come in faith to Jesus while there is yet time before the judgment falls and it is too late. The gift of eternal life (here in Revelation 22 called the water of life) is free. It has been paid for by the death of Christ on the cross and is extended to all who are willing to receive it in simple faith.

Have you come to faith in Christ? Is He your true love? I have read the book of Revelation and I would not be serving you if I told you that you do not want to go through the tribulation, wrath and judgment that are coming to those who don’t belong to Christ. Do not wait for the day of God’s wrath. I beg you to repent and place your faith in Christ. Now is the day of salvation. Let’s pray...