

Gaining a Vision of Christ (Through His Word)

Revelation 1:1-3

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June 25, 2023 a.m.

Introduction: Opening illustration: “Butterball expert” – the point? “Sin first shows itself in what you give God.” What do you & I give God in terms of love & service? Or what is our relationship to His Church? Consider our need for a proper vision of Christ. We read in verse one, *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ...”* The word *“revelation”* is in the Greek, apocalypse. It means, “an unveiling, an uncovering, an appearance.” This final book of the Bible is the revealing of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As we gain the proper vision of Christ, we will be able to properly love and serve Christ. In other words, the result of concentrating on the Person of Christ will be our adoration of Him & our motivation for Him. “A true vision of Christ always results in the recognition of self-insignificance” (Barrett). We will see some 3 themes developed throughout this Book: (1) Christ’s magnificence; (2) Man’s insignificance (cf. Psalm 8:3-4); & (3) The world’s transience (which is under judgment).

I. The Revelation of God's Son (:1)

A. Who?

1. Jesus - "Jehovah saves" or "Savior" (see Matthew 1:21, “...and thou shalt call His name *Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins*”).
2. Christ - "Anointed One" or "Messiah."

B. What?

1. Apocalypse - a revelation, a disclosure, an appearing, a making manifest.
2. While the Gospels record Christ’s ascent to the cross, Revelation records His ascent to the throne.

C. Why?

Why study the book of Revelation? (Bible professor VanPuffelen):

1. It is an unveiling. It is a book God intended to be understood (though probably no other book of the Bible is less read or understood; why? Perhaps because it tells of Satan’s defeat & downfall, & he does not want man to know that.).
2. Special blessing is promised to those who hear, read, & obey its prophecies (1:3).
3. Special curse is pronounced upon those who add to or subtract from this book (22:18-19).
4. The Bible is an incomplete book without it. Those who neglect it have an unfinished story of redemption.
5. Because this book centers in the Person and Work of Christ.
6. Because this book reaches farther into the future (in detail) than any other.
7. The symbolism of the book is Biblical. To know Revelation, one must know the entire Word of God.

Summary: “With tears it was written, & without tears it cannot be understood” (Bengel).
“It requires a sensitive, understanding heart, more than an informed head...” (Panosian).

My reasons for this study:

1. To be able to defend Christ's **Deity**.
2. To be able to declare Christ's **Sovereignty**.
3. To be able to demonstrate Christ's **Lordship**.

II. The Revelation **through** God's **Servant** (:1-2)

A. The heavenly channel - "*His angel*" - Gabriel? Michael?

1. "*Shortly come to pass*" – “in a brief time” (cf. Luke 18:8, "*speedily*"). Not “soon” but when “they (*“things”*) begin to happen they will come to pass swiftly” (Ryrie). “Even thousands of years constitute only a 'brief time' on the eternal time frame within which He was speaking (Morris) – Also emphasizes the imminence of Christ’s return.
2. "*Signified*" - related to “sign” or “miracle” - perhaps refers to "the miraculous nature of the marvelous prophetic visions which John was enabled to see." (Morris).

B. The human writer - John, "*bare record*" - gave testimony to:

1. The Word of God - this book of Revelation.
2. The testimony of Jesus Christ - Christ's witness to John.
3. The things that he saw - the future events in heaven & on earth ("*I heard*" is found 28 times; "*I saw*" – is found 49 times).

III. The Revelation **to** God's **Saints** (:1 & :3)

A. Blessing upon those who proclaim this Book:

[First of 7 “beatitudes” > 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 & 14]

1. "*He that readeth*" - public reading (cf. I Timothy 4:13).
2. For the benefit of oneself & others.
3. Consider the privilege to have the Bible in one's own language. Do we consider it so?

B. Blessing upon those who partake of this Book:

1. "*They that hear*" - listening to the public reading (cf. Acts 17:11).
2. Those in the place physically to hear (attendance) - Hebrews 10:25.
3. Those in the position spiritually to hear (attitude) - Acts 10:33.

C. Blessing upon those who practice this Book:

1. "*Keep those things*" - (cf. Jeremiah 15:16 & 20:9). “It is not a book of mere prediction. Its moral instruction must be heeded” (Erdman).
2. A student of the Word - II Timothy 2:15 (& cf. Nehemiah 8:8).
3. A sower of the Word - Psalm 126:5-6.

Summary: “Thus read, the book is of practical helpfulness & of ethical value. It is not designed to satisfy curiosity, but to stimulate courage & steadfastness as well as hope” (Erdman). “The hope of Christ’s return is not a matter for speculation & star gazing, but it is an incentive to sanctity & service. If this study does not make you a more consistent & earnest Christian, you have missed the message entirely” (Brooks).

Conclusion: John concludes verse 3 with the words, "*for the time is at hand.*" This promise, meaning that the time is near, is repeated in 22:10, "*Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*" It has been said, "If it was urgent for Christians in John's time to study this book of prophecy: how much more urgent it is for those of us who are 1900 years closer to the time when it will all be actually taking place." (Morris) But remember, the theme of this Book is the revealing of Jesus Christ. We need the proper vision of Christ in order to love Him more & serve Him better. Consider the Transfiguration of Christ in Matthew 17. God speaks from heaven, "*This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him*" (:5). “What the church today needs more than anything is the spiritual sight to see no man save Jesus only” (Barrett). How about you & me? How is our “spiritual sight”? May God grant us a proper vision of Christ that will cause us to love Him more & serve Him better!