

5-7-23 Seven Churches of Revelation

Revelation 1:1-20.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

A few weeks ago, in our life group we were discussing how hard it is to continuously invite the same group of people/friends to church. Even how hard it is to share the gospel to those in your circle that know you and your past or have been abused in other church experiences. How much is too much?

Then someone shared an answer they had received from a close friend of theirs. Their answer was, they don't believe that if Jesus was walking the earth today, like He was in N.T. times He wouldn't go to any of the churches today, nor feel welcome in them. Their thoughts are based on their belief that the church is full of hypocrites and sinful people, and He (Jesus) wouldn't go to any of them. And since He wouldn't go, I don't have too either. (We can be clever, can't we?)

At first, I understood their thoughts and said, well maybe Jesus wouldn't visit 75% of the churches but, He would Bethel, because we have it all together! Then after I thought about it more, I realized I was wrong. Jesus would visit every church He felt like. He visited the Synagogues every opportunity He could. Jesus used every opportunity to correct man's belief system and point to the truth of His gospel. Every church in the world is full of hypocrisy and sinfulness, some are more aware of it than others, and some might seek after the Holy Spirit more than others. But we are all guilty!

I also think that when Jesus visited churches, because He is God, would say and do whatever was necessary for that church. This is exactly what we will be looking at regarding the Seven Churches of Revelation. Jesus sends these Churches a message of what He knows of them, and the apostle John gets to write it all down.

The Apostle John is the last standing of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ. Many years have gone by since John had seen Jesus' return to Father from the Mt. of Olives (60 plus years). Tradition says that John had been beaten and boiled alive and yet did not die, so he was sent to the isle of Patmos to live alone deserted.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, means the revealing, unveiling of Jesus as fully God. God reveals all the depths of His Son in the book of Revelation. In the book of Daniel, he is told to seal mysteries of God, but in Revelation, God dictates to John and reveals the rest of the story.

Revelation 1- Those things which were.

Revelation 2-3- Those things which are.

Revelation 4-22- Those things which shall come.

In this series we will be studying **Revelation Chapters 1-3**. Specifically, into the Seven Churches of Revelation. Those seven churches were real and in operation during John's time. Each of the churches represents churches throughout history and I believe you can find these same churches alive today. As a matter of fact, I believe these churches can be found in individual believers today.

The Seven Churches are: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodiceans. As we study them, we will see all those seven churches in our lives here at Bethel.

Today, we are looking at **Revelation 1**. The key to the entire bible is found in this chapter.

“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. (v.18)”

Read Revelation 1:1-3.

The Revealing:

1. The Man of the book.

- God gave His story, unveiling of His Son to an angel, a heavenly servant, to John an earthly servant. John, who was a witness of to the testimony of all that Jesus had done while ministering on earth.
- John was given the great responsibility of witnessing and writing down all that God was going to reveal to him. John had been there with Jesus as the suffering servant, the lamb of God that was slaughtered for sins of man. John would have the awesome opportunity of witnessing Jesus, the Messiah, the conquering king.
- He was hearing things while in the spirit - **Rev 1:10-12**
- He was shown things while in the spirit – **Rev 1:2**
- He was shown things and heard things from an angel – **Rev 22:8**

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Rev. 22:8

2. The Blessing from the book.

- **Read verse 3.**
- Three-fold blessing in this verse.
- To read the book of Revelation. **“Blessed is he who reads...”**

1 Tim 4:13, Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

- He who hears - **“...and those who hear the words of this prophecy...”**
- Eight times in the gospels Jesus says, **“He who has ears let him hear.”** We are to listen and listen intently.
- He who keeps what is written is repeated seven times – **Rev 1:3; 2:26; 3:8; 3:10; 12:17; 14:12; 22:7-9.**

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. James 1:22

- There is an urgency in this because **“things which must shortly take place” (v.1) “the time is near.” (v.3)**
- There is an urgency because of great apathy to the ways and things of God.

2 Peter 3:3-4, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”

3. The Partakers of the book.

- **Read verses 4.**
- The seven churches in Asia – **Rev 1:4**
- **“Grace to you and peace...”** There cannot be peace without grace. God’s grace.
- God the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- **Read verse 5-6.**
- **“...Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler over the kings of the earth.”** What awesome attributes of our savior.
- Jesus is the first and only one who has been resurrected from the dead. Jesus is the only one who has been resurrected and now has a resurrected body – He will not die again.
- Who loved us – **Rev 1:5; Rom 8:35-39.**
- Who washed us from our sins in his own blood – **Rev 7:14.**

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18-19.

- Who hath made us kings – **Rev 1:6; 5:10**
- Who hath made us priests – **Rev 1:6.**

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” 1 Peter 2:9

4. The Preview of the book.

- **Read verses 7.**
- Look at Jesus Christ’s Destiny. **“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”**
- Notice the contrast in how Jesus will be coming back compared to how He came the first time.
- All eyes will see and be on Him.
- **Read verse 8.**
- Look at Christ’s Deity. **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**
- Jesus is the beginning and the end; He is the A through Z!

1 John 1:1-4, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

Revealing:

5. The Conversation

- **Read verses 9-12.**
- John the Apostle, our brother, our companion in tribulation and kingdom, exiled on Patmos; on the Lord’s Day (Sunday).

- John heard a voice and was given work to do. **“What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia.”**
- John describes what he turned around and saw. (7 golden lampstands)
- **Read verses 13-16**, notice John’s description of Jesus: **“One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.”**
- Contrasted with the carpenter that John walked the roads of Israel with.
- Jesus’ white hair depicts His purity.
- Jesus’ eyes like a flame of fire depicts his x-ray vision. He sees all and there is nowhere for anyone to hide from Him.
- Jesus’ feet were like fine brass, and this illustrates His perfect judgement. He makes no mistakes and comes the second time as the judge.
- Jesus’ voice will drowned out all other noises, when He speaks all of creation pauses and listens.
- Out of Jesus’ mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, when He speaks, it will cut through everything.
- Jesus’ countenance speaks of His glory shining will be all the sunshine we need for eternity.
- Look at John’s response to seeing Jesus in His King role. He fell down face first and appeared dead. **Read verse 17.**
- Jesus’ response? “He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, **“Do not be afraid...”**
- **Read verses 18-20.**
- Jesus explains that the seven stars in His right hand are His messengers and the seven golden lampstands that He stood in the midst of were the seven churches.
- John will be writing the mysteries of Revelation, **“the things you have seen” (Rev.1), “the things which are” (Rev.2-3), and “things which will take place after this.” (Rev.4-22)**

Conclusion

The Jesus that stood before John is what is soon to come. The conquering King! One day God will give Him the word to go get His bride, the church and that will user in the things still to come.

The prayer of every believer should be the same as John’s in **Revelation 22:20, He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.** We should be looking for His gathering of His bride.

If you are not a believer today, what is hindering you?