

Last week we looked at the book of Revelation and the different ways people interpret the book. We saw that there were ten (10) reasons we as Christians generally regard the book as mostly prophetic in nature and content.

In review those 10 reasons were;

1. Jesus Christ Himself,
2. The Church,
3. The resurrection of the saints,
4. The great tribulation,
5. Satan and Evil,
6. The Man of Sin,
7. The end of apostate Christendom,
8. The beginning, middle, and end of the Gentiles,
9. The second Coming,
10. Israel's covenants with God.

These were all areas that God began to deal within the other 65 books of the Bible, and yet are not completed until Revelation. Notice the word is singular and not plural. This is significant because you must either believe it is all revealed by God to John, or none of it is the revealed word of God. With that in mind, the book is divided up into three major sections. Each dealing with Jesus Christ

Chapter 1 - The Person of Jesus Christ- Christ in Glory

Chapter 2 -3 The Possession of Jesus Christ - The Church in the World

Chapter 4- 22 The Program of Jesus Christ - The scene in Heaven

Today we want to look at just Chapter 1. This chapter is divided into seven (7) subjects. You will begin to notice the number 7. In Israel's day the number seven represented completeness.

1. *Title of the Book* - vs. 1:1 It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the opening of the seal that was sealed by Daniel. It is enlightening the mystery of God. Paul spoke of this mystery in Col. 1:24-27. It is the mystery of who Jesus Christ is, which is the hope of glory. So what is being revealed? It is that which must shortly take place. Look quickly at 2 Peter 1:20 I submit to you that this verse requires that every Christian not interpret any single text of scripture by itself. But it must be done in light of the entire Word of God. Therefore, look at the symbols of this book in light of the entire Bible. What is reality and what is symbolism. John makes it very plain which is which. We also see in this verse the chain of who told whom. God told Jesus Christ, who told an Angel, who told John, who told us.

2. *The Method of Revelation* - vs. 1:2 John wrote what he saw. However, we can only imagine the vividness and the realism John must have experienced with God as the one who revealed to

John all these things.

3. *The Beatitude of Bible Study - vs. 1:3* We commonly think that the only beatitudes are found in Matt. 5. However, Revelation contains seven beatitudes. Verse three is just the first one. It is interesting to note that it is in the book of Revelation, an often ignored book, God saw fit to emphasize the importance of Bible study. It is as if God knew we would not read it if we didn't have to. Yet He promises us a special blessing if we study this book.

4. *Greetings from John and from Jesus Christ – vs. 1:4-8* Here John identifies exactly to whom he is writing this Revelation. It is to the seven churches of Asia. We know it as Asia Minor or Turkey. It is that area around the Mediterranean Sea on the East coast. The greeting also is from the seven spirits. Now is where things can get confusing. However, if you will just stay with me I think I can straighten it out for you. The seven spirits refer to the Holy Spirit. For now just accept that. We will see later that the seven branches of the lamp stand refer back to the Holy Spirit and we can tie the two together. But the greeting is also from God; Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. Look at verse 5. We see that the greeting from Jesus Christ is described as Christ, who was the first to rise from the dead, after He gave His blood for our sins. Then in verse 8, we see the completeness and the eternity of who God really is. "I am the Alpha and Omega", the beginning and the end. Heb. 13:8 says that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

5. *Jesus Christ in a Glorified Body – vs. 1:9-18* We begin in this passage to see John identify with the seven churches in their pain and trouble. He had been exiled to Patmos which is off the coast and only 10 miles long by 6 miles wide. Yet it is here that God reveals to John the only account of the future. Again God restates that He is the first and last and commands John to write everything down for the seven churches. In verses 12-13 John saw seven candlesticks with one in the middle. These candlesticks represent the seven churches and the one in the middle represent Christ. How do we know that the candlesticks are the seven churches? Look at John 8:12. We are the light of the world because of who we are. Verse 14-16 describe Jesus Christ in His power and Judgment role as righteous, Holy, Lord. In Verse 18 we see Christ again referred to as the one who died, and rose again, and has victory over hell and death. What a wonderful promise.

6. *Time division of the Contents of Revelation – vs. 1:19* It is here that John spells out for us the period of time he is writing about. He writes about the things he has already seen, the Glorified Christ. Just who Christ is and shall always be. Also the things which are. Those things which pertain to the church and the body of Christ. We will look at those in detail for the next few Sundays. And then, the things which will be about to happen. These are the things chapters 4-22 describe and are the most interesting. We'll talk later about those.

7. *Sevens stars and Seven Candlesticks – vs. 1:20* Up to now you only could guess that the seven candlesticks were the seven churches. Yet here, God makes it very plain to John what each represents. The Revelation of God is clean and the symbolism is always identified as such. The seven stars are angels or messengers that carried the word to each of the churches. This can be

confusing, yet it can be enlightening. I trust you have seen some things you never saw before and you understand that the book of Revelation is not to be feared, but to be read and reread. God promises to honor that and bless you for it. It is exciting to understand any mystery especially God's mystery. Next week we will begin to look at just what John wrote to the seven churches