



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### The Vision of the Apostle John Concerning the Future Revelation 1:1-20

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*"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. <sup>3</sup> Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

*<sup>4</sup> John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.*

*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

*<sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with 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.*

*<sup>8</sup> "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."*

*<sup>9</sup> I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."*

*<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> Write the things*

*which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. <sup>20</sup> The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands which you saw are the seven churches."*

## **Background Notes**

First -- the correct name for the last book of the Bible is "**Revelation**" -- **not Revelations!** Revelation is singular, not plural! So don't tell your friends that you're studying the Book of Revelations!

Who wrote this book? When and where was it written? All these answers are found here in chapter 1. The apostle John is the author (v1, 4, 9). The apostle John was not martyred, as were the rest of the apostles. Because of his testimony and ministry as a Christian, John was exiled to Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of what is now the country of Turkey.

On Patmos, in about 95AD, near the end of his life, John received the vision from the Lord that is called the book of Revelation. You can visit the beautiful little island of Patmos today, and guides will even show you the grotto where John is traditionally supposed to have received the vision, but of course we can't be sure of the exact location!

In verse 10 we see that the vision came to John while he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." John was walking in close fellowship with the Lord, and thus he was in a position to have the Lord speak with him and speak to him. That certainly has an application for us, doesn't it? John was "near to hear" -- and so should we be near to the Lord if we're going hear what the Lord has to say to us. Whether it's encouragement and guidance, or exhortation and correction, we need to be near in order to hear!

John was "*in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.*" Notice that even in the 1st century AD, Sunday was referred to as "the Lord's Day." Why? The reason is that Sunday, the first day of the week, was the day of the Lord's resurrection.

The Lord Himself told John to write up the vision and send it to the seven 1st century churches of Asia: "*to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea*"(v11). In that day the Roman province of Asia was where the country of Turkey is today.

The apostle John's greeting is addressed to those seven churches. Notice that all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned in the greeting. Verses 4-5: *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne* [that does not mean that there re seven Holy Spirits – this phrase refers to the Holy Spirit **in His fullness** -- the number seven in Scripture is the number of

perfection and completeness and fullness] <sup>5</sup> *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...*"

This greeting came to the seven churches from God the eternal Father, the Holy Spirit in His perfection and fullness, and Jesus Christ the Son, who loved us and washed us from our sins.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. The Book of Revelation concerns the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Verse 1 tells us that the Book of Revelation is not the Revelation of the Apostle John, but **the Revelation of Jesus Christ** to the Apostle John. Notice what we learn about Jesus Christ in this first chapter of Revelation: "*and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood*"(v5). Jesus Christ is the **firstborn from the dead**. What does that mean? He not only has the place of honor and preeminence (firstborn in that sense), but He is the first person resurrected out from among the dead. Now at this point you might wonder, "What about those people in the Bible that were raised back to life when Jesus died, before the resurrection of Christ? How can Jesus Christ be the "first born" from the dead? Answer: Those other people were not **resurrected** from the dead; they were **raised** from the dead. Those people all eventually died again. The Lord was resurrected from the dead with a new glorified body -- never to die again! All believers who have died will be resurrected in the future, never to die again. The Lord is the firstborn from the dead.

Jesus Christ is now **ruler over the kings of the earth**. And not only that, but we who have been saved from our sins (v5) are now in His Kingdom. He has made us kings and priests, and we will praise the Lord forever and ever (v6).

When you share all this good news with unbelievers they will probably laugh at you and think that you're crazy, but they will change their tune in the future because the Lord is coming back. "*Behold, He is coming with 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*"(v7). Every eye will see Him -- this includes all believers and all unbelievers, those who are living and those who have died. But why will all the tribes of the earth mourn? They'll mourn because the Lord is coming back in judgment. He will be coming back to set up His long awaited Kingdom here on this earth. This is known as the "Millennial Kingdom of Christ," or the Millennium, because it will last for a thousand years (Revelation 20.)

In verses 8 and 17 the Lord referred to Himself as the Alpha and Omega, "*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.*" Alpha is the first letter of the Greek

alphabet, and *omega* is the last letter. The point here is that the Lord spans both time and eternity. He is eternal! He's the First and the Last. He's the Alpha and Omega.

In the vision, the Lord was seen standing in the midst of seven lamp stands with seven stars in His right hand. The Lord Himself gave John the interpretation of this part of the vision in verse 20: "*The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands which you saw are the seven churches.*" The "seven stars" are the seven angels or messengers of the seven churches, and the "seven lamp stands" that you saw represent the seven churches themselves.

Verse 18: "*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.*" Jesus Christ has the authority over death, and He has authority over the place of the dead. Satan no longer has the power of death because Jesus Christ has died; He has conquered both death and Satan! The Book of Revelation concerns the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

## **2. The Book of Revelation concerns the revelation of the future.**

In verse 19 John was told to write "the things which you have seen" and "the things which are" and "the things which will take place after this." This verse gives us the basic outline of the Book of Revelation. "The things which you have seen" would be what John saw and recorded in Revelation 1. "The things which are" would be Revelation 2 and 3, in which the present state of the Church, the body of Christ, is seen in the messages to the seven churches. "The things which will take place" are found in chapters 4-22, that describe the judgments of the future Tribulation Period and events at the end of time and on into eternity. We'll go over this outline again, but the important point here is to realize that most of the Book of Revelation is **still future**.

A different interpretation of the Book of Revelation is called the "preterist view." This school of thought interprets the Book of Revelation as **history**. These people believe Revelation refers to the time of the Roman persecutions of the early Church. In the preterist view, a view that refers to past events, all of the prophecies in the Book of Revelation have already been fulfilled. However, we don't believe that the historical view is the correct interpretation of the Book of Revelation. Most of the Book of Revelation is a revelation of **future** events.

### **Practical Application**

#### **Expect to be blessed as you study Revelation!**

Verse 3: "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*" "The time is near" -- not because it was all fulfilled in the first few

centuries AD, but the time is near because the beginning of the vision takes place in the 1st century. Chapters 2 and 3 will describe the state of the Church from the 1st century on.

What about this "blessing" to the reader of Revelation? Some folks have never read or studied the Book of Revelation. They feel that it's too complicated and they can't understand it -- or even that they're afraid of it! Well, there are seven "beatitudes" (blessings) in the Book of Revelation, and this is the first one: "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy.*"

This blessing should encourage you to read and study this interesting book of Scripture. Get into it, and you **will** be blessed -- God says so! Expect to be blessed as you study Revelation!