

And behold, in 2012, God had mercy on the United States, and His servants the evangelical christians in all their shapes and flavors, and He saw that Mitt Romney was elected.

And graciously, the old USA, because of the new leadership and the evangelical christians, began to have a revival. A new work ethic took hold of the people, and honesty and integrity were rolled back to a time 100 years previous.

Because of God's benevolence to His servants the evangelicals, the United States prospered like never before. It again took it's place as the worlds leading nation. Other nations fell easily under it's umbrella of blessing and a sort of peace reigned.

God did this so that His servants, the evangelical christians in the United States could live out their lives in comfort and security and could enjoy a grand old age secure in the knowledge that their 401 K's and retirement pensions were rock solid, right until the rapture took them all safely home to their porch swings and rocking chairs in the sky. *the plan of god according to the evangelical church in the USA*

Raise your hands if you've been guilty of just such thoughts and dreams and maybe even prayers. Or am I the only one.

Rev. 1:1 - 8 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

4John to the seven churches that 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, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6and

He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

8“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Teaching through the book of Revelation is a daunting task. And one that I am convinced that I am not up to.

But as we progress through this book, if I can leave you with just one thing that you don't have now . . .

. . . the fact that Sovereign God, has given His son all authority in the universe, and that taking this world back from Satan is the single most glorious task, and that in every micron of history, our sovereign God, who loves us with an incomprehensible love, is working all of these events together for our ultimate good and His ultimate glory . . .X2

. . . then, that will be enough. That is the foundation I plan to build on, and I believe we'll see it in every page.

A word about our pace. The Holy Spirit may work this out differently, but my mindset at the beginning is to spend a good portion of time in chapters 1 - 3, and then when we get into the sweeping visions of future things, we'll actually move pretty fast.

We need chapter 1! The problems that are visited with the churches in chapters 2 and 3 are largely because we have a low view of Jesus. X2. We need to be in chapter 1 of Revelation. We need to see the glorified Son of God. Over and over. The church in the USA is paltry, because our view of Jesus . . . is paltry.

Vs. 1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,*

The apokalypsis....of Jesus, Christ. The word means unveiling.

Revealing.

If you grew up in the 1950's and 60's like me, it used to be a big deal to go see the new cars when they were unveiled. The new models. At the car show they would have the new models hidden behind a big curtain, and at the proper time, the curtain would fall, and the new model would be revealed. Everyone gasps.

This book we're going to study is the revealing of Jesus.

You say, I thought the 4 gospels were the revealing of Jesus. And they are. But if that was where the story ended, we would have a stunted view.

The world would have a picture of a defeated Jesus. His disciples saw Him resurrected for 40 days, but mostly, the picture is an incomplete one.

This book is the Revelation of the Glorious Son of God, who conquers, and reigns forever.

Let's take a further step back and consider something else about this word Revelation.

What we know about God, we know because He has graciously revealed Himself to us.

Hebrews 1:1,2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds

We have a God who speaks. Who reveals Himself to us, in words.

We have no capacity to know anything about God beyond what we see in His creation, unless He tells us. Revelation. Words. Information about God!

Left to ourselves, we'd be passing our children through the fire (abortion is just a modern version of this practice) and engaging in same sex marriage.

This is the Revelation, the unveiling, of a Jesus Christ we haven't seen before. Glorified. Sitting at the right hand of His father. Returning to claim this earth as His own, judge all sin, and reigning. He will defeat every foe. He will sit on a throne in Glory, forever.

1The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

Every phrase has richness. *which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants*

So God gave Jesus this revelation to show His slaves.

That shouldn't seem odd. The trinity never operates independently of each other. Clear back in Genesis 1, at the creation, you get to verse 26, and you see this; *26Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*

Here, God gives Jesus the revelation of Himself, to show to . . . who?

doulois, autou. His slaves.

This book isn't for the world. This book is for the slaves of Jesus.

The world thinks this book is bizarre fiction. The world thinks John was on an acid trip. The world CANNOT understand the things that are here. This is for us. Us slaves.

the things which must soon take place

OK, well He got that wrong. It's been 2,000 years. soon take place?? Really??

The word translated "soon" is tachos. We get our word tachometer. speed meter. He's saying when these things begin, they will advance with speed. It all happens quickly, once it's underway.

and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His slave John

Some of the older translations have the word signified. When you're at a conference and you see the folks up in the front signing for the deaf, that would be a good illustration of this word. Communicated it by His angel seems to be a good translation. Signboards communicate.

When else have angels been used to mediate God's revelation? Acts 7:53 and Galatians 3:19 both tell us the law was given through the mediation of angels.

and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His slave John 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

John is using the language of a courtroom. John says he has testified to; The Word of God, testimony of Jesus, and to all that his eyes beheld.

And that's what we have. Words from God. Testimony, directly from Jesus. And then all of the visions that John saw!

Vs.3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

There's a 3 point sermon in this verse. Don't worry, I'm not going to preach it.

Blessed, happy, well, is the one who (1) reads, and those who (2) hear (listens, takes it to heart), the words of the prophecy, and (3) heed, obey, put into action, the things which are written in it:

See the natural progression. Read it. Hear it. Do it.

If I'm doing my job right, we'll do at least 2 of those. I'm laboring all of these points because I want us to get beyond the surface. You don't get the blessing by just reading it. Nor do you get the blessing by reading it and being alarmed by it. The blessing comes from doing all 3. Read it. Hear it. Do it.

I can't make you do it.

You know the world reads this book, and the last thing that comes to mind is "happiness". Blessedness.

To them the word apocalypse is dark. Frightening. Everything they love is going to grind to a halt. The sky is going to fall. Darkness is going to ensue. Judgement is going to be final. Wrath is going to be unimaginable. Crushing.

Then 5 minutes later they're thinking they've really got to stop at the market and get some Crest toothpaste.

The world never gets past no. 1 above. They read it. They walk away from the screen. Poof, it's gone. Have I got some eggs left for pancakes tomorrow? I wonder if the neighbors dog is going to bark all night again . . and so it goes.

Don't be like the world and just read, and forget what you read a minute later. Embrace this book, this Jesus. Do it! So the blessing will come.

Vss. 4-6 are the salutation.

VS. 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

These were 7 real churches in Asia minor. We'll have more to say about that. But the document was to be copied 7 times and each church was to have a copy.

No big deal, right. Just start an email and put Ephesus in the "To" line, then CC to the other 6 churches.

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, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Here, every member of the trinity offers grace and peace to these seven churches. And to all real churches that have slaves of Jesus.

That should make His real church feel very very blessed. We've got the whole trinity rooting for us.

I love the old acrostic for GRACE God's Riches At Christ's Expense! We deserved Wrath. We got riches. Why? Because of Jesus blood, that's why.

Grace and peace.

We have known relative peace in our lives here in the USA. But if it pleases God to leave us here to see some of the things described here, some of the birthpangs perhaps, or the dissolution of our nation, our security, our wealth...

There is a peace that we haven't yet known. In all of that, God provides it. God can give perfect peace when the world around you is dissolving. We would do well to prepare for just such a day. Grace, and peace, are ours. No one can take that away from us.

Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come

This is Eternal God. Psalms 90:2 *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne

What or who are the seven spirits of God.

This is a mystery. We don't have very much information. But I can show you some other occurrences where the 3rd person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is referenced as 7, the number of completion.

In Isaiah 11, the "Branch" is described thus;

*1Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*

*2The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

In Zechariah 3:8,9 and 4:9 we have this reference; My servant, the branch.

8'Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. 9'For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

Then similarly in chapter 4 we have this;

8Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. 10"For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

Then, finally in Revelation 5:6, this;

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

So we have grace and peace from God the father, and the Holy Spirit, and then this in verse 5;

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

faithful witness. How is Jesus a faithful witness? This passage in Hebrews explains this term.

Heb. 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

He faithfully showed us the Father. He is the faithful witness. That is one of His titles used in the letter to the church at Laodicea. *To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:*

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead

...the firstborn of the dead. What is that?

This is where a brief study of the original language is very helpful. The word for firstborn is *prototikos*. It's the word that we get our word *prototype*.

Out where I work we've got 7 legacy camera mounts that are approaching the end of their design life. The electronics are dying and they use that antique stuff called 'film'.

We don't have money for new ones, so we are doing the design and building an upgrade that would hopefully give them 20 more years of life. Right now we're working on the prototype. When we get it perfect, or as good as we're going to be able to do, we'll do the other 6 just like it. Prototype.

Jesus is our prototype. He went through death and rose victorious on the other side. We will too. He's the prototype, we're going to follow in resurrection to glory.

Show me another faith that has ***that!!***

And then finally, my personal favorite in an election year;

*5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth*

Man, I love that!

I confess, I like to watch the politics unfolding on Fox News. But while all of my cohorts at work are getting their panties tied in knots, I happen to know who the real ruler of all these little puppets is!

Barack Obama is not the most powerful man in the world! Neither is Netanyahu, or Achmadinajad, or Ban Ki-moon, or anybody else. All of them are at the pleasure of the "ruler of the kings of the earth". **All of them!**

Not only that, but He's looking out for me. No one can touch me without His command. He is the King of all kings! **Sovereign over everything!**

Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

Then this introduction just gets better and better. John sort of breaks into praise. He's talking about Jesus, and he just can't help himself! This is a doxology. doxos logia. Praise Words.

To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

That is so beautiful you hate to break it down. He loves us! He paid the debt for our sins by His blood! He has elevated us to be Rulers in His Kingdom and Priests to His God and Father. Wow!

to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

If you missed my morning opportunity to preach a couple of weeks ago, you could sum up what I said in these words. *to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. I WILL be exalted among the Nations!*

I'm really excited to teach through Revelation, and here's why. I've discovered I'm having the most fun when I'm teaching about the glory of Jesus. And that's what Revelation is. The Glory of Jesus.

Now the next 2 verses are like a Forward. A Prologue.

Remember in the salutation in vs. 4. One of the signator's is

from Him who is and who was and who is to come

And remember that John is testifying to "the Word of God"

These next 2 verses are The Almighty, writing the prologue.

Vs. 7,8 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

I began this study with a bit of foolishness. We think it's all about this life. Now.

I'm as guilty as anybody. I think it's all about having a good time with my toys. My garage full of junk. My antique cameras.

Someone has said the American church is 3000 miles wide, and an inch deep. I resemble that!

Here's what it's all about.

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

That statement should captivate our thoughts, our motives, our joy, our hope, our lives.

What are we doing messing around with all of the silly stuff we're messing around with, when 6,000 + people groups remain un-evangelized??

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

I'm preaching to myself here. Join in if you like, but for me, this is driving me crazy. It's like I'm trapped here, with my stuff, worrying about whether times are going to get better or worse, from the mindset that, I might not be able to play as much if things go badly.

How shallow is that, in view that Jesus is coming, maybe tomorrow, and I haven't even told the people I work with, let alone 6,000 ethnic groups that are waiting for someone to come!

It's about the Glory of Jesus! The church in America needs to wake up!

Vs. 7,8 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Join with me in praying that this study will be a transforming one.