

Hurstbourne Baptist Church; September 6, 2020
Sermon Notes: Revelation 1:1-8
“Grace and Peace”

What is Revelation?

- The word “revelation” means **unveiling** or disclosure. The verbal form in Greek (ἀποκαλύπτω) means “to reveal” or “to disclose” or “to bring to light” (BDAG, 112). Now consider Revelation 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.”
- The Book of Revelation is also a **prophecy**, according to verse 3. The prophets were responsible to speak God’s Word to God’s people. Sometimes the Old Testament prophets would speak a word from God to the people of God about contemporary events. And sometimes the Old Testament prophets would speak a word from God to the people of God about future events. The Book of Revelation does both. In other words, the Book of Revelation is a word from God to the people of God about contemporary events and future events. In this sense, the Book of Revelation is much like Old Testament books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah.
- The Book of Revelation is also a **letter**, according to verse 4. John dispatches the Book of Revelation “to the seven churches that are in Asia.” John is like a secretary who writes down the words and visions that **Jesus** gave to him (1:1, 22:16).
- In summary, the Book Revelation is a **letter** to the people of God that **unveils** how history will conclude.

The Context of Revelation: Dangers, Toils and Snares

- John wrote the Book of Revelation while in exile on the Isle of Patmos.
- Irenaeus wrote that John “beheld the apocalyptic vision ... towards the end of **Domitian’s** reign” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.XXX.3 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Robert and James Donaldson, ed., 1:559). Domitian was emperor from **81-96AD**.
- According to a secular Roman historian named Suetonius, Domitian was a moral degenerate.
- The intense, localized persecution of Christians makes sense under Domitian’s reign, because a “cult of emperor worship” was reinstated during this time, particularly in Ephesus (Beale, *Revelation*, 3).
- Domitian insisted upon being called **Lord** and **God**.

The Purpose of Revelation

- The Purpose Revelation is to **encourage** the church.
- John opens his letter with a greeting of **grace** and **peace** from God.
 1. God the Father: “Him who is and who was and who is to come” (1:5).
 2. God the Holy Spirit: “The seven spirits who are before his throne” (1:5)
 3. God the Son: “Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth” (1:6).
- John opens his letter with a Celebration of Christ’s Love (1:5b-6)
- John opens his letter with the Promise of Christ’s Return (1:7)

Our Response to Revelation

- John writes, “Behold, He is **coming**” (1:7).
- Jesus promises, “Behold, I am **coming** soon” (22:12).
- In response, the Spirit and the Bride say, “**Come**” (22:17).
- “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am **coming** soon’” (22:20).
- “Amen. **Come**, Lord Jesus” (22:20).

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- “Though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators” (Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 29).
- “Christianity, we are reminded, is essentially something that concerns the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We start with that fact and emphasize it, because Christianity is not primarily a teaching, nor a philosophy, nor even a way of life. In the first instance it is, before all, a relationship to a person. The New Testament in a sense will not even discuss with us the kind of life we are going to live until we have come to a satisfactory answer about Him. All along, it shuts us down to this one matter and holds us up against this one thing: it refuses to discuss our questions and our problems with us except in terms of this person. “I want to live a good life” says someone. “All right,” replies the New Testament, “but before we can discuss with you how you can live such a life, what have you made of Him? Where does He come into your scheme of things? What is His place and position in your whole outlook and world?” (Lloyd-Jones, *The Heart of the Gospel*, 43).