

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Reading, Hearing and Keeping the Prophecy (Revelation 1:1-7)

Jerry Marek 01/20/10

1. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

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, (Revelation 1:1)

- a) The book of Revelation is called the Revelation of Jesus because it reveals Jesus' heart and His leadership. The Father's primary purpose in giving this book is to unveil the beauty of Christ to His servants. The secondary purpose of the book is to give us insight and clarity regarding end-time events.
- Revelation describes to us the beauty of Jesus at His Second Coming, by giving us insight into the personality, power, and action plan of Jesus as He prepares His Church to participate with Him in releasing God's glory in all the nations.
 - Habakkuk 2:14 says: *“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”*
 - Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9-10; and 40:5 are but three of many passages in the OT that help describe the physical, spiritual and governmental consummation of heaven and earth that takes place as the knowledge of the glory of the LORD fills the earth.

“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between nations and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.” The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

- In the book of Revelation, we read of the faithfulness of God's leadership as He judges all unrighteousness, and establishes Zion as the praise of the earth, ruling from David's throne and redeeming His bride. No one on earth will be able to hide from the knowledge of God's glory, and no nation will be able to resist His government.

It says in Revelation 11:15... *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The Kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*

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b) At the outset of the book we see the Father has commissioned Jesus to reveal more of His majesty to His Church. Jesus reveals Himself as the Bridegroom King who judges all that hinders love as He takes over the earth.

- Before Jesus' ascension into heaven, He promised to continue declaring His Father and His Kingdom to the Church. He says in John 17:26, *"I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."* The book of Revelation is the final canonized document of our Scriptures, and a very important fulfillment of a promise He made to the Father.
- We see in this book that Jesus is a passionate Bridegroom who is filled with tender, yet jealous love. Jesus will come only in context to a prepared Bride who lives in unity with Him and the Spirit.

"The marriage of the Lamb has come... His wife has made herself ready. (Rev 19:7)

- Jesus is a King who will intervene to save the earth by taking over the government of every nation for the glory of God and the good of His people forever. Jesus will replace all the unrighteous governments on earth with righteous leaders and laws.
- Jesus is a righteous and wise judge, who works in redemptive fashion to confront the hatred of God and truth in order to establish love across the whole earth. (Rev 16:5-7; 19:1-5)

"Great and marvelous are Your works... just and true are Your ways, O King of the Saints!... For Your judgments have been manifested. (Rev 15:3-4)

- The Second Coming events will display the various tensions of God's love that will forever change the course of human history and usher us into the next age. It is the hour when God's nature of love will be manifested and clarified before the whole world. In the person of Christ the world will watch God declare His name in terms of mercy, compassion, deliverance, protection, righteousness, justice and wrath.
- Jesus will declare His Father's name again as He delivers the saints, protects and saves Israel, destroys the wicked, and binds Satan in the bottomless pit, all through the partnership of a praying, purified Bride.
- The generation in which the Lord returns will witness the full opposition of God against the world, the flesh and the devil. This generation will see the Lord in the fullness of His zealous, compassionate love as He prepares His Church to partner with Him in the releasing of God's glory in the nations. The earth will meet Jesus, the Bridegroom, King and Judge in all of His passion and all of His fury. Passion towards those who are His. Fury toward those who have scorned His love, refused His tender affections, and embraced the things which God calls perversion and wickedness.

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2. The Glory of Jesus in His Church- The End Time Book of Acts

“(John), who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.” (Revelation 1:2)

- a) We are called to be faithful with these words in the same manner as the apostle John. In his notes on Revelation 1, Allen Hood describes the book of Revelation as the 'Acts of the End Time Apostles'. As the book of Acts describes the power of the Holy Spirit that was released through the early Church, so the Book of Revelation describes the power of the Holy Spirit that will be released through the End Time Church.
- Both Daniel and Revelation reveal the Church as purified and made ready in full agreement and partnership with the Lord.

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. (Dan 11:32)

And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time. (Dan 11:35)

The marriage of the Lamb has come... His wife has made herself ready. (Rev 19:7)

- b) The Book of Revelation is a “*canonized prayer manual*” that equips the Church to partner with Jesus in confronting Satan's authority. Jesus is coming back only after the Church is prepared in love, wisdom and faith to release the Tribulation through prayer against the Anti-Christ's empire. Jesus is waiting on the Church to grow up into agreement with His character and End Time plan.
- As Jesus' judgments progressively unfold, the Church will become greatly unified and focused in prayer. The judgments described in Revelation six through sixteen are given to us as an infallible prayer guide. Jesus reveals His action plan so that when the time comes, the Church will know exactly how to intercede according to God's will.
 - As Moses released God's judgments on Pharaoh by prayer (Exod 7-12), so the Church will release the Great Tribulation judgments on the Antichrist by prayer. The miracles and judgments in Exodus and Acts will be multiplied and released worldwide through prayer.

I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18-19)

- The End Time prayer movement under Jesus' leadership will bind and release His

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redemptive judgments according to the will of God. (Rev 5:8; 6:9-11; 8:3-5; 9:13; 10:6; 14:1-5, 18; 16:7; 19:2)

The prayers of the saints ascended before God... then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth... (Rev 8:4-5)

- The End Times prayer movement will be likened unto the forerunner ministry of John The Baptist, who was *the voice of one, crying, make ready the way of the LORD, make strait His paths*. The End Times prayer movement will be the voice of an entire generation of believers crying out with one unified voice, *“The Spirit and Bride say, come Lord Jesus!”*
- Through unified prayer and proclamation of the Gospel, the Church will hasten the day of the Lord. It says in 2 Peter 3:12 that we will be *“looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...”*
- To hasten the coming of our Lord, we must grow up in unity, purpose and the knowledge of God. Ephesians 3:14 informs us that we will come *“to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”* Revelation 19:7 tells us that *the Bride has made herself ready, dressed in the white linen of righteous deeds*.
- Quoting Wayne Grudem, who says, “To some extent, then, the degree to which we actually long for Christ's return is a measure of the spiritual condition of our lives at the moment.” Longing for the Bridegroom brings sobriety, producing zealotry for good works, righteousness and unity to the Church in a way that nothing else has the potential to do. (Titus 2:11-14)

3. The Blessing and Invitation

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. (Revelation 1:3)

- a) The Book of Revelation contains seven key blessings (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). Five of these encourage faithfulness in the face of fear, persecution and deception. Two of these, Rev 1:3 and 22:7, deal specifically with the blessing that comes to the person who keeps the words of this prophecy. They bookend the prophecy as an encouragement to believers to take the prophecy serious, to receive the revelation of Jesus' personality and plan, and to engage the content of the book in active partnership.
 - This verse contains a threefold blessing to take to the Lord when reading Revelation.
- b) The First: HE WHO READS- The early Church had the charge to read Revelation publicly, valuing its rightful place of being in the center of the community. The content of the book is

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vital for godliness and the formation of genuine Christian community. The Church must read, study and meditate upon this wonderful gift given to the body of Christ.

- Christian community is severely hindered by the loss of this prophecy. Without the book of Revelation, the Church's view of Jesus diminishes.
 - Jesus, whom we know as the Word of God and Lord of lords is replaced with an unusual spiritual man who gave a unique but not supreme revelation of God.
 - As the sovereignty and supremacy of Jesus fades into more sensible modern notions, the overflowing heart of genuine discipleship gives way to intellectualism and stale religion.
 - Jesus' return becomes an abstract concept, not a concrete plan designed to cultivate deep intimacy and fellowship between Christ and His Church.
 - An eternal perspective gives way to the increase of temporal pleasures.
 - The centrality of prayer and worship as a means of establishing God's government on earth is exchanged for human governmental methods. Marketing, rather than intercession, becomes the tool for advancing the Kingdom.
 - The fear of the Lord and His judgments are forgotten and the Church becomes emboldened to greed and compromise.
 - Perseverance is no longer necessary and we give way to the tolerance of other gospels.
- It is necessary for Christian community to gaze upon the beauty of Jesus concerning how He reveals Himself in light of His return. Only then will we begin to cultivate a true and eager expectation for His coming.

c) The Second: HE WHO HEARS- Hearing takes place when the spiritual senses of a person are awakened to the truths contained in the book. This begins by setting our minds and hearts to fully agree with the words of this prophecy. When we agree, the content will shift from the realm of principles to be pondered to the place of living understanding that demands a response.

- Jesus is described in Isaiah 50:4-5 as one with an awakened ear. The awakening enables Him to hear as the learned. Immediately, the verse connects the listening ear with the right response. What you hear and how you hear always display itself in behavior. Why? Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD has opened my ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. (Isa 50:4-5)

- I also want to point out that the condition of our hearing will be directly proportionate to

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our personal communion with the Holy Spirit. We possess the indwelling Christ and the mind of Christ, but if we do not actually commune with Him, wait on Him and listen to Him, we cannot expect to hear anything but our own human thoughts. This does not mean 'clearing our head', but rather filling our minds with the Scriptures, waiting patiently for revelation, and actually 'being still and knowing that He is God'.

- Mark 4:24 points to the importance of what you hear.

Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (Mark 4:24)

- Luke 8:18 points to the importance of how you hear.

Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and to him who does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away from him. (Luke 8:18)

- Seven times in the Gospels (Mt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35) and once in Rev 13:9, Jesus exhorts, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" Eight times in the Book of Revelation Jesus exhorts, "If anyone has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."
- The Word of God is to be cherished, pursued and sought after like hidden treasure. Those who attain through hunger will always receive more than those who do not treasure what they receive. If we do not treasure the Word of God it will be taken from us.
- God gives more to the hungry. Wisdom is given to the wise, not the foolish who scorn the treasure of God's counsel. True wisdom is simple: It is the fear of the Lord and the desperate hunger for wisdom. We need to be as Daniel, who longed for the wisdom of God.

It says in Daniel 2:20-22, "Daniel answered and said; "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. ""

- d) The Third: HE WHO KEEPS- God's word is not simply meant to be understood; it is to be kept. The Greek word used here means: 'to guard from loss'. Blessed is the one who guards the content of this book in a way which takes the details seriously. Blessed are those who fill their hearts with the living waters of this prophecy and zealously guard it.
- Blessed is the one who takes the details seriously, who searches enough to understand in

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a way that impacts our behavior and view of Christ and eternity.

- This prophecy is an invitation for hastening the day of the Lord through active participation. Which generation will read, hear, and then keep the prophecy? Which generation will come into the revelation of Christ that produces the faith to keep the prophecy?
- Jesus reiterates the invitation in Rev 22:7. Who will come into agreement with the reality of the imminence of Jesus' return and fully embrace the Lord's desire to come and establish justice on the earth? One generation will come into faith concerning the person and work of Jesus presented in this prophecy.

He says, *“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”* (Rev 22:7)

4. Jesus Christ, The Faithful Witness

Revelation 1:4-6:

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, 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, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a) The foundational issue of the End Times is “Who is Jesus?”

- Jesus is first described as *“THE FAITHFUL WITNESS”*. He has been, and will continue to be faithful to declare to us everything that is necessary for life and godliness. He has faithfully declared all that His Father sent Him to declare.
- We can trust His testimony. Revelation 19:10 tells us that “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” Every word that proceeds from the mouth of Jesus will prove powerful and effective. Not one word or thought that proceeds from Him will return to Him void.
- If we receive His words, we can also trust that we will not be surprised or overtaken by anything that is to come. Jesus has faithfully declared to us all that we need to know. It is written and sealed. As long as we do not add or take away from the Book of Revelation, we possess a pure and complete testimony.
- Jesus is the first-born from the dead. He has conquered death and Hades and promises the same victory, resurrection from the dead, to all who believe on Him and are born of the Spirit.

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- He is the ruler over the kings of the earth. Even in the darkest hours of the Tribulation, Jesus still remains sovereign over all things. He is in complete control and committed to the judgment of Satan and the deliverance of His people. He will execute perfect justice on earth and all rulers will be made to answer Him.
- He is the one who loves us and washes us of our sins. Even in a generation that will face the grossest sin and the deepest delusion, Jesus will be eagerly faithful to redeem those who repent and call on His name. Out of the generation of the Lord's return there will be a perfect people, cleansed in the blood of Christ and consumed by His love.

b) Once the foundation has been laid, the next issue is “Who has He called us to be?”

- We are kings. Jesus will use the Great Tribulation to prepare His Bride for ruling and reigning with Him in the age to come. We will partner with our King in the glorious ministry of intercession. We will pray, pronounce and prophesy of His coming Kingdom, and we partner with Christ as His ruling body on earth, calling down judgment on the Anti-Christ and his government.
- It is the glory of the generation of the Lord's return to be the generation that calls down the judgments and the Kingdom of God. The generation of the Lord's return will walk in the fullness of the New Covenant promise stated in Hebrews 11:39-40, “*And all these (the great could of witnesses), having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God has provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.*”
- All those who have gone before us and died in their faith will not reap the fullness of their reward until the Church that remains on earth becomes a perfect bride. On the day of our perfection the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then, those remaining in Christ will rise with them, and God will receive the faithful from every generation as a perfect and pleasing bride. The perfection of the End Times Church completes the testimony of Jesus in this age and ushers us into the age to come. At the return of Christ, the Patriarchs, the prophets and all the saints of past generations will receive the fullness of the promise of Jesus.
- We are priests. It is the priestly duty of the Church to minister before the Lord and proclaim Him before all mankind. This is first of all to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. He became for us the perfect sacrifice, that we might enter into His presence with thanksgiving and praise. Secondly, it is to preach the gospel of the kingdom to every tribe, tongue and nation on earth. Jesus will not come until every nation has heard His testimony.
- The greatness of our calling as kings and priests is revealed through worship and prayer. Psalm 68:24-27 describes a great host of worshipers led by the Jewish remnant during

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the generation of the Lord's return. It is a praying, worshiping Church, committed to the priesthood of the New Covenant, that will usher in the return of Christ.

- Men and women, young and old, will prophesy and proclaim Christ in the generation of His return. Everyone who is called by His name in that generation will have an important role to play in hastening the Day of the Lord. Joel prophesies, *“I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on My male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”* (Joel 2:28-29)
- We usually do not question the idea of a man preaching the Gospel, but many in the Church still struggle with the idea of women preachers. Psalm 68 is a song about the Day of the Lord, and touches on some of the things that will happen right before, during and right after Jesus' return. Psalm 68:11 confirms to us that there will be a great host of women preaching an 'apostolic message' in that time. It says, *“The LORD gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings (the gospel of the Kingdom) are a great host:”*

5. He is Coming

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. (Rev 1:7)

a) The key theme that flows throughout the book of Revelation is Jesus' return to the earth to rule all the nations (Rev 11:15; 19:15, 21). His End Time battle plan is to physically destroy all the evil governments on earth. He will do this by releasing His judgments on them during the Great Tribulation, as we will later read in Revelation 6-19.

- When Jesus returns, He will be coming with the clouds in the very same way in which He ascended into heaven. Jesus will return to the earth exactly as He left the earth. He will have the same glorified human body, the same character, the same purpose and plan. He is, was and will always be the same. There is no shadow or turning in this Man.

They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go up into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

- Every eye will see Him. When Jesus returns, there will be no one with an excuse. Every person will see Him with their own eyes. They will all realize that He is God. Jesus will come in glorious procession, filling the whole sky with His radiance and beauty.

“For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.” (Luke 17:24)

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- On the day of His coming, there will be mourning among every people group on earth. Entire nations will mourn because they have rejected the Lord of glory only to realize that He truly is King of kings and Lord of lords. On that day there will be mourning on earth unlike any other moment in history.

b) Even so, Amen...

- The Book of Revelation will greatly challenge our ideas about Jesus Christ. We will see later on in chapter one how the apostle John fell at Jesus' feet because he did not immediately recognize Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus is gracious and loving of us in the midst of our fallen nature. He knows our frame and our human nature. Even in the heights of His glory, as He reveals to us His most zealous and holy characteristics, Jesus still reveals Himself through humility and meekness in such a way that we can receive Him.
- Jesus is fully committed to revealing to us the full nature of His being. He will not shrink back nor relent until His people have come into full agreement with Him.