

The Beginning Of The End

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 9th, 2012 • Pastor Chris Lankford

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...

~Revelation 1:10-11 (NASB)

1) The Means And Blessings Of The Apocalypse

- A) Revelation (apocalypse) means an “uncovering” of something, or “revealing” of things previously unknown (Revelation 1:1). This book is no ordinary revelation, but “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ is the One revealing, disclosing, and uncovering throughout the book.
- B) Note that the only three references to “Jesus Christ” in the entire book occur here in the first five introductory verses (1:1, 2, 5). The author emphasizes that this is the same “Jesus Christ” who became incarnate, lived in human flesh, died on the cross, was resurrected from the dead, and will be disclosing the visions revealed in this book.
- C) John’s explanation of how the Apocalypse came to him is very specific (1:1), highlighting its authenticity. The revelation has come through four stages: God to Jesus to an angelic messenger (more on angelic participation in the delivery of apocalyptic messages later) and then to the community of faith (bond-servants, first of all was John).

- D) John also mentions that the purpose of this revelation is to show “the things which must soon take place...” (note parallel allusion of Daniel 2:28-29). The tone is set from the very first introduction that the Apocalypse is viewed through the lens of Daniel 2 (and the parallel visions which will come in Daniel, especially Daniel 7).
- E) In biblical prophetic writing, the end is always near (Revelation 1:1, 3). Time is always secondary to the apocalyptic/prophetic viewpoint. This is important to keep in mind, resisting “time stamping” Revelation (cf. Matthew 24:36; contra 2nd Peter 3:8 about repentance/faith).
- F) The blessings of reading/hearing (inseparable biblical concepts) this Revelation which John records (Revelation 1:2) will come to the everyone who will “heed” (persist in obedience) what is written (1:3).

2) Trinitarian Introduction To John’s First Vision

- A) After the introduction emphasizing the apocalyptic/prophetic intent of Revelation (1:1-3), a typical letter-styled introduction precedes John’s first vision (church vision, 1:11).
- B) John indicates the recipients of this letter are the “seven churches in Asia” (1:4, expanded in 1:11). These are not meant to be an complete list of churches, but the first of many “sevens,” expressing totality/fullness/perfection (we will explore symbolic numbers in Revelation later).
- C) The letter is again addressed from God “who is and who was and who is to come” (1:4, cf. Exodus 3:14). The letter is also from the Holy Spirit (“seven Spirits”) in God’s presence, and Jesus Christ (1:5).
- D) The focus on Jesus Christ with a three-fold description and dramatic three-fold obedience of Christ and resulting status of the followers of Jesus (1:6, cf. 1st Peter 2:4-10) sets the overall tone for the entire Apocalypse. The glory of God is on display for all to see in Jesus Christ. Our lives might be a mess, but Jesus loves us, has saved us, and made us. Amen!