

**Transcript Explanation**

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This morning we embark upon one of the most fascinating journeys of Bible study, *The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*. Will you take your Bibles and turn to the book of Revelation? Revelation chapter 1: The *Apokalypsis Iesou Christou* in the original language. *Apo* means “to take away”, and *kalypsis* is “a cover.” Thus the literal meaning of the title given to the book is that of *an uncovering*, or a *laying bare*, a *disclosure of that which has been previously concealed*. Here we have, dear friends, a revealing of divine truth, a manifestation from God that lays bare that which has been hidden.

One might ask the question, “Is this the revealing of Jesus Christ when He returns to earth at His second advent, or does the title mean that Jesus Christ is the one doing the revealing?” Well, certainly both are true. Christ is revealed. We know that since His first advent He has been hidden in His incarnate form, and here we’re going to see Him revealed. But He is also the one doing the revealing. The grammar of the text and the context indicates the primary meaning of the title, namely, that Jesus Christ is the One who is the revealer of that which was hidden.

As we study this book we will see that Jesus Christ is the one who received from God the Father this divine disclosure to give to John to show His slaves. We will see that it is Christ who addresses the seven churches. It’s Christ alone who we will see is worthy to open the scroll of divine judgment and redemption in chapter 5. It is Christ Jesus our Lord who reveals far more than just His second advent in Chapter 19, but also all of the astounding events that lead up to His earthly return, as well as many amazing truths that will be subsequent to his glorious appearing.

There is some introduction that is in order before we embark upon this study, and even before we look at the text before us this morning. First, may I encourage you with the fact that this is the only book in the Bible that opens with a promise of a special blessing to those who not only hear it read and explained, but also who respond to it with heartfelt obedience. It is also a book that closes with a stern warning of judgment against tampering with this text by adding to it or detracting from it, as we read in Revelation 22:18-19. This is a clear prohibition against any further prophetic activity subsequent to this final prophecy in the canon of Scripture. And because of these promised blessings and curses, we must therefore approach this text of Scripture with the same care that we would all of Scripture; with the same exegetical precision and contextual consideration that we would every other passage of Scripture. We must be careful to rightly divide the word of truth to be workmen that are not ashamed.

We are going to find in this book that there is an extensive use of figurative language and of symbols. But you must understand that not all prophecy is figurative or symbolic. So we must maintain a normal principle of Bible interpretation, a system that is often called a literal, grammatical, historical, method of hermeneutics, which is the science and art of Bible interpretation.

Now sadly there are those who seemingly ignore these promises by rejecting the principles of a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation used to interpret all of the other passages of Scripture that are not prophetic. They prefer instead to treat the prophetic literature as an allegory, to treat it more as a kind of spiritual, figurative language; a hermeneutic therefore that would spiritualize the word of God and thus impose upon it the fanciful imaginations of the interpreter. For this reason when you study those that do this, you will soon find that there are widely divergent interpretations in their systems that are utterly bereft of any authority, authenticity, or perspicuity (which means the clarity of Scripture). Therefore, I fear that very often these dear folks, many of whom are brothers in Christ that I love dearly, end up transforming the revelation of Jesus Christ into the revelation of human invention.

The camps that fall into this particular category are really three. You have first of all the *Preterist* position which means *past*. They would see the book of Revelation not as predictive of the future, but merely a historical record of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Now this position is held by many reformed evangelicals, many friends of mine, maybe some of you. For example they would not see the promises to Israel concerning the land and the nation, the coming kingdom, the messianic kingdom, and so forth. Instead, they would spiritualize all that to say that those things really refer to the church and what is happening now in the church age.

For example, in Isaiah 11:6-9 that we read earlier this morning, where there is the promise of ferocious animals that will be tamed in the millennial kingdom, they would spiritualize that and say that that refers to spiritual transformation like you saw with Saul on the road to Damascus; where he was changed from a wolf-like predator of the church to a lamb like follower of Christ, and so forth. Now the problem with that kind of Bible interpretation of the book of Revelation is numerous, and I'm not going to use this as a time to have a thorough polemic of that particular position. We will see some of that as we go through Revelation in the months to come. I might just add briefly that the book of Revelation was written around 96 A.D. during the reign of Domitian *after* the fall of Jerusalem; though many Preterists will insist on an earlier dating based upon dubious exegesis of several passages within the book. If the book was written *after* the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it certainly couldn't have anything to do with the explaining of that event. This position also denies the books' claim to be prophetic, as we will see, not to mention such a position neglects all the Old Testament prophecies that point to a radically different conclusion. Especially with respect to Israel, Gods covenant people. Moreover, if you try to squeeze the events of A.D. 70 into those that are described in the details of the book of Revelation, and into the chronology of the book of Revelation, especially the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 19, if you try to say

that all of that happened somehow in A.D. 70, I would humbly submit that that requires a wholesale abandon of the normal meaning of language in favor of pure imagination.

Frankly, the cataclysmic judgments of the time of tribulation that we read about in Revelation and other passages involve a level of suffering that is unprecedented upon the earth; something that is global in scale, something that is cosmic in scale, and not something that was merely confined to Jerusalem. In fact the Holocaust and calamities perpetrated upon the Jewish people by Hitler and Stalin far exceeded what happened in A.D. 70.

There's also another position that would hold to the allegorical form of interpretation that spiritualizes prophetic literature. That would be the *Historicist* position, in other words the *present* position. They would allegorize the book of revelation and equate the events that are described within it as merely describing various historical events in the church age. For example, they would read Revelation and see within it the fall of Rome to the barbarians. They would see the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, the advent of Islam, even the French Revolution. They would see, for example, the fifth seal found in Revelation 6 where they believe it would describe martyrdom under the Roman Emperor Diocletian in 284-304 A.D. This is a position held by some of the cults like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and even by the Seventh-day Adventists. Of course, this also denies the books claim to be a prophecy, not to mention such a view forfeits any literal, legitimate meaning even to the recipients of the text in favor of some obscure and fanciful interpretation, devoid of any authority and absolutely bereft of any practical relevance.

Then thirdly are the *Idealists*. For them, Revelation is kind of a timeless idea. They believe that the prophetic passages merely teach great truths about God. That it merely describes the great battles between good and evil. Of course these spiritual truths from their perspective could be applied to any time in history. They would argue that God has not revealed anything with respect to future events or the chronology of things to come, but everything is merely kind of an unrevealed mystery.

Of course, once again this denies the book of Revelation's claim to be prophetic. It denies the chronology of the actual events, and it frankly diminishes our Lord's revelation to nothing more than anthology of myths, kind of like a spiritual version of Aesop's fables to be used to impart spiritual wisdom.

I might add that I've read at length the champions of all of these positions. And I've read many of the major subcategories of their positions like amillennialism, supercessionism (the replacement theology position), post-millennialism, and historical pre-millennialism. There's all kinds of these "isms" out there and I have found them to be woefully in error as you examine them in light of Scripture based upon a literal, grammatical, historical, hermeneutic. I fear that they go to great lengths to avoid the normal meaning of Scripture in an effort to support some kind of theological system.

Now in contrast to these three systems the Preterist, Historicist, and the Idealist, there is yet another, and that would be the *Futurist* position. That is the position that I would hold to, the one that you will hear in the coming months and probably years as we go through this book. It rejects the allegorizing and spiritualizing method of Bible interpretation in favor of a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic. I would ask you, why would you argue for a literal interpretation of, for example, the book of Genesis, God's inspired beginning, and then turn around and abandon the literal in favor of allegory when it comes to interpreting the book of Revelation, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the end of the story?

There are approximately 333 Old Testament prophecies that speak of a coming Deliverer. We know that all of the prophecies pertaining to Christ's first advent, which would be a little over 100, were fulfilled literally. I ask you, that being the case, would you not expect that the rest of the prophecies would also be fulfilled literally? I believe that we must respect our Lord's clear words in verse three of chapter one that this is a *prophecy*. These are words that can be heard, and words that must be heeded for the time is near. John MacArthur speaks of this, and he says "prophetic literature compels us to give great glory and honor to our Lord for what he will do in the future, just as we praise him for what he has done in the past. The end of the story matters, then, because God himself revealed it to us and he did so for a reason—so that His people would glorify him through their trust and obedience rather than living in fear about what the future holds."

Now I concede that there are many passages in the book of Revelation and other passages of prophetic literature that we do not understand. For example we're going to come to the mark of the beast and the number 666. I don't have a clue what that means and nobody else really does either. We have some positions and we can think this and that but ultimately it is conjecture. When you come to those places you need to admit that. However, I would submit to you that those people during that day will know precisely what it means during that time of tribulation. So we must never impose our own creative interpretations upon texts that frankly we don't fully understand. We don't want to fall into a camp of sensationalizing the Word of God and imposing upon it things that we think it means when there's no exegetical, contextual, or other Biblical support for such a position. We must leave those things to be fully explained in a day yet future.

Dear friends please hear me, even though there are many mystifying symbols and baffling images in the book of Revelation, most of them can be interpreted in light of other passages of Scripture, giving the audience of that day, and frankly all the saints since that day a profound unveiling of what is coming upon the earth, and the future of all people; prophecies that should sober us to godliness and evangelism; prophecies that should stir our hearts to praise as we contemplate the majesty, excellencies, glory, and the Sovereignty of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. Now herein is the great application of prophetic truth when we study it. Truths that will bring about blessing when it is heard and when it is obeyed.

John Walvoord aptly stated it this way, "the immediate application of distant events is familiar in Scripture, as for instance 2 Peter 3:10-12 which speaks of the ultimate

dissolution of the earth; nevertheless,” he goes on to say, “the succeeding passage makes an immediate application:” and there he refers to 2 Peter 3:14 where we read, “Wherefore, beloved, in seeing that you look for such things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless, blameless.” To be at peace with God, and to have full assurance that He is sovereignly in control of all things, have a character that is spotless and blameless as we await the day of His coming.

Now dear friends, like never before in the history of the earth we are now seeing undeniable events occurring all around us that point to a climax of human history. Events that I believe are a preview of predictive prophecy. In fact, our statistics with respect to the Internet Ministry of this pulpit indicate that the prophetic discourses that come from this pulpit are by far the most popular among the listeners around the world, both in the United States and in other countries. Frankly, any honest person that looks around them and that listens to the news must admit that the world is spiraling out of control. It is not spiraling upward towards utopia, but it is spiraling downward towards catastrophe. We look around us and we are constantly aware of the threat of terrorism. We are aware of the dangers of the weapons of mass destruction that can literally destroy entire continents. We see the rise of radical Islam. We see Iran in what they are doing in the Gaza strip, the West Bank in Lebanon, and Syria with Hezbollah and Hamas as they try to destroy Israel. In fact the motivation of Ahmadinejad, the leader of Iran, is that of Islamic Jihad, a holy war; whereby they will produce, they believe, an apocalyptic chaos that is so great that it will bring in the 12th Imam, which is the Islamic Messiah. In fact, he said, “. . . our Revolution’s main mission is to pave the way for the appearance of the 12th Imam, the Mahdi”. Of course the key to all of that is the destruction of Israel; to wipe them off of the face of the earth and to destroy the United States. Recently in one of their parades you could see draped over their long-range missiles some banners that say “Death to America.” People see this and they are afraid.

We look around and we see the economic meltdown of the United States economy with no end in sight. We see corruption in our government. We see the utter inability of our politicians to even govern themselves, much less solve problems in our society. We see a burgeoning hatred of the United States of America, and even within the United States we see an increasing hatred of Bible believing Christians—the butt of most jokes. We see the moral freefall in the United States of America. We see apostasy in the church that is absolutely staggering. All you need to do is go to your local Christian bookstore and grab some of the best sellers off of their main rack when you come in the door and I assure you will find within them much apostasy, things that have absolutely no basis in Scripture, heresy upon heresy.

We witness even the miracle of an Israeli state and the gathering forces around that tiny little country. Forces hell-bent on destroying her. Isn’t it amazing how it seems like the problem of the whole world is there in Jerusalem? People look at all of this and they ask the question, and rightfully so, “What on earth is going on?” Dear friends, I would submit to you that God’s answer to that question is in His Word, especially here in His Revelation. That’s why in verse three of chapter one we read, “Blessed is he who reads,

and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

Now a bit more background here. This Revelation was given to John from God through an angel, and he penned it. John was the son of the Zebedee. It was given to him while he was an exile on the Isle of Patmos. The authorship of this book is virtually undisputed. This was John who was one of the 12 apostles, the author of the fourth Gospel that bears his name, and of the epistles of John. He wrote this Revelation near the end of Domitian’s reign in about A.D. 96. I might add that this is a date widely held by the early church in contrast to the dating held by the Preterist’s that has virtually no support from external evidence. This was the date held by church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Irenaeus; they all confirmed this date.

In fact Irenaeus wrote this: “ we will not however incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist for it if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision [the book of Revelation]. For that was seen no very long time sense but almost in our day towards the end of Domitian’s reign.” Unlike the persecution of the church under Nero that was limited in scope primarily to the Christians in Rome, when you study history, you will see that Domitian’s cruel maltreatment was very widespread as he endeavored to advance his cult of Emperor worship. According to tradition, John left Palestine for Asia Minor around the time of the Jewish revolt in A.D. 66 through 70.

Now friends, as we approach our text we find the beloved apostle, now about 90 years old banished to a tiny island in the middle of the Aegean Sea; an island about 10 x 6 miles, about 30 miles south of Ephesus. A place where Romans sent those that they thought were political troublemakers, putting them to work doing hard labor. This is where the beloved apostle was when he received this revelation, (hardly a testimony to the blasphemous prosperity Gospel that is taught today). There in that earthly hell, he receives this amazing Revelation.

Beloved, please hear this, we have before us the summation of God’s plan of redemption. We have here the last chapter of human history. We have a detailed account of the consummation of all things. We have the final pieces of a great puzzle of prophetic truths that were first laid out and revealed to us in the Old Testament and even in the New. In fact, 278 of its 404 verses allude to three divisions in the Old Testament, primarily from Daniel, followed by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Psalms.

Here dear friends, we will read of the glory and the majesty of Christ as He conquers Satan, sin, and death. We will read the unveiling of the increased apostasy that will fall upon the “church” that claims to be the Church of Jesus Christ. We will read of the snatching away of the Church, in some of the nuances of the text. We will read of God’s judgment upon the nations and all those who hate Him. If you want to know what will happen to Russia, to China, and to the nations of Islam, and all nations that hate Israel, you will see it here. There will be a vivid chronology of seven years of unprecedented

and unimaginable tribulation that is going to fall upon the earth. Here we have before us a disclosure of what will ultimately happen to Israel, including the final fulfillment of His promises to them and their ultimate salvation, when “all Israel will be saved” as Paul says in Romans 11. We are going to read a description of the rise of a one-world government and the reign of the most vicious and vile dictator in the history of the world, the antichrist.

This book portrays Christ’s return to earth *with* His saints, the Battle of Armageddon, the establishment of His millennial reign upon the earth, the ending of the times of the Gentiles in which we now live. It reveals to us the final judgment that awaits Satan and his minions, it discloses to us the Great White Throne judgment which will be a time and a place where the fate of unrepentant sinners will be declared. It describes hell, the lake of fire, the final state of those who have refused to believe in Christ as Savior and serve Him as Lord. And it also reveals the final state of the redeemed in the glories of the new heaven and a new earth. Here dear friends, the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us the consummation of redemptive history, a time when He will be glorified as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In His Revelation He describes Himself with many titles. He calls Himself “the faithful witness,” “the firstborn of the dead,” “the ruler of the kings of the earth,” “the Alpha and the Omega,” “the first and the last,” “the Lord God Who Is and Who Was and Who Is to Come,” “the Almighty,” “the Living One,” “the One Who Holds the Seven Stars in His Right Hand,” “the One Who Walks Among the Seven Golden Lampstands,” “the One Who Has the Sharp Two Edged Sword,” “the Son of God,” “the One Who Has Eyes Like a Flame of Fire and Feet like Burnished Bronze.” He goes on to describe Himself as “the One Who Has the Seven Spirits of God, the Seven Stars,” “the One Whose Holy, Who is True,” “the Holder of the Key of David Who Opens and No One Will Shut and Shuts and No One Opens,” “the Amen,” “the Faithful and True Witness,” “the Beginning of the Creation of God,” “the Lion that is From the Tribe of Judah,” “the Root of David, the Lamb of God,” “the Lord, Holy and True,” “the One Who is Called Faithful and True,” “the Word of God,” “the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” In this book we will see Christ the Messiah ruling on the earth with His glorified saints. Where Jesus is called the “Root, and the descendent of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

Beloved please hear me, God has disclosed these astounding truths to every believer and we must rejoice in the blessing that can be ours when we hear it and when we heed it. Likewise we should tremble if we ever attempt to add or detract from it.

Let me read to you this morning the text that we will look at for a few minutes here and Revelation 1, the prologue of the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. I want to read verses one through eight this morning, and we will look specifically at the first three verses.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 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. John 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; and 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 and 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. 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. Even so. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” That is the signature of God that signs to this glorious prologue.

I’ve divided this into five sections. We will see the *Essence*, the *Blessing*, the *Benediction*, the *Doxology*, as well as the *Theme* of Revelation. This morning we will look specifically at the *Essence of the Revelation* and the *Blessing*.

Notice first the *Essence*, in other words the heart, the core, the fundamental nature of this glorious disclosure. In verse one again, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His bondservants.” As I said earlier, the *Apokalypsis Iesou Christou*; *apo*, “to take away”; and *kalypsis*, “a cover.” Literally an uncovering, a laying bare, an unveiling of that which has been concealed, a revealing of divine truth. Christ is revealed and He is the one doing the revealing. But again, I would remind you that the primary meaning of the title denotes *Christ as the Revealer of that which was hidden*.

Notice it’s a revelation that God gave Him. In other words, Jesus Christ is the One who received from God the Father this magnificent disclosure to give to John to show His bondservants. Beloved, please understand, here we have a detailed account of the Father’s gift to the Son, that He might be exalted upon the earth. Having once emptied Himself and taking upon Himself the form of a bondservant in the likeness of men, as Paul tells us in Philippians 2, “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Beloved, this is the infallible record of that coming day of exaltation. Here we have before us a detailed description of the Son’s inheritance from the Father. A document to be shown ultimately to His bondservants. Bondservants, is a reference to those who were willing slaves. Are you a willing slave of Christ? This is a term rooted in the concept of a pierced ear of a bond slave as we read in Exodus 21. You might recall that a Hebrew slave would be required to work for six years and on the seventh year he had to be set free. The text says if the slave plainly says, in Exodus 21:5, “I love my master,” and he goes on to say, “and I will not go out as a free man, then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his

ear with an awl, and he shall serve him permanently.” This Revelation is to be shown to these type of people, to His bondservants.

You must understand that the meaning of this Revelation will be utter foolishness to nonbelievers; they have no capacity to grasp divine truth because they are spiritually dead. I remember talking with a man once when I was on a plane a few years ago, and I was reading some of this and he was asking me about it. I remember him saying to me, “You don’t really believe all that stuff do you?” And I said to him, “Yes I do with all of my heart.” Then I had a chance to share with him what the book says.

Isn’t it interesting when you turn on the television and you hear all of the political pundits and so-called experts out there, hear how they laugh about those who believe in a battle of Armageddon; those “doomsday people,” those people that “believe in the end of the world,” and they just mock and laugh. Of course this should be no surprise to us. Remember Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 13:11, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.” He went on to say in verse 13, “Therefore, I speak to them in parables because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”

But here dear friends, He speaks in verse one of all “the things which must shortly take place.” The word “shortly” can be translated *soon* (*tachos* in the original language). It is a term repeatedly used in the New Testament to denote the idea of *imminence* and even *nearness* of an event. It is as if to say, “Persecuted Christians, you don’t have to wait too long because a day of Christ’s return is imminent, it is forthcoming, it is pending, it is looming on the horizon.

It’s interesting, Daniel detailed these events and said that they will be fulfilled “in the latter days” in chapter 2:28, and “after this” in chapter 2 in verse 29, and verse 45 as well. Even Jesus indicated that there must be certain things that will happen “first,” according to Luke 21:9, and Jesus said and that the end “is not yet” in Matthew 24:6. But now beloved, please hear this, but now for the first time the writer is telling us that *these events are ready to come to fruition*. Unlike the earlier prophets, John can now say these things are imminent, “the time is near,” verse 3, and even as Jesus said in chapter 22:6, “behold, I come soon.”

Now some will say, “Well yeah, but my goodness it has been 2000 years.” True, but you must understand that God’s standard of time, and the way He measures time is radically different than the way we do. In 2 Peter 3:8 we read, “with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.” So beloved, His return is imminent, it is right on schedule. What a powerful motivation this should be for holy living.

Notice more the *Essence of the Revelation* in verse one where he says, “and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bondservant John.” Revelation is unique in the New Testament. It is the only book communicated to an author by an angel, even as angels were involved in the giving of the law to Moses (Acts 7:53). Yet by the inspiration of God, through this angelic messenger, John is the author.

In verse two we read he is the one “who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.” As I read this text I am reminded again that God has gone to great lengths to communicate these truths, even with all the mysterious symbols and images. Therefore we must likewise be very careful to approach God’s self-disclosure with equal care as we would any other passage of Scripture. We must translate it like would any other passage because it is the Word of God.

So in summary, dear friends, here we have in these first two verses the *essence* of the book of Revelation. This can be summarized simply as a divine disclosure of previously hidden truths given to Jesus Christ from God the Father as a description of His glorious inheritance. Events that are now imminent (that are pending), communicated to John by an angel, and for him to give testimony of all that he saw and give to the bondservants of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we see the *Blessing of the Revelation* in verse three, “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.” Now friends, this is one of seven beatitudes promised in Revelation. As we approach them we will discover that each one of them give a promise of blessing to those who are committed to the divine standards of holiness.

You might also need to understand that early Christians did not possess copies of the Bible. They did not have copies of Scripture; they were very expensive and extremely rare. In fact most churches of that day only had one copy, so they read it publicly and the people listened so carefully that they memorized the text. You will be reminded of James words when he warned believers not to be mere hearers but doers of the word. Would that we be so devoted. Therefore, “blessed,” He says, “is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it.” Three Greek participles translated here, *reads*, *hear*, and *heed*. Let me ask you, does this characterize your life? You know many Christians are clueless about the book of Revelation. In fact they’re clueless about many other books as well. Yet look at the blessings that could be yours. Can you imagine reading a book and you get all the way through it and you come to the last chapter and just skip it? I can’t imagine doing that. In fact sometimes I, must confess I, start with the last chapter to see how it ends because I’m so excited.

As a footnote, may I ask you what possible blessing could be derived from this Revelation by the early saints if it were merely an allegory describing the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? What blessing could Saints thereafter possibly hope to inherit if it was just some spiritualized, allegorical document? Such an interpretation causes this text before us in verse three to beg for relevance. Oh dear friends, what blessings are ours when we learn of the end of the age. When we read and study and therefore witness the final judgment upon the wicked, the defeat of Satan, the restoration of Israel, the exhilarating truths of the snatching away of the Church, the second coming of Christ, the establishment of the messianic kingdom, and learn of the glory and Majesty and the Sovereignty of Christ. What a magnificent incentive to plumb the depths of these glorious truths and then to live consistently with them. Beloved, this text applies to all of

Scripture. If I can put it this way, if you want to inherit the promised blessing, you must be diligent to *blend hearing with heeding*. The choice is yours.

Notice again the stress God places upon the *imminence* of these events in verse three. He says, “for the time is near.” The word “for” establishes the reasoning for the blessing. Notice here first of all He says “time”; it is *kairos*, it is not *chronos* in Greek; it is *kairos*, it means a *season* or an *epoch* or an *era*. This is often used in a technical sense in the New Testament to describe, as one scholar, Trench puts it, “the critical epoch-making periods foreordained of God.” And Robert Thomas also says, “it describes the end times when the earthly kingdom of Israel will be instituted.”

We see this in other passages of Scripture as well, this idea of time. In fact, in Acts 1:7 the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom of Israel? He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs, (there’s the same term) which the Father has fixed by His own authority”. Likewise, in Acts 3:20-21 describing Jesus we read He is, “the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period (same word) of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time”. In 1Thessalonians 5:1 we have the same concept, “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren (there is the same word) you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourself know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night”. The “day of the Lord” refers to that time of eschatological judgment at the end of the tribulation and at the end of the Millennium. So what is the reason for such a blessing? The answer is, “for the time,” in other words the epoch, the season, the era of the end times in the establishment of the kingdom, it’s “near,” it is imminent. Of course this statement affirms yet again the declaration of verse one, *en tachei*, the concept of “soon.” Certainly it is sooner today than it has ever been before. Oh child of God, this is our glorious anticipation. This is the anticipation of the prophets. This is the next thing to happen on the prophetic calendar, as we will see.

I will challenge you, as we close this morning; based on the promises that we have before us, I would challenge you to examine these glorious truths and allow them to stir your heart. Beloved, rest assured Jesus is coming again. Let the scoffers scoff and let the mockers mock, but He is coming as He is promised. Peter said, “the end of all things is near” (1 Pet 4:7). Paul told the Romans, “the night is almost gone and the day is near” (12:12). James said, “Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord . . . strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near . . . behold, the Judge is standing right at the door” (5:7-9).

Again, beloved, His return is imminent. The question is, are you ready? Finally, Jesus said in Luke 12:35ff, “Be dressed in readiness, keep your lamps lit. Be like men who were waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour

the thief was coming, he would not allow his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

Let’s pray together. Father, we thank You for these eternal truths. We would plead with You to give us understanding as we endeavor, by the power of Your Spirit, to understand them. Not only to hear them and grasp them, but Lord to live consistently with them. How we long for such blessing, that You might be glorified. Lord how we long for You to return. So we commit our study to You as we embark upon it this morning. Finally, Lord if there be any even within the sound of my voice right now that know nothing of the glorious Savior, oh God, would that You convict them. Would that You cause them to see their sin, call it for what it is, and recognize that apart from Your saving grace, they are doomed. Lord we would ask this for their good, but ultimately for Your glory. I pray all of this in the precious name of Jesus, and for His sake. Amen

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