

Revelation: Lesson #95 – Introduction to Revelation

Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children

For Wednesday, May 6th

Read Revelation 1:1-20 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes.)

Memory Verse: Rev. 1:11b “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

- When your parents give you a present for your birthday, a lot of times they wrap it up. The wrapping paper keeps you from seeing what the present is, but finally you are allowed to open it up. You tear back the paper and get to see what they gave you.
- That’s kind of what the word Revelation means. It is something that has been hidden that we couldn’t see, but God has revealed it. It is like He has torn back the paper and opened the box so we can see what is really there.
- It would be right to say that all of God’s Word is revealed by God, all of it is a revelation. God has drawn back a curtain and let us see what His Word is.
- The last book of the Bible has been given the special title of Revelation. The Greek word that Revelation comes from is *apokalupsis*. You might hear some people refer to Revelation as the apocalypse.
- Revelation was meant to show the early church what its future was like. It showed them how Jesus was really on the throne ruling the world. It showed them how their enemies would fight against them. And it showed them how Jesus would help them win.
- The words of Revelation make it clear that the events of the book were about to take place: “revelation was given to Him by God to shown His servants what would soon be happening” (Rev. 1:1), “the time is near” (Rev. 1:3).

Revelation Uses Signs and Symbols to Teach

- Revelation 1:1 says “he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John.” The word “signified” is the same word the Bible uses to describe the amazing signs and miracles that were done by Jesus and the apostles.
- Most of the time Revelation won’t tell you the story its story in plain words, but in symbols and signs. It will paint strange and amazing pictures (sometimes even scary ones) for you to think about.
- Sometimes the book tells you what the symbol means and sometimes it lets you try to figure it out.
- Revelation also uses a lot of things we saw happen back in the Old Testament to teach its story.

Revelation “Reveals” Jesus Christ Reigning

- When Jesus was about to be born, the angel Gabriel told His mother, "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:32,33)
- But when we read about Jesus while He was on earth in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John He doesn't rule on a throne. He teaches, He helps people, He is tried and crucified. When would Jesus reign as King?
- Jesus resurrected and then as He was about to ascend back to heaven, He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18). When Jesus ascended He would sit at His Father's right hand and rule (Psalm 110:1). All through the New Testament, we are told that Jesus was now sitting at God's right hand ruling (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34-36; Acts 5:31; Acts 7:55,56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; I Pet. 3:22)
- Revelation was given to show Christians that Jesus truly was reigning from heaven.
 - Rev. 1:5 from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and **the ruler over the kings of the earth.**
 - Rev. 1:6 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.
 - In Rev. 1:7 John reminds his readers of the Old Testament prophecy about Jesus from Daniel: "I was watching in the night visions, And **behold**, One like the Son of Man, **Coming with the clouds of heaven!** He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom..." (Dan. 7:13-14)
 - Much of what we study in Revelation will show us how Jesus is reigning.
- When Jesus was crucified, it may have seemed as if He was helpless. But Revelation shows us a powerful picture of what Jesus is in heaven. "I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength." (Rev. 1:13-16) That image was so overwhelming that it made John fall down. But this picture of Jesus isn't really saying that this is what Jesus looks like in heaven. It is telling you that He is now very powerful and glorious.

To the Seven Churches of Asia

- Jesus gave this Revelation to the Apostle John to write down and send to the Seven Churches of Asia. This part of the Roman Empire was known as Asia Minor. Those seven churches are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.
- The apostle Paul had worked a lot in this area in towns like Ephesus, but by the time Revelation is written Paul is thought to have been dead for many years. Some believe that after Paul died, the apostle John went into that region and worked the rest of his life.

- But John was not among those churches during this time. He had been put on an Island called Patmos. He was there as a punishment because he had been preaching about Jesus.
- John said that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (a Christian way of describing Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead). He heard a loud voice behind him commanding him to write down what He saw and send it to the seven churches of Asia.
- When John turned around, he saw the awesome image of Jesus that we talked about. In that vision, John saw Jesus standing in the middle of seven golden lampstands. These lampstands are a symbol that stand for the seven churches of Asia.
- In chapters two and three of Revelation, we will read how Jesus Himself sent a letter to each of these seven churches. He knew what was going on in each church, what good things they were doing and what bad things they were doing.
- We should always remember that Jesus knows all about our congregation, too. He knows if we are serving Him faithfully, or if we aren't doing right.

Jesus is the Beginning and the End

- One thing that is emphasized a lot in this chapter is how the whole story (really the whole story of the Bible) is about Jesus from start to finish. Several things describe this in Revelation chapter one:
 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (vs. 8) - The alpha and the omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It would be like us saying from A to Z.
 - "I am...the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (vs. 8)
 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (vs. 11)
 - "I am...the First and the Last" (vs. 11)
 - "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last." (vs. 17)
- We also learn from this that while some would come along trying to stop Jesus from reigning as King and trying to defeat His Kingdom, He would outlast them all. He had been there at the beginning. He will be there at the end. Jesus will win over all of His enemies.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

The Revelation

1-2 The Revelation, the drawing back of a veil to reveal the truth of Jesus Christ. This revelation was given to Him by God to shown His servants what would soon be happening. He sent this message communicating it in signs by an angel to His servant John who was a witness to the Word of God and testified of Jesus Christ concerning all that he saw.

3 Those who hear the words of this prophecy and carefully watch what is written in it will be blessed – the time is near.

A Message From the King of Kings

4-6 John to the seven churches of Asia: Grace and peace from Him which is, which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ the trustworthy witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us, released us from our sins and made us to be a kingdom, priests to the God and Father. To Him belongs glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 “Behold He comes with the clouds” and “every eye shall see Him, and all eyes will look on Him they have pierced, and all the tribes of the earth shall cry because of Him.” Even as it was said, this is certainly true.

[John is reminding his readers of two prophecies of Jesus: “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom...” (Dan. 7:13-14) “They will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born and the land will mourn every family by itself” (Zech. 12:10-12; see John 19:37. John then says that these were prophecies had proven to be true.]

8 The Lord says, “I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. I am He which is, which was, and which is to come. I am the Almighty.”

John Told to Write the Seven Churches

9 I, John, am also your brother, sharing in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, but also sharing your persecutions and troubles, and also your endurance through these difficulties. I was put on the island called Patmos because of preaching the Word of God and because I am a witness of Jesus Christ.

10 It came about that I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard a loud voice behind me, as loud as a trumpet.

11 And the voice said, “What you see, write down in a book and send it to the seven churches of Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

The Awesome Image of Jesus Christ

12 Then I turned around to see who was speaking to me, and when I had turned I saw seven golden lampstands.

13 And there in the middle of those seven lampstands was one who resembled the Son of man. He was clothed with a garment all the way down to His feet and across His chest He was girded with a golden belt.

14 His head and hair looked white as though it could have been wool, white as snow. And His eyes were like a flame of fire.

15 And His feet were like fine brass, like it had been refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

16 And in His right hand He had seven stars, and from His mouth went out a sharp two-edged sword. The appearance of His face was like the sun shining in the brightest part of the day.

17-18 And when I saw Him, I fell down at His feet like I was dead. Then He put His right hand on me, saying, “Don’t be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am the One who was alive, then was dead, and now look, I am alive forever. It is true! I have the keys of Hades (the place of the dead) and of death.”

19 “Write these things you are seeing, things which are now and things that will be after this.”

20 “The secret of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: those seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the lampstands are the seven churches.”