

Back to the Future, Part 1

Revelation 1:1-3

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Introduction and Benediction

1 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, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 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.

A. Beginning and Introducing the Study of this Great Book

- Let's turn in our Bibles to **the book of Revelation**.
 - We are beginning **our study this morning** with an **examination** of **the great truths of this marvelous book**.
 - As I **began my study** some time back, I was **contemplating how I might be able to introduce the book**.
- 1. 1. *Thinking Through HOW to Introduce This Book*
 - I **thought of perhaps going back** and beginning with
 - **some notes** taken from **the book of Ezekiel**, or perhaps
 - **some notes** taken from **the book of Daniel**, or perhaps
 - **some anticipatory teaching** from **the book of Zechariah**,
 - **all of which touch** in one way or another on **this great book**.
- I **thought about going back and beginning** maybe in the **Olivet discourse** of our Lord; that is **His discussion of His own second coming in Matthew 24 and 25**,
 - **And also** in Luke's gospel.
- And then I **thought of perhaps looking into the epistles of Paul or into the epistles of Peter**,
 - for there are **many places where themes related to the second coming** of Jesus Christ are dealt with.
- 1. 2. *But after all of that consideration*,
 - as I **began to read** over the first chapter,
 - **and just read it and reread it and meditated** on it,
 - I **realized that for me to concoct** an introduction,
 - even though it be **an Old Testament** one or
 - **a New Testament** one,

- would somehow be to step, as it were, on the territory which John had reserved for his own introduction.

And as I began to read and think about the beginning of this book, I came to two conclusions

- First, I thought that, as the Book Speaks of two Great Occurrences – Laying them out would be a good place to start – in the most general of terms*

What are the Differences Between the **Two Great** (Re:Believers) **Events the Book speaks of:**

- There are at least 25 differences between the Rapture that begins this great time
- And the 2nd Coming which brings it to a conclusion...

B. What are the Differences *Between The Rapture and the Second Coming?*

- 1. At the Rapture Christ takes His people **to heaven** to be with Him. At the 2nd Coming Christ **Brings** His people Back with Him*
- 2. At the Rapture **Believers** are taken and at the 2nd Coming the **wicked** are taken (for Judgement)*
- 3. At the Rapture it is **Believers** that do the action; at the 2nd coming **angels** do the action*
- 4. At the Rapture Christ Himself **comes** to the Earth but at the 2nd coming Christ **sends** His Angels to the earth*
- 5. The big difference between the two is that at the Rapture Believers are **taken** and the wicked are **left**...at the 2nd Coming the **reverse** is true*
- 6. The Rapture occurs **BEFORE** the Tribulation, the 2nd coming comes **AFTER** the Tribulation*
- 7. There are essentially **NO SIGNS** for the Rapture, There are **MANY** for the 2nd Coming. And so the Rapture can happen at **any** time, but the 2nd Coming **MUST follow** quite a number of visible events.*
- 8. There is a difference concerning each event's relationship to the **Judgment** of the wicked.*
- 9. There is a difference in the **timing** of the resurrections that take place.*
- 10. There is a difference in the **KIND** of **bodies** Believers will possess when the Lord gets here.*
- 11. At the Rapture we will meet the Lord in the **air**, at the 2nd Coming we will **return** with the Lord*

12. The basic **THEME** of the Rapture is **Deliverance**, that of the 2nd coming is **Judgement** and the Establishment of the **Kingdom**.
13. The Rapture is a **hidden** event but the 2nd Coming is **seen** by all!
14. At the Rapture we see the **Translation** of all believers to their **Spiritual** Bodies. At the 2nd Coming, there doesn't seem to be **ANY** Translation at all.
15. At the Rapture, **Translated** Saints go to Heaven. At the 2nd Coming Translated saints **return** to earth
16. At the Rapture, the Earth is **not** judged. At the 2nd Coming Earth **judged** & righteousness **established**
17. The Rapture is **not predicted** directly in the OT. The 2nd Coming follows definite **predicted** signs including some predicted often in **Old Testament**
18. The Rapture basically concerns **Believers** only. The 2nd Coming affects **all** men
19. The Rapture occurs **before** the day of wrath. The 2nd Coming occurs **concluding** the day of wrath.
20. The Rapture contains no reference to **Satan**. The 2nd Coming **clearly** tells us that Satan will be **bound**.
21. The Rapture speaks of Christ coming **for His own**. The 2nd Coming speaks of Christ comes **with His** own.
22. At the Rapture Christ comes in the **air**. At the 2nd Coming, He comes **to the earth**.
23. At the Rapture Christ claims His **bride**. At the 2nd Coming He comes **with His** bride.
24. At the Rapture **only His own** see Him. At the 2nd Coming **every eye** shall see Him.
25. At the Rapture the Day of **Wrath**, the **Tribulation** begins. At the 2nd Coming, the Day of **Wrath ends** and the **Millennial Kingdom** begins.

We'll look at all those differences in depth as the Book of **Revelation speaks of them**.

- We may (likely will) also cover them referring to references to them in other Books

b. Secondly – Verses 1-3

- It became very obvious to me that verses 1 to 3 is in fact John's own, **Holy Spirit-inspired, introduction to this monumental work.**
 - And I realized that **I don't need to introduce this study because John has done that.**
 - And the **first three verses do it perfectly.**
 - Let's **look at them.** Revelation, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3:

"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." (Rev. 1:1-3)

- And then in verse 4 he **really begins to write** when he says,

"John, to the seven churches..."

- But before that letter, which begins in verse 4, is this wonderful introduction in **the first three verses.**
 - And as I began to study these three verses it became apparent to me that
 - **everything we need to prepare us for**
 - the **unforgettable and life-transforming experience** we're going to have **in Revelation**
 - is **tucked into those three verses** someplace.
- And so **what I want us to do** to help us with our orientation—
 - and it's **very important,**
 - it's **very essential—**
 - is to **look into those three verses** and
 - see **the components of that introduction**
 - which put us **in touch with the great matters** and the **great issues** of this book.
- Now in order to do that, **I want to break the introduction down into several components** and
 - **share them** with you **one at a time.**
- And **as we look** at them,
 - they **will introduce us** to this wonderfully **rich book.**

1) *The Essentials of The First Part of the Book*

- **First of all**, in his introduction John speaks with regard to **the book of Revelation**,
 - of its **essential nature**, its essential nature.
- Verse 1 says, "***The revelation...***"
 - Now we **have to stop there**.
 - **I knew you knew** I'd do that, **but we have to do that**.
- **The nature of this book** is that it is **a revelation**.
 - It is **the revelation**.
- This is **the key to everything that follows**.
 - There are **truths that have been concealed and are now revealed**.
 - There are **truths in the book of Revelation** that were **carried on the back of symbols**,
 - **carried on the back of figures of speech in the Old Testament**.
 - There are **truths in the book of Revelation** that were **veiled in prophetic language in the Old Testament**.
 - Though **there are no**—I'll say it again—there are **no direct quotes from the Old Testament in this entire book**.
 - There are **no direct quotes out of 404 verses**.
 - There are **no less than 275** of them that have **some reference to or connection with Old Testament prophetic truth**.
 - The relationships are **not in terms of quotations** but in **terms of connections and references, rather than direct quotations**.
 - It is **a book that is filled with the unveiling** of that which was **only initially suggested in the Old Testament**.

A. What John Had in His Mind When Writing

- **Furthermore**, it is **obvious to any reader** of the book of Revelation
 - that **John must have had** in his own mind,
 - **as he wrote** under the **inspiration of the Holy Spirit**,
 - the **teaching of Jesus in the Olivet discourse** of Matthew 24 and 25.
- As **we shall see**, moving **through the book**,
 - there are **many, many parallels** to the **teaching of our Lord in that great discourse**,
 - which is **recorded in Matthew 24 and 25**.
- So **much has been revealed** about **the return of Christ**,
 - **in the Old Testament and in the New Testament**,
 - **through the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself**.

- It is **also true** that Paul had **much to say** about the **coming of Christ**,
 - **both in the rapture** of the church **and then**
 - **in the judgment** that He would **bring upon the ungodly**.
- It is also **important to note** that **Peter had much to say** about the coming of Christ in his epistles,
 - as he **looks forward to that great event**.
- It **must also be noted** that even in the **epistles** of John
 - there is **anticipation of the return of Christ**.
- It is **also true** in the **epistle of James** that
 - he tells the believer to be patient and endure **until the coming of the Lord**.
- So there **has been much said** about it.

B. The Basic Contents of This Beginning of the Book

- **And again I say,**
 1. 1. *OT figures and symbols given in the NT*
 - **some of it in figures** and
 - **some of it in symbols** and
 - **some of it in veiled prophecies and generalizations**
 - **all seen in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament,**
 - **some of it very specific also, and**
 - **then again in the New Testament.**
 1. 2. *Explosion of Detail in This Book, the Revelation*
 - But **here in Revelation** there is **an explosion of detail** about the **return** of Jesus Christ.
 - And so **this is the revelation**; this is **the revealing**.
 - The word is **apokalupsis**, from which **we get the word apocalypse**,
 - that means **literally**,
 - **to take the cover off:**
 - to take the cover off,
 - **to uncover, to unveil,**
 - **to reveal.**
 - That **word is used eighteen times** in the **New Testament**.
 - And **when it is used of a person**, it always indicates that **he becomes visible**.
 - Whenever that word is **used of a person** it means that person **becomes visible**.
 - And so **what you have here is truth becoming clearly visible**.

C. The Root and Basis of the Book

- The word **apokalupsis** is **first used in Luke 2**, and
 - I need to **just show it to you** so you'll **get a feeling for how** it is used,
 - because **that needs to be in your mind** as you think about it **in relation to the book of Revelation**.
- In **Luke**, chapter **2** and verse **25-28**,

Simeon's Prophecy

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

- We have here **the parents of the Lord bringing Him** into the **temple, the baby Jesus**, where He is **met by a man named Simeon**.
 - **Verse 25** says,

"A righteous, devout man looking for the consolation of Israel [looking for the Messiah], the Holy Spirit was on him."

- And he **takes the baby, in verse 28**, into his arms and **with the baby Jesus in his arms** he **blessed God and said**,

"Now, Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word."

- That is, **I can die now**, I've **seen the Messiah: WHY?**

"For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

- There is the word **apocalypse, a light of apokalupsis, an unveiling, an uncovering**.
 - **Literally in this case, a person made visible**.
 - Now the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior **has been made visible**.
 - And it **speaks of the shining forth of a person**.
- In **1 Peter 1:7** the word is **translated appearing**.

⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

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- In **1 Corinthians 1:7** it is translated coming, or arrival.

⁷ *so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the **revelation** (coming/arrival) of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- In **Romans 8:19**, manifestation.

¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the **revealing (or manifesting)** of the sons of God.*

- So it means **all those various aspects** of the idea:
 - an **unveiling**,
 - an **uncovering**,
 - someone **made visible**,
 - the **shining forth** of a person **for all to see**,
 - the **appearing**,
 - the **arrival**,
 - the **manifestation**.
 - **All of those** are possible depending on **the context in which it is used**.
- That is **its essence**.
- Now **there is truth** in the statement that **all Scripture is revelation**; that is **true**.
 - But in a very special way, this book is “*the revelation*”.
 - It is the revelation, **notice it, of Jesus Christ**.
 - It **reveals Jesus Christ shining forth**.
 - Here we see **the blazing glory of Christ revealed**.

D. Not About hiding Things

- Now **many people assume**, and I need to comment on this, that **this book hides things**.
 - **People read** this book and are **absolutely confused** by it.
 - People read it and assume that it is some kind of
 - **mysterious**,
 - **strange**,
 - **exotic**,
 - **unsolvable riddle**,
 - **some puzzle** that man could never understand.
- They assume it is **vague** or **obscure** or **complex** or **incomprehensible** and **confusing**.
 - But **this book is not the hiding**,

- this book is **the revelation, the revealing; important** to note that.

• It is **not the covering**,

- it is **the uncovering.**

E. And what does it reveal? What does it uncover?

• Well, **many things**, many things.

- As we look at this book we will find that it **reveals quite a number of things:**

1. *It reveals warnings to the church about its besetting sins.*

2. *It reveals instruction to the church about the need for holiness.*

3. *It reveals the amazing power and glorious overcoming strength of Christ and the Christian over sin and Satan.*

4. *It reveals the ultimate triumph of believers who are killed for the cause of Christ.*

5. *It reveals the glory of worship.*

6. *It reveals the end of human history.*

7. *It reveals the final political setup of the world.*

8. *It reveals the triumph of God's saving purpose.*

9. *It reveals the career of Antichrist and the final battle of Armageddon and the alignment of the nations of the world.*

10. *It reveals the need to fight the forces of evil patiently.*

11. *It reveals the glories of Christ's kingdom on earth and in the new heaven and the new earth.*

12. *It reveals the triumph ultimately of God's saving purposes, no matter what Satan endeavors to do.*

13. *It reveals the victory of Christ over all powers, human and demonic.*

14. *It reveals the final end of Satan and the final end of sin.*

• It is **the opposite of a puzzle**,

- it is **the opposite** of a mystery,
- it is **not a covering**,
- it is **not a hiding**;
- **it is an unveiling.**

F. And So, We Say Its Essential Nature Is That It Is “The Revelation”

• And that word is **chosen very carefully by John.**

- It is
 - **the apocalypse,**

- the **unveiling**,
- the **disclosure of details heretofore hidden** from human view.
- It is **the history of the end of the universe** and
 - **how it will take place** and
 - **what will come after** that.
- In fact, the **best way to say it is it is a front-page story of **the future of the world****
 - **written by someone who was there**, who was there.
- **If I could title the study of Revelation** in a contemporary concept I would title it, "***Back to the Future.***"
 - So **that is its essential nature.**
- **It is revelation.**

2) *The Central Theme of the Book*

- A **Second point** that I want you to **note as we consider John's introduction** is **its central theme**, its central theme.
 - **It is the revelation** of Jesus Christ.
 - **I am halted** as I go through this **by every term** because **they're so literally filled with meaning.**
 - **It is the revelation** of Jesus Christ.
- Now **some people think** that that **means the book is from Jesus Christ.**
 - Well, that **certainly in a sense is true.**
- In **Revelation 22:16**, the last chapter:

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches."

- It is **true that this revelation comes from God** and certainly **from Jesus Christ.**
 - But it is not **best to understand John's statement in that regard.**
 - It is **not so much the revelation from Jesus Christ** as it is the **revelation about Jesus Christ.**
- It is **Christ who is unveiled** here.
 - It **doesn't really take very long.**
 - In fact as soon as you get into verses **4, 5 and 6**, Christ **begins to be unveiled.**
 - And then you get into **7 and 8** and you see **Him in all His blazing glory.**
- And then you get Him in chapter **2 and 3** as He **scrutinizes His church.**

- And then in **chapter 4 through 22** the whole theme of it is
 - the **unveiling of the glory of Christ in His second coming,**
 - as He **takes back the earth from the usurper, Satan, and establishes His kingdom,**
 - **both the kingdom in this world and the kingdom in the world to come.**
- It is **Christ who is unveiled.**
 - It is **Christ who is manifest.**
 - It is **Christ who is uncovered.**
 - It is **Christ presented in glory,**
 - **Christ presented in majesty.**

A. Much Like the 4 Gospels

- Now **in that sense perhaps** you'll understand **what I mean** if I tell you **it is very much like the gospels** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
 - only in this **great distinction.**
- The gospels **unveiled Christ in His first coming in humiliation.**
 - The book of **Revelation unveils Christ in His second coming in exaltation.**
- The **theme of** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is **Jesus Christ in His humiliation.**
 - The **theme of Revelation** is **Jesus Christ in His exaltation.**
 - But **He is the theme.**
 - This is **the apocalypse.** It is the “**apokalupsis Jesu Christou**”.
 - It is **the unveiling of Jesus Christ.**
- **By the way, that phrase is used in other places** in the New Testament.
 - In **1 Corinthians, chapter 1 verse 7,** says we are

*“...awaiting eagerly **the apokalupsis Jesu Christou,**”*

- the **apocalypse, the unveiling of Jesus Christ.**
- In **2 Thessalonians, chapter 1 and verse 7,** it says,

*“**The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed.**”*

- There is **that same phrase, the apokalupsis Jesu Christou.**
- **We find it there in that same text, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1.**

- **Peter even uses the same phrase, 1 Peter 1:7.** He says,

"We will be found in praise and glory and honor at [the apokalupsis Jesu Christou], the coming of Jesus Christ."

B. Compared with Galatians 1

- The same words appear in **one other text** and I want you to look at it;
 - Galatians, **chapter 1**, Galatians, chapter 1.
- And **here**, I think, is a **very important note** so that we **don't misunderstand its meaning**.
 - In **Galatians, chapter 1** Paul is talking about he now **preaches the gospel**.
 - And in **verse 11** he says,

"I would have you know, brethren, the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man."

- It's **not according to man**, he says;
 - I didn't get my message **from a human source**.
- Then at **verse 12**,

"For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through an apokalupsis Jesu Christou."

- And he means here **not a revelation from Christ**, but a **revelation of Jesus Christ**.
 - In other words, **I got my gospel when God delivered to me the truth about Christ**.
 - To see that's what he means you **only need to read further**.
- **Verse 13**,

*"For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. **But when** He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace [that is, God] was pleased to reveal **His Son in me** that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I didn't immediately consult with flesh and blood,"*

- and so forth.
 - He essentially says that he received a revelation of Jesus Christ **from the God** who called him through His grace and **was pleased to reveal His Son**.
- **So each of these uses of this same phrase, apokalupsis Jesu Christou**, are consistent with the idea that it is a revelation about Jesus Christ,

- **not a revelation from** Jesus Christ that **the writer here has in mind.**

C. Jesus as the Central Theme of the Book

Now **back to the book** of Revelation.

- What he is **saying here** is that **Jesus Christ is the great central theme** of this book which **closes the Bible.**

• **One of my favorite preachers** on the book of Revelation is **W.A. Criswell**, for many years the very honored pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas,

- From which I **have had the joy of hearing messages** on several occasions, much to my own **delight and blessing.**
- **In commenting** on the book of Revelation **he said this:**

"The first time our Lord came into this world He came in the veil of our flesh. His deity was covered over with His manhood. His godhood was hidden by His humanity. Just once in a while did His deity shine through, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, or as in His miraculous works. But most of the time, the glory, the majesty, the deity, the wonder and the marvel of the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, were veiled. These attributes were covered over in flesh. He was born in a stable. He grew up in poverty. He knew what it was to hunger and to thirst. He was buffeted and beaten and bruised. He was crucified and raised up as a felon before the scoffing gaze of the whole earth. The last time this world saw Jesus was when it saw Him hanging in shame, misery, and anguish upon the cross. He later appeared to a few of His believing disciples. But the last time that this unbelieving world ever saw Jesus was when it saw Him die as a malefactor, as a criminal, crucified on a Roman cross. That was a part of the plan of God, a part of the immeasurable, illimitable grace and love of our Lord. By His stripes we are healed."

• **Then he says this:**

"But then, is that all the world is ever to see of our Savior, dying in shame on a cross? No. It is also a part of the plan of God that someday this unbelieving, this blasphemous, this godless world shall see the Son of God in His full character, in glory, in majesty, in the full-orbed wonder and marvel of His godhead. Then all men shall look upon Him as He really is. They shall see Him holding in His hands the title deed to the universe, holding in His hands the authority of all creation in the universe above us, in the universe around us, and in the universe beneath us, holding this world and its destiny in His pierced and loving hands."

• **Once you traverse this book it will become apparent that you are seeing the main central theme is Jesus Christ.**

- In fact, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ appears in seven chief images.

1. *He is the risen glorified Son of God among the churches.*
2. *He is the Lamb in heaven, publicly invested with authority to carry out the determined preliminary judgments on men.*
3. *He comes to earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords.*
4. *Fourthly, He is Christ.*
5. *Fifthly, He is the judge on the Great White Throne.*
6. *Sixthly, He is the Lamb upon the throne of God and of the Lamb.*
7. *Seventh, He is I, Jesus, the Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.*

And less you, don't think there are only seven times in this book when He is spoken of,

- I will give you **a list of other titles that He bears.**
 1. *In this book He is the faithful witness.*
 2. *He is the firstborn from the dead.*
 3. *He is the ruler over the kings of the earth.*
 4. *He is the Alpha and Omega.*
 5. *He is the beginning and the end.*
 6. *He is the One who is and who was and who is to come.*
 7. *He is the Almighty.*
 8. *He is the first and last.*
 9. *He is the Son of Man.*
 10. *He is He who lives, He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and who walks amidst the seven golden lampstands,*
 11. *He who has the sharp two-edged sword.*
 12. *He is Son of God.*
 13. *He is He who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass.*
 14. *He is He who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*
 15. *He is He who is holy,*
 16. *He who is true,*
 17. *He who has the key of David,*
 18. *He who is the amen, the faithful and true witness,*
 19. *the beginning of the creation of God,*
 20. *the Lion of the tribe of Judah,*
 21. *the Lord holy and true,*

- 22. *the Lord God almighty,*
- 23. *the King of the saints and*
- 24. *the Word of God.*

- All of that **in this book**.
 - He is **the center** of the book and He is **the circumference** of the book.
 - He is **the beginning and the end,**
 - He is **the top and the bottom.**
 - He's **the inside and the outside.**
 - He is **the over and the under.**
- The **heavens are opened** in this book and you are **going to see a vision of Jesus Christ**, **not in humility, not in human form**.
 - You're going to see a vision of Jesus Christ in His sovereign majesty and eternal glory
 - and it **will flash before your eyes** over **a prolonged period of time**,
 - as it did for a split second in **the vision of Stephen**.
- You remember that?
 - He saw **the Son of God** in heaven when he was **dying as a martyr** in Acts 7:56.

⁵⁶ and said, "Look! I see *the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!*"

- **What flashed** across His eyes in a moment shall be **prolonged in your vision as we go from chapter 1 to chapter 22**.
- Jesus Christ always seen in majestic glory, **never in humiliation**.

3) *Further, He is The Essential Nature of the Book:*

A. **An Unveiling, An Uncovering of Things Heretofore Not Known**

- It is an **unveiling, an uncovering of things heretofore not known, details of**
 - **the end of the universe** and
 - **the coming of Christ.**
 - The central theme: **Jesus Christ.**
- Look **back at verse 1**.
 - Let's go **further**:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him."

- That leads me to **discuss the divine source**, the divine source of this book.

B. Who is the divine source? God:

"which God gave Him."

- This is a **wonderful aspect** of this book, by the way.
 - Let me ask you a **question**; this is **what struck me**.
-

"Which God gave Him,"

- you'll **notice it's capitalized** in your Bible.
- It's **referring back to the antecedent**, Jesus Christ.
- What that says is, **now listen to this, God gave this book to whom?**
 - **To Jesus Christ**; that's an interesting thought, isn't it?
 - And **I suppose** you could **ask yourself the question** that I asked myself.
 - **What does Christ need God to give Him?**

C. It Speaks of the Day and Hour of the Son of Man

- Well there have **been some interesting suggestions about** that.
 - Some people say, well let's **go back to Mark 13:32**.
 - You **don't have to turn to it**, you'll **remember it as soon** as I read it.
 - **Mark 13:32** says these **familiar words**, and you remember this is a **startling statement coming from Jesus**,
 - *"But of that day or hour,"* that is, **of the return of the Son of Man**,
-

"but of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

- **Remember** that?
 - And **many times, we've asked**, how is it that Jesus, **if He is God, doesn't know that?**
 - How is it **that He doesn't know** the time of His return?
 - The **angels don't know**, He said, **and I don't know; only the Father knows**.
- But that's **what He said**.
 - **In His humiliation** when
 - He **came in as a servant** into this world and
 - **humbled Himself** and took on **the form of a man** and
 - **restricted the free exercise** of His attributes,
 - He **limited His own knowledge**.
 - And when He said **I don't know** that's exactly what He was referring to!!

• **Some have suggested then that the reason it says here**

"...the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him,"

- **was to give Him the information that He up to this point didn't know.**
- **In other words, God is saying,**

"I am now going to tell you what You haven't up to this moment known. In Your self-limiting condescension, You didn't know the day or the hour. But in this book I'm going to tell You the details of the end."

• **That's an interesting observation to take, but the facts are, this book doesn't even tell us the exact day or the hour either.**

- **So this really doesn't answer that question.**
- **And I think it would be a fair assumption for us to make that**
 - **now** (at the time spoken of in Rev. 1) **the Son of God is glorified and back at the right hand of the throne of God,**
 - **He has reentered upon His resurrection) into the full exercise of all His attributes,**
 - **including His omniscience and**
 - **He now knows anyway and**
 - **didn't have to wait till 96 A.D., when this book was written, to find out.**

D. A Book Given to Jesus Christ, to Exalt Him!

• **Well then, in what sense is this book given to Christ?**

- **In another sense, a wonderful sense; God made a promise to exalt Jesus Christ.**
- **God made a promise**
 - **that Jesus Christ would be King of kings and Lord of lords,**
 - **that He would be King of the earth.**
- **God made a promise**
 - **that Jesus Christ would be the heir to everything that the Father possesses.**
- **And because Jesus humbled Himself and because He became flesh and**
 - **because He served the Father obediently, perfectly,**
 - **because He suffered and because He died,**

- God has given to Him this great revelation of the glory to come.
- There **isn't the time of His coming in here;**
 - that's not what He's giving Him.
- **He is giving Him** the full disclosure of what will happen in **His glorification when He returns.**
 - This is His reward for such perfect, humble, faithful, holy service.
 - It would be like a father saying to his son:
 - You've been a good son,
 - you've been a wonderful son,
 - you've been an obedient son,
 - you've been a dutiful son, and
 - In your faithfulness to me as your father I have promised you that if
 - you were faithful and
 - you did what I asked and
 - you accomplished the goals that I established for you
 - that I would give you my inheritance.
- And the father then says:
 - Now son, here it is, I have it all written up in full and I hand it to you, it is now yours.
- In a sense, that is exactly what God has done with the book of Revelation.

4) *Eavesdropping On The Gift Of This Book*

- Beloved, can you handle this?
 - We are essentially eavesdropping on the gift of this book which God the Father gave to His Son.
- It is for Him.
 - **God the source,**
 - the primary recipient being Jesus Christ, and
 - it tells the awesome, glorious, wonderful story of what's going to happen in the future
 - when the obedient Son **comes back in full glory.**
 - Think of it this way.

A. A First Down Payment

- The resurrection was the Father's first down payment on the inheritance.
 - There are any number of Promises that we will see fulfilled as we head toward the establishment of the Kingdom at the end of the Book!!

1. 1. *The First Token*

- The **first token**, evident token of the inheritance **was the resurrection**.
 - God **raised Him from the dead**.
 - That Resurrection was the “*stamp*” if you will, that **the Father has accepted and approved of the work that Jesus had come to do and had accomplished!!**
 - Because He had **approved and actively received that work...**
 - That inheritance coming to Christ as the Lord of all and Master of all thing was **guaranteed...**
 - It was **surely coming**, and the Book of Revelation describes just **what inheritance was to be...**

1. 2. *A Second Token*

- The second **evident token** of the **Father's pleasure** was **the ascension**.
 - He **took Him to heaven and sat Him, where?**
 - At **His right hand**.
 - If the work was **not complete** and the **Resurrection not received** by God...there **would not have been any Ascension!!**
 - **The fact that there was a token that the ultimate return of Christ, which is ultimately in the hand and under the power of God, was/ is **guaranteed and the facts and description of it is what is **contained in this Book...******

1. 3. *A Third Token*

- The third token of the **Father's pleasure over the Son's obedience** was the **sending of the Holy Spirit**,
 - This is true because **the Spirit was sent to indwell the church** which Christ **redeemed and loved**.
 - **If the work and the Ascension was not acceptable to God, you and I would not be filled with the Holy Spirit!!**
 - Once again, **the Book describes and tells the tale of the ultimate finalization of God's plan and purpose for the Lord Jesus and His dealing with of mankind**.

1. 4. *A Last Token*

- And here is **the last token, **this gift of this book****
 - which **outlines in detail the coming glory of Jesus Christ**
 - so that **not only will He live in full anticipation but**
 - **all who love Him can enjoy knowing all of this that will come to pass**

- for the purpose that we may praise Him and glorify Him and
- honor Him in anticipation.

5) *A Summary of the Whole Discussion*

- I guess you could **sum that whole discussion up** with the **words of Philippians, chapter 2.**
 - It says **tho Jesus Christ**

"...existed in the form of God, He didn't regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."

- And it **goes on** and tells us...

"...being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

- There's **His humiliation.**
 - Then **immediately in verse 9,**

*"Therefore, God **highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name** [That is, by the way, the name Lord.], that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**"*

- Those last three verses, **9, 10 and 11**, are **played out in detail in the book of Revelation:**
 - You were **faithful in your humiliation** and **I will be faithful to fulfill My promise in Your glorification.**

6) *The Essential Nature of the Book as a Whole*

- This is the **essential nature** of this book:
 - It is **the revelation,**
 - **the uncovering.**
- The **central theme** of this book:
 - It is the **uncovering of Jesus Christ.**
- The **divine source** of this book:
 - It is **God who gave it** and who **gave it to Christ** as a **testimony of the future glory** which He will enjoy.
- And **we are really privileged**—Are we not?—**to be able to look at this and see it.**
 - Very often, when a father leaves
 - an **inheritance to a son**, and
 - **marks it out** in the will, and

- **lays out everything**, and
- how it's **going to be**, and
- how it's **precisely to be given to the Son**;
- that will is a **sealed document**.
- That is a **document we're not allowed to look at**.
- **Nobody is allowed** to look at it.
 - It is **sealed**.
 - It is **put away safely where it can't be tampered with**.
- How **wonderfully true** it is, however, that **this book has been opened for us**.
 - In fact, **in chapter 6 we see the title deed of the inheritance unrolled** and seven seals are **broken** and they're **all unveiled for us to understand**.
- 7) *God Is the Divine Author of This Revelation of Jesus Christ*
 - Now that **takes us to the next point** in His introduction.
 - **God is the divine author** of this revelation of Jesus Christ, which is **given to Him** (to Jesus).
 - But **who are its human recipients**?
 - Who are its human recipients?
 - Please **note**:

“The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants.”

A. Another Step in Comprehending This Book

- John takes us **another step in comprehending** this book;
 - it is **to be shown to His bond-servants**.
 - It is **not just for Christ** to see and understand and anticipate,
 - but it is **to be shown to us**.
- It **wasn't written for us**,
 - God **gave it to Him**, and
 - He **has given us the right to see it**.
- 1. 1. *What's the Word Bond-Servant?*
 - **What's the word** bond-servant?
 - Doulos, slaves; **that's what it means, slaves**.
 - Now may I **note something for you** here?
 - Here is **one clear reason why non-Christians find this book incomprehensible**.
 - It was **never intended for them**, right?

- It was **to be shown to people who are the willing slaves** of Christ.
- And if **He is not your Lord**, you wouldn't be expected to **comprehend** this.
- Now **the doulos**, or the **bond-slave**, is **different** say, than the **ones called huperetes**, or **different than the diakonia**, the men—
 - there were **six different Greek words for servants**.
- This one was **a unique slave**.
 - **When we say bond-slave**, we're talking about a slave who **served out of love and devotion**.
- **Way back in the Old Testament** the Jews had a **custom**.
 - **If a servant said**, "*Look, I love you,*" to his master,

"I love you, I want to serve you. I don't serve you out of duty, I don't serve you out of fear, I serve you out of love, I want to be your servant for life out of love,"

- The master would **take that servant** over to the **doorway** where there was a **wood frame** and
 - he would **pull his ear** and **push it up against a doorway** and **through the lobe** of his ear he would pound **an awl**.
 - And he would **make a hole in his ear**.
 - His ear was **punched with that hole**.
 - And **any slave who had** his ear punched was **making a statement**:

I serve out of love, not duty, I am a bond-slave, I am bonded willingly to my master.

- Now **let's talk about what** that means and **why it is used here...**
- 1. 2. *The Theological Nature of the Book*
- And it is **only those kinds of people** who **will understand** this book.
 - **I never cease** to be amazed **when I read liberal theological literature** about the book of Revelation.
- It is **bizarre**.
 - You pick up **some liberal book** about Revelation some time, **if you can find one** in a library.
 - **Don't** check it out—**just glance** through it—it's **not worth the effort**.
 - But you'll find that **they are hopelessly lost in a maze** which they **cannot unscramble**. **Why?**

“Because the natural man understandeth not the things of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they're spiritually discerned.”

- **To the unbeliever, to the hypocrite in the church, the book is chaos, the book is confusion.**
 - **But** to the loving, willing slave of Jesus Christ,
 - it is **an unveiling**,
 - it is **an uncovering** that makes things very clear.

B. Truths of the Book Closed to Non-Christians

- And so, I have to say to you **at the very outset**:
 - If you're not a Christian these truths are closed to you.
 - Oh, you may understand the words that I say,
 - and as I go through, if you listen carefully to my explanation it may make sense to you in terms of the data on the page.
 - But it can never grip your life,
 - it can never become real to you in your heart,
 - you will never comprehend its significance fully and its meaning in terms of its real depth,
 - because you're not a bond-slave.
- You remember back in Matthew 13 when Jesus was **teaching in parables**,
 - He said to His own disciples,

“I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”

- You may see the page, you may hear the words,
 - but you **will not see with spiritual eyes, you will not comprehend.**
- And then He says to His disciples in Matthew 13:16,

“Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear,”

- It is because you're bond-slaves.
- **Revelation is a book for Christians and no one else can understand it.**
 - So it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, from God, given to the Son, which He shows to us.

8) *Lastly, The Books' Prophetic Character*

A. It is a Book of Prophecy

- **Lastly**, and we'll stop at this point: **its prophetic character**, its prophetic character.

- Verse 1 again,

"It is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants [Here it is.], the things which must shortly take place."

- Its **prophetic character**:
- It is a **prophecy about things which must shortly take place**.
- That is a **very important phrase**.
- This **book differs from all other New Testament books**.
 - It does.
- The **gospels tell us what took place**, right?
 - Jesus **came and lived and died and rose and ascended**.
 - And while there are references to the future, the **theme of the gospels is what happened in the past**.
- The **book of Acts follows**.
 - What is the **book of Acts about**?
 - It's the **history of the church from the ascension of Jesus Christ all the way to the death of the apostle Paul**.
 - That's **already happened** in the past.
- What are **the epistles** of Paul and James and Peter and John and Jude and the writer of Hebrews?
 - Well they're **all about explaining the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ**
 - **and its application** to the life of the church.
 - And so they **take the history of the gospels and Acts and move them in to the present life of the church and the life of the believer**.
- **B. It is the Past Contrasted with the Future**
- And so we **could say the first five books** of the New Testament **are about the past**.
 - And the **next group** of books (twenty-one of them) are **all about the present and how we are to apply** the realities of the work of Christ now.
 - And the last book is about the future.
 - This is **about the things which must shortly take place**.
 - It is a book **made up of prophecy about the future**.
 - And that is its fascination.

1. 1. Three Things Described

- The **outline of the future consideration** of this book is in **verse 19**.
- **Look** at it.

Revelation 1:19

¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- Here's **the outline of the whole book**.
 - John is told, "*Write*," and here's what you write,

"...the things which you have seen,

the things which are, and

the things which shall take place after these things."

- **Three things:**
 - the things **you have seen, past**;
 - the things **which are, present**;
 - the things which **shall take place after these things**.
- That's **the outline** of the book.
 - **Chapter 1** is what John saw.
 - **Chapter 2 and 3** is what is.
 - And **chapters 4 through 22** is the things which shall take place after these things.

1. 2. Two-Sided Emphasis

- So **prophecy starts in chapter 4** and extends **all the way through chapter 22**.
 - So this is a **prophecy book**.
 - This is a prophetic book, in the **future sense of prophecy**.
 - It is **prophetic literature**.
- And I need to mention to you, a **very important note**.
 - In **all prophetic literature** there's **a two-sided emphasis, okay?**
 - Always a two-sided emphasis:
 - **There is coming future glory** for Christ in which **the saints will participate**,
 - but there's **always that other side** of
 - coming **future judgment on the wicked**.
- And so **as we flow through this** and we say **Jesus Christ is the theme** and

- future glory is **the main, the main emphasis**;
- we will **also see running along with** the future unveiling of the glory of Christ **the destruction of sin, Satan, demons and sinners.**
- **While it surely predicts with detail the coming glory of Jesus Christ and the way the saints will share in that glory,**
- **it also predicts the damnation of sinners.**

1. 3. *A Book of Bittersweet judgement and Doom All Revealed*

- And so, **its truths, as John notes in Revelation 10, are bittersweet, bittersweet.**
- It is a **book of judgment.**
- It is a **book of doom.**
 - **It tells the end of the world,**
 - **the end of human history,**
 - **the end of sinners.**
- And the **darker side** of the picture is **never for one moment concealed.**
- **It too is fully revealed.**
- **God is just, as we know.**
- **Sin must be punished,**
- **impenitence and rebellion**
- **issue ultimately in**
 - **misery and defeat, disaster, death, and eternal judgment.**
- **This is no sentimental book.**
- It is a **serious book.**
- It is a **compelling book.**
- It is a **heart-wrenching book.**
- It is a **disturbing book.**
- There is **no weak tolerance of evil.**
- There is a **Lamb who has been slain,**
 - **but there is the wrath of the Lamb also.**
- There is a **river of the water of life,**
 - **but there is a lake of fire, as well.**

1. 4. *It is also A Revealing of the Love and Final Actions of Christ*

- Here we **find a God of love who will**
 - **dwell among men, and**
 - **wipe away all tears, and**

- **abolish death**, and
- **abolish sorrow**, and
- **abolish pain**.
- But **before that**, He will **send His enemies into**
 - a **place of sorrow**, and **pain**, and **death**, and **tears** that is **unimaginable**.
 - And so there is **no hiding** of the **dark side** of the **glory of Christ**.
 - A **brighter day is to come**, yes.
 - But there is **thunder before the dawn**.
- And **so**, we will **look at the future**.
 - It will be **back to the future** as we go **back to this ancient book** written in **96 A.D.**
 - and see **in it the future** written by **a man who was there**,
 - for **John the apostle was there**,
 - **transported by visions**. It is **prophecy**.

C. A Book with Multiple Interpretations

- **One of the things** that we, as **believers** of this age, **have to be careful of** is that there are **quite a number** of ways that the **book is looked at and understood** by the ones **around us** who call themselves “**knowers of the Lord**”

1. 1. *Liberal Ideas*

- Now there are **some people who don't think this is true**.
 - **Liberal theologians** say this, they say:
 - Well, it is a **look back**, no, the book of **Revelation is a look back**
 - and it **describes** the events **fulfilled in the reign of Nero from 54 to 68 A.D.**;
 - it **describes** the time in which **Paul and Peter were martyred**.

1. 2. *The Preterist View*

- Some say: **No**,
 - it **looks back from the time** of Emperor **Domitian** from **A.D. 81 to 96 A.D.**,
 - when **all these things recorded occurred**.
- This is called the **preterist view**.

- You **may have heard** that word.
- **Praeter** is the **Latin word for past**.
- People who say, **no, there's nothing prophetic**,
 - it's **not supernatural**, it's **not the future**,
 - it's **just a look back** and it's **describing what happened under Nero**,
 - or describing **what happened under Domitian**.
- By the way, **that's absolutely impossible**, absolutely impossible.
 - **As we go through** the book it will become apparent that the things described **did not happen then**.
 - **If they did, nobody would be here**.
- 1. 3. *The Historicist or "Panorama" View*
- Now there are **other people who say**:
 - No, it **actually is a panorama**,
 - **starting at** the time John wrote and **just describing all of church history until the second coming**.
- So there are **some who will go into** this book and they'll **find the Roman Catholic Church**.
 - They'll **find a whole lot of different popes**.
 - They'll **find Constantine** in here.
 - They'll **find Mohammed** in here.
 - They'll even **find the French Revolution** in here.
 - They'll **find the Goths**.
 - They'll even **find the Jesuits**.
 - And there are **many, many more things found** in this view!!
- That's **all impossible**.
 - You **can't take this period** of events,
 - This **Book's massive list** of events,
 - **and string it out** over all of **church history**.
- **Because if you read the book** of Revelation **carefully**,
 - **most of all of the drama happens** in a period of
 - **three and a half** years:
 - **forty-two** months;
 - **twelve hundred sixty** days.
- It's **impossible to string it out over all of church history**.
 - That's what's called **the historicist view**.
- 1. 4. *The Allegorical or Idealist View*

- There's a **fourth group** that come along and they say:
 - Well, it **doesn't really speak about real people**;
 - it **doesn't speak about real events**;
 - it **doesn't speak about real acts or real wars** or;
 - it's **just allegorical**,
 - it's just all about spiritual battle, and spiritual warfare, and
 - **we just need to spiritualize it.**
- And **what that means** is you **can make it mean absolutely anything you want it to mean.**
 - There's **no rules to that game.**
 - Because if it doesn't mean what it says
 - **but it means what you think it says,**
 - **then what you think it says is the authority.**
- And **so what everybody thinks** it says would be **what it means.**
 - And **since everybody would think it said something different,**
 - **it wouldn't mean anything.**
 - BTW – the **principle is embraced about virtually all of the rest of the Bible as well, and we can see that this is ONE of the reasons why there is such LIBERALISM today...**
 - That's called the idealist view.
 - It's **really the idiotic view.**
- **One last view** I want to mention...
- 1. *5. The Futurist View*
- That leaves us with **only one other option** and
 - that is **that it's future.**
- You **say,**
 - *"Well why do you believe it talks about the future?"*
- **Because** it says:

"The things which must shortly take place."

- And **if you read it, and let it say what it says,** it's **obvious** that these things **haven't happened.**
 - **How about massive resurrections?**
 - Have they **happened?**
 - How about, you can **check the cemeteries just to be sure.**

- How about **holocausts of unheard of proportions** where a **third of the entire world is killed**?
 - Has that **occurred**?
- What about **the destruction of the whole human system as we know it** and the **building of a new a heaven and a new earth**?
 - Has **that happened**? **Absurd.**

D. It MUST Be Future Prophecy

- There's **only one way** to look at this and that **it is future prophecy.**
 - So we're embarking on a revelation of Jesus Christ, from God, to Christians,
 - **about the future, the time of the coming of Christ.**
- And as **Sir Walter Scott said long ago,**

"Prophecy annihilates time."

"Prophecy annihilates time and all intervening...circumstances and sets one down on the threshold of accomplishment."

- And we're **literally going to get transported back to the future.**
 - And we're **just going to land at the end.**
 - That's **what we can anticipate.**
- Now **notice** that verse again, **verse 1,**

*"The things which must **shortly** take place."*

- Now wait a minute, **shortly**?
 - When John wrote that, that was **two thousand years ago.**
 - **What does that mean,** shortly?
 - You **come back next time and find out** because I **don't have time to get into it.**
 - It is a **tremendous, tremendous truth.**
 - Let's pray.

9) *Concluding Prayer*

- Father, as we have begun this study, already we are filled with excitement, enthusiasm and anticipation.
 - To be able to see and understand the revelation of Jesus Christ,
 - which You gave to Him,
 - which He now shows to us about the future, is so thrilling.
- I pray for every person here that they would have
 - eyes to see and
 - ears to hear and
 - a heart to understand
 - because they are bond-servants of Jesus Christ.
- Lord, we have all had such great experiences of the love you have for us!
 - We've all see what marvelous mercy and grace you have shed in our lives, time and again to help us along to gain progress in our walk and striving to be like Your blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!
- And now, Lord, we can add this,
 - one of the great benedictions,
 - one of the great blessings,
 - one of the great riches of being a Christian
 - is to be able to comprehend truth,
 - to be able to understand the revelation of Jesus Christ
 - which You gave Him to show to us.
- What a thrill, that the Lord Jesus would open this to us,
 - which was meant for Him,
 - and let us share in its truths
 - so that we know the future before it comes,
 - so that we can read the history before it happens and
 - live in the light of it.
- Thank You, Lord, for this great unveiling and
 - may it enrich us far beyond our wildest expectations
 - so that we might, until Jesus comes,
 - serve You more faithfully.
- In His precious name we ask, amen.

