

05.01.2019 THE GOSPEL FROM PATMOS

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 (at hand). Revelation 1:3

A meaningful interpretation of Revelation's prophecies must be Christ-centred. The entire book was written from the perspective of Christ. It is only through Christ that the symbols and images of Revelation receive their ultimate meaning and significance.

Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the centre of all hope, "the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star." EGW: Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers p.118

The book of Revelation begins thus: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. In these 5 words we find the relationship between Jesus and the book of Revelation.

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries], which God [the Father] gave to Him to show to His bond-servants (believers) the things which must soon take place [in their entirety]; and He sent and communicated it by His angel (divine messenger) to His bond-servant John. Revelation 1:1 (Amplified)

The book of Revelation is both a revelation from Jesus Christ and a revelation about Jesus Christ. It is Christ's message to the church, spiritual Israel.

It was given to John the Apostle to tell God's people about things that are shortly to take place (Revelation 1:2). Christ promises a blessing to all who read and take heed to the message of Revelation: *'Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.'* Revelation 1:3

The Structure of Revelation

Chapters 1-11 of Revelation are primarily historical (though they have lessons for us today, as do the stories of the Old Testament). Chapters 13-22 are eschatological (referring to end-time events) and Chapter 12 is both historical and eschatological.

The book is filled with Old Testament imagery; for it reminds spiritual Israel of the high calling of the nation of Israel – a calling rejected by that nation and therefore given to spiritual Israel, the church (Matthew 21:43).

"The historical basis of Revelation is the past history of the chosen people; God's dealings with men always follow the same lines. Revelation shows us the principle working in higher levels and in a wider arena. The Israel of God, the church of Christ, takes the place of the national Israel." Ellicott: 'Notes on Revelation'.

'In the Revelation are portrayed the deep things of God. The very name given to its inspired pages, "the Revelation," contradicts the statement that this is a sealed book. A revelation is something revealed. The Lord Himself revealed to His servant the mysteries contained in this book, and He designs that they shall be open to the study of all. Its truths are addressed to those living in the last days of this earth's history, as well as to those living in the days of John. Some of the scenes depicted in this prophecy are in the past, some are now taking place; some bring to view the close of the great conflict between the powers of darkness and the Prince of heaven, and some reveal the triumphs and joys of the redeemed in the earth made new'. Acts of the Apostles: the Revelation p.584

Images of Jesus

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Revelation 1:5

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death (1:18).

Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (5:2-7).

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Revelation 19:11-15

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts (21:6).

Christ in Revelation

Revelation is wonderful book. In it we are assured that all that was lost in Eden will be more than recovered.

In Genesis there is the serpent; in Revelation he is condemned to eternal death (2:10).

In Genesis there is the curse; in Revelation there will be no more curse (22:3).

In Genesis there is sin and death; in Revelation there is no more sin and death (20:14)

In Genesis man loses access to the Tree of Life; in Revelation the Tree of Life will be in the midst of the City (22:2).

In Genesis God walked and talked with man; in Revelation God's dwelling place will be with men (21:3).

But the reason for the recovery is Christ Jesus. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (the book of Revelation calls Him the Lamb 28 times, more than any other book in the Bible); He is the Risen LORD exalted to the right hand of God the Father; He is the great High Priest and He is the coming King.

What is my destiny? What is the destiny of the church? What is the destiny of this world? All our answers are found in the finished work of Christ.

In Revelation, Jesus is returning to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will finally overthrow the Enemy Satan, and the kingdoms of this earth where he has ruled; Christ will destroy sin and death and the grave which are the consequences of following Satan.

Having done this, Christ will bring in the universal reign of the Kingdom of God.

Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him; that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:28

The Vision of Christ

I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last... Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a

golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."
Revelation 1:10-19

We are sometimes more interested in the visions that John saw later in the book of Revelation. While they are important, this vision of Christ is the supremely important vision. This is a vision of Christ, not as the Lamb of God and Saviour, but as the Majesty of God, the King and Judge of all the earth. This vision of Christ made John fall at His feet as dead. So it is always with those who see have a revelation of the glory of God; Isaiah (Isaiah 6) and Job (Job 42) are 2 examples. They have a sense of their utter helplessness and earthliness in the presence of God Almighty. So must it be with us. If we do not have this sense of utter helplessness, we will not put our trust wholly in God; and it is only those who recognise their helplessness and trust wholly in their God who will be able to stand true to Him through the time of the end.

The Godhead in the book of Revelation

God the Father is identified as the One "who is and who was and who is to come" This designation refers to the divine name Yahweh, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14).

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8 (see also Revelation 4:8).

Four times in the Book of Revelation, Christ states that He is the Alpha and Omega (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13). He is the Beginning and the End (1:8, 21:6, 22:13). He is the First and the Last (1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13). He is Jehovah, the great I AM, for He calls Himself by that name in Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

The Holy Spirit is referred to as "the seven Spirits". In Scripture, seven is a number of fullness. "The seven Spirits" means the Holy Spirit is active in all seven churches. This image refers to the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit and His constant work among God's people through history, enabling them to fulfil their calling.

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Revelation 4:5 (also 5:6).

The Keynote of Revelation

"Behold, I am coming quickly!" Revelation 22:7, 22:12.

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. Revelation 1:7

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:20.
