

Behold, He is Coming!

Revelation 1:1-8

January 10th, 2015

Summary

The resurrected, glorified Jesus revealed Himself to the apostle John who recorded what Jesus showed him in what we know as the book of Revelation. In this revelation, Jesus unveiled a spiritual diagnosis for seven churches in Asia minor and revealed to John a series of visions about events that would unfold at the end of time. Most scholars believe that the seven churches of Asia to whom John writes were experiencing persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian (A.D. 90-95). The apostle John had been exiled to the island of Patmos where Jesus gave him these revelations. John who had once been an eye witness to the incarnate Christ was given a glimpse in the revelation he received of the glorified Christ. Jesus is returning, and Revelation is the story of his return.

Getting Started

When have you had a revelation you were eager to share with someone? Maybe you received some good news you just had to share or received an epiphany into a problem you've faced for a long time. Whatever the case, some news is too important or weighty to be kept to oneself. As you study Revelation 1:1-8 in your groups, remember that Jesus Himself imparted this message to John who eagerly shared that message with several churches and now has been made known to us. While the initial audience were the seven churches in Asia minor, we are the beneficiaries of this awesome glimpse of the resurrected Christ.

Understanding the Passage

To whom is Revelation addressed? How did John receive this revelation?

Who are the seven spirits in verse 4 and where are they?

What are meanings given to the titles of Jesus in verses 5 and 6?

Re-read verses 5 and 6. What three things does Jesus do for us as believers according to this passage?

How might these opening verses in Revelation 1:1-8 encourage believers who faced severe persecution?

Why will people wail at the 2nd return of Christ according to verse 7?

What blessings might await those who read and keep the words of Revelation?

Applying the Passage

Consider the many titles given to Jesus in this passage. Which title holds the most meaning for you at this time in your life? Why?

What are your honest thoughts and feelings about the 2nd return of Jesus? Terrified, unsure, joyful, hopeful, worried? What's the basis for your reaction?

How do you want Jesus to find you when He returns? What changes do you need to make to prepare for this imminent return?

Who in your life do you believe may be among those 'who will wail on account of Him'? Take time in your groups today to earnestly pray for their salvation.

Share Point

Read Revelation 1:1-8 and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

Commentary Notes

1:1-3 The opening paragraph identifies this book's genre as a disclosure of unseen realities, its divine author and the process by which he is conveying it through the human author to believers. It then pronounces the first of seven benedictions on those who rightly receive the book's message. Jesus is both the one revealed as well as the Revealer. God transmits the unveiled truth to Jesus whose angel conveys it to John to deliver to God's servants in the 7 churches. The prophecy must take place because it is secured by God's sovereign purpose and power. It will take place soon because the time is near. We must remember that Christ's imminent return does not carry with it a specific timetable but communicates a sense of urgency that is an integral part of the message recorded by John the Baptist. The word 'soon' means that the events of Revelation will suddenly unfold when they occur, not necessarily that they will occur immediately. In the epilogue, John, unlike Daniel, is told not to seal his prophecy. John's visions are important for his first century readers as well as for later generations of believers. The first of seven blessings is given to those who hear and keep God's Word. Later blessings commend purity and perseverance, even to the death. In the early church one would read aloud while others listened. Revelation's message and its blessing can be received even by hearing it read, but only if that hearing is accompanied by obeying as well.

1:4-6 This greeting identifies author and recipients, then pronounces blessing upon the recipients. Since churches existed in other cities of Roman Asia, Christ's selection of 'seven' symbolizing completeness implies that he addresses the whole church through them. God is eternal and in Christ he will come at the end of history to judge and save. Revelation presents the Holy Spirit as one person but he also appears as 'seven spirits,'

representing perfection, and as 'seven torches of fire' and 'seven eyes' to express his omnipresence and omniscience. John's greeting comes from all three persons of the Trinity. Witness is central to the church's calling and suffering. As Jesus was the faithful witness even to death, so must his followers be. Christians are called to be faithful witnesses but Jesus is the faithful witness par excellence. John comforts his persecuted readers with the truth that Jesus has triumphed over death and that he is sovereign over all earthly powers, even Caesar, since he is the ruler of the kings on earth. Israel's roles now belong to those of all nations who are freed from sins by Jesus' blood. From the outset, Jesus death is central to the message of Revelation.

1:7-8 Jesus will come as the son of man with universal dominion, though his subjects pierced him. Most scholars think that the wailing is a reaction to judgment instead of the kind of grief that leads to salvation. The coming one is the Lord God, Alpha and Omega. Jesus is the beginning of all history and also the goal for whom all things are made.

Sources Consulted

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HCSB Study Bible
Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study
Life Application Study Bible