

BaptistWay Bible Series for June 5: John pens the revelation of Christ given to him_53005

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John pens the revelation of Christ given to him

- Revelation 1

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This quarter's study will examine the last book in the Bible, the Revelation from Christ to John on the island of Patmos in A.D. 95. John also has attributed to him the Gospel of John and three epistles. The Revelation is the final addition to the canon of Scripture and represents the final task of John the Apostle. Tradition says he died on Patmos, immersed in a vat of boiling oil by the Romans.

Revelation was needed at this point in history. Many believers had been persecuted and martyred for giving testimony to Jesus Christ and more persecution was going to occur. The revelation (a disclosure of that which is hidden) would strengthen believers by verifying their faith in the resurrected Christ and would enable them to endure persecution still to

come.

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The focus of Revelation is on the future coming of Christ, who will return and defeat the forces of evil persecuting churches and believers. The introductory chapter presents a picture of the living Christ as leader of the battle.

John, along with his brother James, was among the first followers called by Jesus as he began his ministry. As John recorded the Revelation, he was completing 70 years of service in the name of Jesus Christ. He had suffered through the persecutions of the Roman emperors Nero (A.D. 54-68) and Domitian (A.D. 81-96) and faced the prospect of even more injustices at the hands of the Romans.

Revelation 1:1-3

The revelation of Jesus Christ was presented to John through an angelic messenger who testified that John's vision was real. John testified to the revelation of God's word through Jesus Christ. The one who reads the word of prophecy, John writes, as well as those who hear and act upon it will be blessed. The message was urgent because "the time is near" for more persecution to occur.

Revelation 1:4-8

John addressed his letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

John recorded a message from the eternal God. The message also was from the “seven spirits” before the throne of God (possibly meaning that each of the seven churches experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit). The greeting also came from Jesus Christ who resides in heaven and rules the earth with God.

By his atoning death, Christ made every believer a priest and member of his royal kingdom. Exodus 19:6 states “you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Revelation 1:7 quotes Daniel 7:13 and pictures the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) as coming “with the clouds” in victory over all earthly powers. God’s word referred to Christ as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing the completion of God’s atoning act through Christ his Son.

Revelation 1:9-18

John related to all who suffered in the name of Christ, having been exiled himself to Patmos. John experienced a vision of the glorified Christ on a Sunday. He heard a voice resembling a loud trumpet behind him telling him to write down the message he was about to receive and send it to churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

John turned at the sound and saw seven golden lampstands (v. 12). Later (v. 20), John saw the human figure of Jesus Christ (Son of Man) clothed in a robe with a golden sash. His hair was “like white wool, as white as snow” (v. 14) and resembled the description of the Ancient of Days (Daniel

7:9-10). His eyes blazed like a flame and were able to penetrate and to discern. His feet glowed like burnished bronze (see Daniel 10:6). His voice was like the sound of rushing waters (like the description of the voice of God in Ezekiel 43:2). In his right hand, he held seven stars. A sharp double-edged sword was in his mouth with which he would strike the forces of evil (Revelation 19:15) and also to show that he is the Lord of Judgment (2:12). His face was brilliantly lighted and resembled the sun. John fainted from fright. Christ told him not to be afraid since he is the living Christ who has overcome death.

Revelation 1:19-20

Christ commanded John to write about the revelation and prophecy. He explained the mystery of the seven stars as being “messengers” to the seven churches, indicating a divine presence within each of the churches. The seven lampstands represent the seven churches.

John, through his vision of Christ as majestic and powerful, was inspired to give churches and believers a revelation of the future. Christ would return and conquer the forces of evil. The message will bring comfort to persecuted Christians by revealing the end of history and the security afforded by their trust in Christ. Believers would be able to persevere.

Application

Although our reading of the scriptural account of the Revelation is not as dramatic as John’s experiencing it, the substance of the Revelation is just as real and vital to our faith. The Revelation is not a message of frightening predictions of future events. It is a message from an almighty and eternal God who controls history. God has established Christ as Lord of all. We

experience a growing vibrant faith when we fully understand that God's word was completed with the Revelation. John's vision of Christ solved the mystery of the future.

Discussion question

- How is Christ revealed to us today?

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.