

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Prisoner for Christ"

Revelation 1:9-11

Introduction

1. John has given a glorious opening for this blessed book. Precious truths have grabbed his heart. He has accented God's grace and glory before moving into His wrath and judgment. He adds more of himself.

2. Peter had been told what would happen to him in old age (John 21:18, 19). He was interested to learn what would happen to John (John 21:20-23). Two things were sure: a. Death was not the same as the Lord's coming. b. John physically did die, but his ministry to the church abides through this book he penned.

3. It is this John who writes (v. 9): "I John...." Sounds much like Daniel (8:15; 9:2; 10:2). A prophetic utterance is backed up by the fidelity of its witness. What about this John? Here are some facts about him:

1. HIS NOTATION v. 9.

a. Brother.

This marks John in a filial relation to those whom he addresses. It is a spiritual item (John 1:12, 13). One article links this word with the following one.

b. Companion.

The Greek here means "partaker." It is strengthened by a prefixed preposition to mean a "partner along with." Its root is a favorite with John--"fellowship" (cf. 1 John 1:3).

NOTE: John does not mention his apostleship. This is true to form for him (John 21:24; 13:23).

2. HIS RELATION v. 9.

a. Tribulation

Although there is a single definite article linking

the three words in this series, there is no way by which to identify this with "the" great tribulation yet to come. The meaning is the ordinary experiences of trial which believers endure (Acts 14:22; John 16:33).

b. Kingdom

True, there are many meanings for this word, but the obvious one here is that which relates to the future demonstrations of God's rulership on earth and its eternal aspects (cf. v. 7). Although the church is not "the kingdom," there is a relation to it which the church will enjoy (Rev. 19:11-16; 1 Cor. 6:2).

c. Patience

This is the prevailing attitude throughout "tribulation" and "kingdom" prospects. John had not "lost his patience." The word means to "stay under" the situation. It is a key to waiting for what God will yet do. In the light of the contents of this book, it must have been a very real thing for John.

NOTE: All the items mentioned here are "in Jesus." The one who is related to Him enjoys them, too. John, 2000 years ago, stands with us in them all.

3. HIS ISOLATION v. 9.

a. The place

Patmos is a rocky, sparsely populated island 10 by 6 miles in the Aegean Sea, south of Miletus. There is a grotto there portending to be "the grotto of the Aposcalypse" in which John is supposed to have had his vision.

b. The purpose

The Greek preposition here shows that John was on Patmos "because of" the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." He was not there to get these, but because he had been faithful in them! Hence, fidelity to the Lord landed him in isolation for "His Name's sake."

4. HIS VISITATION vv. 10, 11.

a. The Spirit

The Greek states that John "became" in the Spirit. This has nothing to do with the contrary positions of "in the flesh" or "in the Spirit" (Rom. 8:9). The fact here relates to the control by the Spirit for revelation and inspiration. These are two major doctrines which result in an inerrant Bible!

b. The day

Specifically, this is the "Lordish day." There is no reference here to the "day of the Lord" as an eschatological frame of reference, but to the first day of the week. Two items occurred then: Christ's resurrection (John 20:1) and the Day of Pentecost (beginning of the church) (Lev. 23:16; Acts 2:1). There is no concept of the "sabbath" here. That is entirely for the Jews. The church never worshipped on any day but the first day (Acts 20:7).

c. The Lord

John has a direct contact with the Lord. Christ's presence is indicated by the "voice as a trumpet." The "trumpet" signals a divine manifestation and authority (Ex. 19:13, 16, 19; Num. 10:1-10). The thought here is of the divine lordship speaking to John. John turned to see the "voice" and this is in keeping with Christ being "the Word." He was instructed to do three items: 1) See 2) Write 3) Send. The first is an indicative present tense verb; the latter two are aorist imperatives. Individual churches were to receive a message through John from the Lord! Seven are mentioned. It is glorious to know that God had His witness there in the Roman empire and in the face of bitter suffering (Domitian persecution A.D. 81-96).

Conclusion God used an isolated apostle to receive a permanent revelation addressed to churches then and now. The great truth conveyed is still true: Christ is Alpha and Omega. He is beginning and end. Hallelujah. None stands as His peer! Glory to God.