

Revelation 1:3

by Harry Ironside

The Book of Revelation contains a great deal of very important instruction for us today, as we live in the closing days of the present dispensation of the grace of God.

Duration: 11:03

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 1:3-22

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. The book is divided into three sections: the vision of John, the letters to the seven churches, and the events that will take place in heaven and on earth after the return of Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of the book and the blessings that come from reading, hearing, and keeping its words. The sermon also highlights the unveiling of Jesus Christ and the glories that will be revealed when he establishes his kingdom on earth.

Transcript

The book of the Revelation, the last book of the Bible, contains a great deal of very important instruction for us today, because undoubtedly we are living in the closing days of the present wonderful dispensation of the grace of God. And this book, we are told, was given to show unto Christ's servants things which must shortly come to pass. A special blessing is pronounced upon all who give heed to what is recorded here.

We'll read in the third verse of chapter one, Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand. And again, when we turn to the last chapter of the book, we hear the Lord saying, Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Now, God wouldn't have pronounced a double blessing in that way upon those who read or hear and keep what's written in the book of the Revelation if it were of as little importance as some people imagine it to be.

A great many Christians pay little or no attention to it at all, and yet, in a wonderful way, this book moves the hearts of those who read it reverently and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, because it's the book of the unveiling of Jesus Christ, setting forth the glories that are to be manifested when he returns to separatist kingdom here on the earth. In the seventh verse of this first chapter, the apostle explains, Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierce him, and all

kindreds of the earth shall rail because of him, even so, amen. That last expression, all kindreds of the earth shall rail because of him, might be translated, all tribes of the land shall mourn because of him.

This links with what we're told in the book of Zechariah in the Old Testament, that when at last the Lord's earthly people Israel shall behold their Messiah at his second coming, they shall look upon him whom they've pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and as one that's in bitterness for his firstborn. It will be a gracious day for them, then brought to repentance they will recognize in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah for whom they have waited so long. And this book tells us a great deal about the events connected with his coming again, and also about the long period which has now extended to nearly 2,000 years between his first and second coming.

The divisions of the book are very clearly indicated in verse 19 of chapter one, where the seer was told, write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, or after these things. Now, when John wrote these words, the only thing that he had seen was the vision of chapter one, the son of man in the midst of the candlesticks, representing the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of his churches here on earth. These were the things that John had seen, division one.

Then the things which are immediately follow in chapters two and three, where under the similitude of seven letters addressed the seven actual churches in the Roman proconsular province of Asia in the last decade of the first century of the Christian era, the Spirit of God has given us in a very remarkable way an outline of seven periods of church history, showing us the moral and spiritual principles that would prevail during those periods. Look at it this way, we see that the letter Ephesus to Ephesus answers to the apostolic church, and then the letter to Smyrna to the persecuted church from the close of the century until about 313 A.D. when the last of the persecuting Roman emperors died. That would be followed by the letter to Pergamon which sets forth the conditions prevailing during the days of Constantine and his successors, when the church and the world were so infamously linked together.

And this, in turn, is followed by the great apostasy of the Middle Ages as set forth in the letter to the church in Thyatira. Then in chapter three, the letter to the church in Sardis gives us an outline of the conditions prevalent in the great state churches of the many having a name to live, but actually dead. The whole mass of the population baptized and outwardly made members of the church, and yet many of them never born again at all.

The letter to Philadelphia, on the other hand, gives us what we may call the counter-reformation, the great awakening movements of the last 200 years, when in so many different lands God has been stirring people by his spirit to bring them back to the word of God and to allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. And then this part of the book closes with a letter to the church of the Laodiceans, and this letter clearly pictures the latitudinarian conditions prevalent in so many places today. Then, though people bear the name of Christian, they're utterly indifferent to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's addressing this church that the Lord says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me. Strictly speaking, the picture here is the Lord standing at the closed door of the church. Everything is going on inside as though all were well, and yet the Lord, the head of the church, is outside knocking at the door.

The church as a whole will never admit him, but individuals will and may, may and will. And if they receive him, then, he says, he will enter in and sup with them, and they with him. That is, he will establish blessed and holy fellowship with those who heed his voice and admit him to their hearts.

Now, the third division of the book begins with chapter four, verse one. We'll read in our authorized version, After this I look, and behold a door was opened in heaven. We may, instead of after this, we might read after these things, and you remember that the third division was, write the things which shall be after these things.

So, after this outline history of the church on earth, John was wrapped, as it were, in spirit into heaven, and during all the rest of the book, he portrays for us events that will take place both in heaven and on earth following the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to take his church home to be forever with himself. That church is pictured in this division as twenty-four elders, that is, the twenty-four heads of the priesthood representing the entire priestly family to which Old Testament saints in the church of this dispensation belong, for all such will have their part with Christ in the heavenly and will be priestly worshippers. This division goes right on for the consummation, the glorious return of the Lord Jesus to set up his kingdom, the kingdom itself going on for a thousand wonderful years, and then at the close, the judgment of the great white throne, when the wicked will be judged according to their works.

And this is followed by a glorious vision of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, the eternal home of the saints. Concerning this, we read, there shall not enter into it anything that defile us. Sin will never be allowed to come into that second paradise, to ruin it as it came into the first paradise on earth, to bring disorder and distress during all the centuries of this world's history.

So, the book of the Revelation gives us a marvelous picture of the last things, and surely no lover of the Lord Jesus Christ can afford to neglect it. Rather, should each Christian read it carefully, independent from the Holy Spirit of God, seeking for the blessing that's pronounced upon all those who keep the things of the prophecy of this book.

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