

APOCALYPSE THEN Revelation 1:1-3

- the most debated & distorted book of the Bible
 - without a doubt the most bewildering book in the NT for young Christians
- Hal Lindsey et al. have sold multiplied millions of copies... Left Behind series
 - Hollywood studios & their blockbuster movies
 - but who really understands the book?
- what if I told you that the most important things you could ever know about how to understand the book are contained in the first three verses of the book?
 - would that make you interested in the first three verses?

Revelation 1 ¹ *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ²who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*

Understand the nature of the book (1:1-2)

It is a revelation *The revelation*

- ἀποκάλυψις = apokalupsis = revelation
- “uncovering” of the head or body (stripped naked), “disclosure,” “manifestation”
- “the real Apocalypse”... does NOT mean “the end of the world”

It is Christ's revelation *The revelation of Jesus Christ*

- it belongs to Him
- it comes from Him
- it speaks of Him
 - this revelation is not necessarily revealing the end of the world; it is revealing Jesus Christ

It is a divine revelation *which God gave him*

- source is God, therefore infallible
- “God said it; I believe it; that settles it”
- if God said it, that settles it
- but how do you know you heard him correctly?
- the challenge of reading Revelation

It is a human revelation *to show to his servants*

- intended to be understood
- **illus** Homer Lindsay: “because I’m so dumb”
- God gave His Word for the sake of dumb people who are willing to learn

It is a prophetic revelation *the things that must soon take place... for the time is near*

- actual future events
- all attempts to spiritualize or idealize the message of the book founder on this rock
- really important to notice the specific time frame: “soon”

It is an apocalyptic revelation *He made it known by sending his angel*

(NKJ “And He sent and signified it by His angel”)

- calls it an apocalypse
- ancient Hebrew literature type, common as romance novels
 - highly symbolic literature
 - usually focused on end of the age, dramatic events
 - usually had a moral/spiritual lesson for present
 - “signified” = communicated in symbolic form
 - expect heavy symbolism in Revelation
 - beware of wooden literalism

It is an apostolic revelation *to his servant John,*

Containing the word of God *²who bore witness to the word of God*

Containing the gospel of Christ *and to the testimony of Jesus Christ,*

Containing the experiences of John *even to all that he saw.*

- beware of commentaries which present the book as John’s composition

Understand the value of the book (1:3)

Who will benefit from Revelation *Blessed*

Those who share it *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear,*

- the lector and the congregation
- today, any person who speaks or hears
(or prints/reads) the contents of the book

Those who heed it *and who keep what is written in it*

- designed to be obeyed
- danger of the sensationalist’s approach
- hazards of the dogmatist’s approach
 - the only churches that are of one mind in all matters of theology are churches where only one mind is allowed to function.
- will have great value in understanding the last few words of the book
- practical/devotional approach of this sermon series

Why they will benefit from Revelation *for the time is near*

- events that were close at hand when these words were written
- need to see God’s Word as true, relevant, urgent

conclusion

- “where is the promise of His coming”
- 1 day = 1000 years
 - not a formula for figuring out timetables
 - a warning that God’s timetables are past figuring out
- what can be figured out =
 - God’s people will be safe through the wrath of man, and saved from the wrath of God
 - watch ye therefore, for the son of man cometh at an hour ye think not