

11.24.19

Revelation

Chapter 1

Revealing the Mystery of Light

From One Who Loves

vs. 1-3

Revelation 1:1-3: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Well, what a wonderful book, the Book of Revelation, and there are great blessings to those that understand what this book is about and apply the book to their lives. So, obviously the book is about training us in the realm of righteousness. So, we need to understand what that's about. It is more than just an academic exercise, philosophical realm of debate. People oftentimes even perceive it in the realm of mysticism and such as that. It's not the purpose of the book at all, and that's why it's so important that you and I really understand why He wrote this book. In many respects, when I usually come to the book, one of the things I ask people to do is just almost forget everything you ever knew about it; if you just come and look at this in a way perhaps that you hadn't thought of it. The reason I'm saying that is this, not necessarily because I have all the answers to the book, but it is because of the fact that it's been so misrepresented; because of that, people are so confused. It has become a very enigmatic book. It has become obscured and closed to many people. In fact, it's not an unusual thing for

people to come to me and say, "I'm just kind of scared to read it" or "It just kind of frightens me", and those kinds of phrases really tell me that they really don't understand what the book is about. So, we're going to be talking today about what the book is about and hopefully as time goes on, you'll see these things being revealed to you.

There's sort of a play on words at the beginning of the title here, "Unveiling Revelation", because literally I'm repeating the word. "*Apokalypsis*" is the word that is used for Revelation, which means "unveiling". More specifically, it is a word which means "to uncover" or "to lay bare". What God is doing in this book is He's uncovering things; He's laying bear things; He's revealing things that had not been seen or understood and are hidden. I'm reminded of the passage in Corinthians where Paul speaks of Satan, and he says the god of this world has blinded the minds and the hearts of people. You realize that there's an obscuring that is going on, and much of it is in the realm of our faith. I think that's one of the saddest things about this, because it's probably one of

the greatest books that you could ever read. Yet, I think so many people just stay away from it.

It is important that you understand that God chose a specific person to write this letter, and as we look at that specific person, he is clearly mentioned in the very beginning of the text as we were reading through the first three verses, and that is John himself. John is the apostle, John; John wrote the Gospel of John. He wrote 1, 2, 3 John of the epistles. So, he's had his hand in quite a bit of writing. One of the things that John and his writing has in common is that they all seem to have this kind of theme of love, which should immediately begin to cause you to ask yourself, "Why John for this book?" I mean, if this book is that which is scary, oppressive, almost mystical, then I can understand maybe him choosing somebody that is like that. John is not like that. He's a fisherman like Peter was, but more than that, he is a man that describes himself in a very unique way. Once again, let me just give you some of the texts.

John 13:23 gives us a picture of John at that supper with Jesus. The text reads something like this, that he was one

of the disciples which Jesus loved. It then goes on to describe the fact that he was leaning on Christ. Now, understanding the Gospel of John at the very beginning of the Gospel of John, it reveals Christ as the Creator of the universe. I've always thought what a magnificent picture that you could feel so comfortable with the Creator of all things to lean on Him. So, it's telling us that He is a very personable God. It is also telling us that not Peter, not James, but John specifically was a person that embraced that relationship probably more than anything else. So, he writes that wonderful Gospel of John, which we oftentimes refer to the fact that it is not one of the synoptic Gospels. That is to say that it's not like the other gospels, those synoptic being alike. This is the Gospel of John, and it's not a synoptic gospel. It's very unique. What makes it unique is the way that it's written and the fact that it obviously starts off with the Creator of the universe, but the fact that he conveys in that very first chapter that the God of the universe became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glories of the only begotten, full of grace and truth. It's a magnificent picture, especially to the Stoics, that the God

who could create order in the universe is a very personal God, and He wants to have a relationship with you. So, unlike the Gospel of Matthew who talks about the multitudes, and you see Jesus talking to them in large groups, John will rarely put you in that setting. He will put you in settings, “Jesus and somebody else. Jesus and somebody else.”

So, whether it's Jesus and the woman at the well, or Jesus at the wedding in John 2 or Jesus in John 1 with the disciples going, “Is this the guy?” and John the Baptist goes, “That's the guy.” And they go, “Well, we're going to go” and they ask Him, “Where are you staying?” And He goes, “Come see.” So, they go to His house. Come to the Creator's house. We'll have lunch.” So, they go to His house and then the very next thing you see is Him at a wedding and He's helping His mom.

Then, you see Him at the end of John 2 and He's cleaning the House of God, and He says, “You can't do this to My Dad's house.”

The very next chapter you see Him talking to a man who is scared to come to Him in the daytime, one of the

Sanhedrin's. So, he comes to Him at night. That's why I call him, "Nick at night". So, he comes to him at night, and he reveals himself and he says, "I've been wanting to talk to You." So, He begins talking to him. So, you see that personal relationship and He tells this guy, who is a student of students, "God so loved the world. Nicodemus, God loves you." Now, of all people, we wouldn't have thought it would be in that setting that He would actually have declared one of the greatest verses that we have learned to embrace, but it was to Nicodemus.

Then, the very next chapter is the woman at the well. Then, the next chapter, you have the guy at the pool of Bethesda, and all the way through, whether it's a woman caught in a very active adultery or whether it's the blind man and he's dealing with the family, Jesus is talking to individuals in the Gospel of John. So, at the very end of the Gospel of John, what is Jesus doing? He's cooking fish and He has them come and eat with Him, and then He ends up just with Peter, and what does He ask Peter? Well, we know the emphasis of the whole book is, "I've written these things that you might believe that Jesus is

the Christ, the Son of God, and in believing you might have life in His name.” I mean, that's the whole reason for the book, but the point of the book is you won't believe in what you don't love. So, Jesus will not ask Peter, “Do you believe Me?” He won't ask him that. He will say, “Do you love Me?” Because He knows if you love Him, you'll believe Him. So, what we have is probably one of the most personable gospels that there is. I mean, what an amazing gospel. God, the Creator of the universe wants to have a relationship with you. That's what that whole gospel is about.

Now, when you read 1, 2 and 3 John, well, you can't read them without reading, “If you love God, keep His commandments. If you love God and you follow His way of truth, well, I have no greater joy than that.” So, it's all about relationships, whether it's 1, 2 or 3 John. So, why does He have John write Revelation? The reason is, and I know it's probably going to shock some of you, Revelation is a love letter. It's a love letter. If you don't understand it as such, you're going to miss the point of the book. People get in there and they dissect it, and then they try

to figure out the time. I always love when people say, "We're going to figure out the time when Christ is coming." I don't think so, as He already said, nobody's going to know. So, I figure once Jesus says it, I'm not even going to go there because I'm not going to know the time. So, it has nothing to do with you figuring out the time. It does have to do with Him telling you how much He loves you. Now, here's the catch, you've got to figure out how He's saying that. Now here's the other catch, it's impossible for you to figure this out without the Spirit of God within you. This is fundamentally the principle, and if you haven't read it, read it again, but it's found in 1 Corinthians 2. The fundamental principle of 1 Corinthians 2 is that man can't empirically understand Scripture. So, the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard; it hasn't entered into the heart of man. He can't figure out God. This is why you know you have all these academia nuts getting together and they're sitting around, going, "What is God like?" Well, good luck. 2 Timothy 3 says, "Ever learning; never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Why? Because you can't get it. 1 Corinthians 2 says the only way you're going to understand is by the Spirit of

God in you. So, if you're not walking in the Spirit of God, you're going to go, "Ok, I'm just seeing blank pictures here. I don't understand what's going on." But if in fact the Spirit of Christ is moving in you, what are you going to hear from the Book of Revelation? God loves you because that's the Spirit of Christ. For God so loved the world that He sent His son to tell you how much He loves you. So, the Gospel of John is conveying it as well as the Book of Revelation. That's why he starts off,

(Revelation 1:1) "The Revelation of Jesus Christ..."

In fact, if you jump all the way to Chapter 19 with me, just to let you know prophecy, and we'll talk about this briefly today as well, but as John is talking to the angel that has brought him to this point, it says,

(Revelation 19:9) "Then he said to me, 'Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

(Revelation 19:10) Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant

of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God...”

Watch this phrase; you might want to underline it,

“... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

In other words, if you don't see Jesus and the testimony of Jesus, which what's the testimony of Jesus? That He loves you. The testimony of Jesus is that God loves you.

“...is the spirit of prophecy.” So, if you're missing that point, then you're missing the book, and it becomes a closed thing. The irony, of course, is that the purpose of the book is to unveil. So, to many people, it's just become a closed, enigmatic document that they're afraid to open, but God says at the end of Revelation, “Don't close the words of this book. This is the time for people to know this” and it really is revealed through the love of His Son. So, as we begin this journey, you have to put it in the context of this being a love letter to us.

Now, if you'll start off with me in Revelation 1:1, as he starts off in this very simple way by telling us that this is a revelatory book or a book of uncovering. Once again, he is letting us know that God is laying bare certain things. So, I

know that the initial thought is, “Well, God’s revealing to us everything that's going to happen in the future.” Ok. Yes, but that's not the sole purpose of it. The purpose of the book is to uncover those things that are hindering the church from having a relationship with Him. We know that the book is written to the church, and we're going to see that in the text, specifically to the seven churches in Asia Minor, but generally to us or the church. We also know that when you consider the tribulation, in particular the wrath of God in the tribulation, it's very clear in Scripture that the church is not destined for that. So, we're not even there. We're not even in there. So, it's not like God has written this book to say, “Ok, I want to warn you so that when it happens you can be prepared.” It has nothing to do with that. It has to do with those things that have begun to infiltrate the church, and God is going to show the big picture so that we stop. It's sort of like you sit down with your kid after you caught him stealing a piece of gum at the store, and you say, “You're not supposed to steal. Didn't I tell you you're not supposed to steal?” The kid goes, “Yeah, yeah. I know I'm not supposed to steal.” “Ok. So, give it back.” “But dad, it's

just a piece of gum.” So, the dad sits down, and he goes, “Let me tell you something,” and he begins to reveal to that son where that could lead. He'll take him all the way to prison, if he has to. He'll take him to the electric chair, if he has to. But he's going to get that kid to understand, “Don't take the gum.” That's what this book is about, is taking. It's bringing the church to this point, and it's saying, “You don't want to let the world infiltrate you. You have no idea what the world is like.” And out of a love God is warning us of the dangers that we're allowing to come into our lives and into the church that will destroy us because it's bent on destroying the world, and ultimately it will. He takes us on that journey. He's going to paint pictures for us because one of the reasons that he writes the book is to stir our emotions. I like the song that we sing before both services, the introductory song because it ends with, what? “Come, come”, and this is how the Book of Revelation ends. “Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” And it's to get the church to long for the Savior instead of longing for the world, because if the church longs for the world, it's going to get caught up in all of the pains and all the sorrows and all the difficulties

that are there. He's going to say, "Let's not even go there. Now, I'll show you where that takes you, but let's not go there." So, He begins to bring them into this wonderful place of peace and rest, which He has ordained for the church.

The interesting picture at the very beginning of Chapter 1, is you see Christ standing among the seven churches, and why does He give that picture? Because that's where God resides, among His church, and these are the ones that He loves. So, though He in the beginning begins to correct some of them, five in particular, as He begins to correct them, it's out of love because He knows that these things are very destructive in their walk. I mean, it's no different than the apostle saying to the church at Ephesus, "You know, you really need to work on this thing called love." In fact, he says, "It's ok to speak the truth. You just need to do it in love." That's Ephesians 4, right? So, what is He going to say at the beginning about the church at Ephesus? "Well, you're doing really good on a lot of your doctrine, but you've left your first love." So, it's all a correction because He loves the church. He's not kicking

them around. He's not trying to scare them to death, but He is wanting them to see how horrible it is for them to open the door to these forces that can be and will be so destructive. So, we're going to see that as we go.

As you look at the very beginning, it starts off,

(Revelation 1:1) "The Revelation of Jesus Christ..."

Now, there's a thousand and one things that I can say about this, but I just kind of want to wet your taste buds. The world is going to tell you that we're progressing. We call it progress. Have you ever heard that? Yeah, I remember the New York World's Fair in, I think, '67? Anyway, I was actually alive back then. But they had this Carousel of Progress, and I think they took it to Disney World as well. There was a song with it. I think I still remember the song. I'm not going to sing it for you, but it says, "There's a great big, beautiful tomorrow." But anyway, it was the Carousel of Progress, and of course, the world is saying that we're getting better. "We're progressing. We're getting better." But Scripture will tell us and it's one of the things we'll look at specifically in Revelation and hopefully to give you a different view of

that, the apocalyptic horses, but when you look at Revelation 6, what he's saying is it's going into degradation. It's not getting better. In other words, the church was at its most glorious state with the apostles. From there, it has gone down because they were those that had been with Jesus. But the church and the world are not getting better.

In fact, Paul writes specifically as he talks about eschatology there in 2 Timothy 3, and we quote it a number of times. He tells Timothy, "Things will proceed from bad to worse." Now, the world is telling you that we're going to progress. Scripture will tell you we're degrading. That's a laying bare. He's uncovering and He's going to reveal that. The world will tell you that we're getting better; 2 Timothy would tell you that we're getting worse. "Technology is going to help us." The world is saying technology is going to make your world a better place. You know what Revelation is going to tell you? I would probably quote Chapter 13 in particular; the world's going to tell you that technology is going to be a way to control you. "Oh, I love technology." Well, ok,

keep hanging on to it because it's going to control you because Scripture says you won't be able to buy or sell without the chip, without that number of the beast. So, "How wonderful technology is." Well, it is wonderful in many ways. I mean, I think it's cool that you can put a glass in a refrigerator and get ice out and don't even have to do the ice tray thing, but when all is said and done, it's not drawing us together. It's not uniting families. It's not making a utopia. What Revelation begins to do is uncover these things. In fact, instead of a utopia, the way he describes in Revelation 18, the cities of the world are prisons. I mean, you talk to a lot of people that are in those cities, if they lived in there long enough, you say, "Do you want to be here?" They'd say, "No, I'm trying to get out." They can't get out because of their indebtedness or whatever, but the very place that was perceived to be that light shining on a hill and everybody should be going to it, it's a very dark place. Revelation is uncovering that. We perceive ourselves to be getting more humane. Scripture tells us that we'll worship the beast. Now, what is that telling you? That, no, you're not becoming more humane. The world is not becoming more. People are not

becoming more loving, they're not more caring. Families aren't tighter. You're more like animals, and you're devouring each other. So, Revelation is uncovering. It's unveiling these things. As we go through, we'll see the unveiling.

Why would somebody uncover these things? Because He loves you. He's trying to show you all these things that are going to bring all these sorrows and all these pains. So, if you just read, we'll just read the first 3 verses together as he talks about the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which once again, we know is a loving thing.

(Revelation 1:1) “... which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants...”

Now, if you underline the word “show”, we're going to solve a lot of problems just with that little word. The little word that he uses here in the text, “*deiknyō*”, is making reference to evidence or proof that we're giving somebody. But what's interesting about it is this, it is exposing evidence by virtue of the visual. So, what he's saying is that this book is a visual. So, you're going to see a dragon chasing a child. You're going to see heavens

opened and earth opened up and there are going to be all kinds of visuals. “You say, “Well, Pastor Gary, what you're saying is that these visuals are not true; they're just pictures.” And I'm saying, “No, I'm not saying they're not true. I'm saying they're visuals.” And the reason for the visuals is to stir your heart. So, for instance, you go to 12, and you see the dragon chasing the child. What are you feeling? You're hoping to save the child. I mean, a picture is worth 1,000 words. More specifically, why do you think that when people are trying to raise money to help the poor starving children that they put the poor starving children in front of the camera? Because the picture is going to be drawing you. What is God wanting to do? He is wanting to stimulate the church. He says, “Do you have any idea what this is going to look like?” We go, “No.” He goes, “Let me show you. This is what it looks like.” He'll show you what it looks like in the heavens, and you go, “I've never seen anything like that.” He goes, “I know. That's why I'm showing you.” But it literally is a “show and tell.” He's moving your hearts and hopefully at the end you'll say, “Ok, You've got to get here quick.” And if that's the way you feel, Scripture says that you will get a crown.

There's a crown for everybody that has loved His appearing. There's a crown waiting for you. It doesn't say there's a crown waiting for you because you led so many people to Jesus. It says there's a crown waiting for you because you have loved His appearing. So, that's how powerful this book is. That's why it says, "Blessed is everybody who reads it and hears it."

So, he starts off,

(Revelation 1:1) "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants..."

Now, this is a key point too, because it seems as if, as Paul would oftentimes refer to himself as well as anybody that was serving with him for the sake of building up the church; he's beginning to reveal that the church is now the venue for showing things to the world. We're the ones that proclaim these things.

When you look at the Old Testament, one of the statements that's made in Hebrews 2 is that God had ordained the angels to reveal the Law, and any breaking of the Law, they dealt with that. Who are the messengers for this message? This is the message of the testimony of

Christ. Well, Peter says angels long to look into these things. They can't comprehend the grace of God, the love of God. So, I submit to you, the angels cannot really testify to these things, but the bondservants can. Now, this is where an interesting switch goes into; you're going to see an angel talking to John. I don't believe it's an angel. I believe it's a messenger because it's the same word.

It's like Romans 13 tells us that God has ordained all authority, and those that are in government authority are angels. Well, we know they're not the angels that we're thinking of, but they are messengers. Hebrews 13 seems to make reference to, "You've entertained strangers. It's probably the messengers of God." Some translators use "angels," but it's probably the messengers of God, because when you go back to the beginning of Hebrews, he says, "Which of the angels, did He ever call sons?" So, he goes on to say, "But He most assuredly has a relationship with the brethren." But angels are not brethren. They don't understand the gospel. So, can they be representatives of the testimony of Jesus? No. What

they can do is they can proclaim the Law; they cannot proclaim grace.

So, he's going to make mention of an angel, but if you read with me, we'll see what he's talking about.

(Revelation 1:1) “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place...”

The best way I can describe that is, the things which of necessity will begin to appear in history. Which at this juncture, are beginning to unfold, and we'll see that when we go to the apocalyptic horses.

If you want to know the outline of Revelation, here it is. If you drop on down,

(Revelation 1:19) “Therefore write the things which you have seen...”

That's the first thing you'll write down.

“... and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”

Now, it's interesting, and I don't want to get into much of debate about this, but some people have said that this

was already fulfilled through the destruction of the temple. The destruction of the temple had already taken place 20 years before this. So, he obviously isn't prophesying of the destruction of the temple. That has already taken place, but what he's going to be talking about are the things that exist now. So, he'll be talking to the seven churches. He says, "Let me tell you what's happened in your body right now, and I want to talk to you about that." Then he'll talk to about the things that will come, but he shows them, "I'm going to reveal those things in that order." He's kind of giving the outline of the book.

As you go back to verse 1,

(Revelation 1:1) "... the things which must soon take place..."

(or begin to happen in in history) Once again, to put it in the context of the apocalyptic horses, the reason why he uses horses to reveal, horses are going somewhere. So, it's a picture of going through time. That's why the horses. So, he says, "I'm going to take a journey through time." So, the apocalyptic horses show us man's dealings

through time. The first thing that God's going to reveal is He's going to show you what man has done with the earth and what a mess he's made of it. Then, He's going to show you, but it's not just man; there are spirits that are also controlling, and He'll uncover them. Now, the spirits are going to be uncovered by what else? Trumpets. Why? Because it's air that blows through trumpets or pneuma or spirit that blows through the trumpets. So, He'll use the trumpets to reveal the angels. Then, He'll reveal the heart of God and His anger in the seven bowls of wrath. So, we'll take you through that, but we're basically on a journey. So, these things are literally almost ready to begin and will begin within probably that century as the Revelation begins almost immediately.

(Revelation 1:1) “...the things which must soon take place; and He sent...”

Could you underline the word “sent”? That's the word “apostle”, “*apostellō*”. That's the word.

“...He sent and communicated...”

“Signified; indicated”.

“... by His angel...”

That's a messenger.

So, “He sent,” and the way I would take it is, “Somebody sent by God would be an apostle of sorts and is communicating by His messenger to His bond-servant John.” Now, here's the interesting catch of this. This angel is going to pop up from time to time in 17, 19, 21, 22. One of the places that we actually just read is in Chapter 19, and that is the angel was talking to John and then John falls down to worship him. Do you remember what he said?

Ok, let's go back there. It's in Chapter 19. There was something that he said that kind of has given you a “cue,” if I can put it that way.

(Revelation 19:10) “Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren...””

He's identifying himself with who? The brethren. That's pretty interesting.

“... who hold the testimony of Jesus...”

What does he hold to? Which of the angels has ever been saved by the testimony of Jesus? He holds the testimony of Jesus, and he tells them,

“... worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Now, if you look with me a little bit further in 22. I won't show you every place that he's mentioned, but just about 3 or 4 places in particular. If you look in Revelation 22:8, obviously John falls at his feet again.

(Revelation 22:9) “But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book...”

So, angel? A messenger, clearly, in the sense of angel.

So, in verse 16, Jesus actually talks.

(revelation 22:16) “I, Jesus, have sent My angel (My messenger) to testify to you these things for the churches...”

Now, who can testify for these things but the church?

Only the church.

So, we're going to show you something, and if you go back to Chapter 1, we see Jesus standing among the churches and He defines the seven stars. What are the seven stars? What are the lamp stands?

(Revelation 1:20) “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

Now, watch the very next text,

(Revelation 2:1) “To the angel of the church in Ephesus...”

Now, almost every theologian in this text will agree that the angel in that text is the pastor. He's now the messenger. The point of the text is that the church has become the messenger of the truth. Now, I don't know exactly who this angel is that's talking to him, but I have a sneaky suspicion. Of course, John being close to 90-some-odd years old, all the other apostles have already died, that one of them are probably talking to him and in their glorious estate because they've been sent by God to proclaim this. I don't know who it is. I just believe that

he's part of the church because he's identifying himself with the church and the main point that he's going to be revealing to us is it's up to the church to correctly reveal who God is. If you don't do it, it's not going to get done. So, God is really saying, "I will build my church," as Jesus said, "and the gates of hell are not going to prevail against it. This is the venue that I've chosen. I use the angels to proclaim the Law. I'm using you to proclaim grace."

So, his statement is if you look in the passage,

(Revelation 1:1) "... He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

(Revelation 1:2) who testified to the word of God..."

"*Logos*" would be the word that is used there, which John is very familiar with, which depicts Jesus.

"... and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw."

Which is obviously making reference to the fact that he not only saw something, but because it's in the perfect, it's making reference to the fact that he perceived it and understood it completely.

I just want to stop here a second. God is using John to be the bondservant and the person that will proclaim this message. As he is getting the message from the heavens, he is now going to be the one to proclaim it to the churches and through the churches. Once again, why John? Ok. This is why it's so important that you understand, and what's interesting, if you've ever read the Gospel of John and you have Peter and John going to the empty tomb, it's like Peter doesn't get it; John says, "But I got it. I know what happened." There's only one conclusion that you can come up with. The reason John got it was because of his close relationship with God. This is a key point really in Scripture.

Jesus will say to His disciples in John 15:15, "No longer do I call you. I call you friends, and because I call you friends, I am going to reveal to you everything." So, the key point is the closer you are to God, the better you understand the testimony of Christ; the clearer things are.

(Amos 3:7) "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants..."

Isn't that a great verse? God could do anything He wants to whenever He wants to. "Surely, the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret council to His servants. "That's good to know. So, in Genesis with Abraham and Sodom and Gomorrah are about to get destroyed, God says, "Should I hide this from Abraham?" as Isaiah would say, "Since he is a friend of God."

So, why is it that John is the one that bore witness to the testimony? The reason why John is the one is because he's the one that was closest to Christ.

"Who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw."

"This is the guy I want seeing the things that I'm going to show him because he so accurately portrayed Me as a God of love. This is the guy I want to portray Me in My coming, and what I'm saying so that when people read it, they understand. I'm telling them these things because I love them so much."

(Revelation 1:3) "Blessed is he..."

So blessed is he, which is in the nominative, which is basically declaring you blessed by God.

“...Blessed is he who reads...”

Now, understand that he's not just talking about, “Well, I read Revelation. I feel blessed.” It literally is talking about you read with the ability to comprehend and distinguish what it's saying. The blessing doesn't come because you read it. It only comes when you distinguish what it's saying, and that's why it's so important for us to get in this book and understand what it is really saying.

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear...”

Which obviously is somebody that's attentive to it.

It sort of reminds me of Proverbs 2, you're hanging on every word; you long for it. Here again, you couldn't just come into this book and say, “Well, it's my duty. I've got to read it.”

“... who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed...”

Which basically means that you're going to do what it tells you to do. Now, there are certain things specifically, that He's going to tell you to do.

“... which are written in it; for the time is near.”

It's about to begin. Scripture will begin to reveal to you that there are all kinds of things that will begin to stir up in those latter days that will begin to take you off of the reality of what's happening. So, probably went on a little bit further, but that's the introduction and hopefully as we get on, we'll begin to see just how much God loves us and why He's telling the church these wonderful things.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word. We give You thanks for revealing to us things that are hidden to the world. They don't understand what's happening. They don't understand what's going on, but to us, to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, to those who love You, it's clear you're doing this for us. You love us. So, Lord, help us to see the love of Christ throughout the pages of this wonderful book.

With your head bowed and your eyes closed. If you just close with me in prayer and just ask the Lord to make this

book come alive for you. God has some wonderful blessings for you.

Father, thank You for revealing and thank You for calling us “friends”. I give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.