

Studying the book of Revelation (3)

@ Concord Community Church on 16/02/2025

Introduction:

Reading: Revelation 1:9-15 & 16-20

While the book of Revelation is a book of prophecy that extends all the way into eternity; it is also a highly personal book. John has already given us a brief glimpse of what we can expect as we move through this great book. In these verses, he begins to record the events and circumstances he obtained in the Revelation. In these verses, we are given some insight into the Apostle John and what he was going through when the Lord came to him with this vision.

As we look at these verses, I want you to keep this thought in mind: People matter to God. This book deals with complex prophecies, awesome judgments and profound truths; yet God still takes the time to give a glimpse of John. So, for just a few minutes, John takes the spotlight in the book of Revelation. Let's examine these verses together for few minutes, especially on the words “*I, John*” in verse 9, for it will provide some insights, that we need to know as the church.

A. The Who Question

If we want to know something about the man who wrote this book, this verse gives us some precious insight into who John was.

- 1. He was A Saint** — This John is none other than the great Apostle himself. John had left his father's fishing business to follow Jesus when he was just a teenager, [Matt. 4:21-22](#). John had followed Jesus throughout the years of His earthly ministry. John was there on snow-capped Mount Hermon, when Jesus was transfigured, [Matt. 17](#). He was there when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, [Mark 5](#). John was so close to Jesus that he literally laid his head on the Lord's chest at the last supper, [John 13](#). He was there when Jesus was arrested, [John 18](#). He was there as Jesus was tried before the High Priest, [John 18:16](#). He was there as Jesus died on the cross, [John 19:26](#). John was the recipient of some of the last words of Jesus as Jesus died on the cross. He was given the care of the Lord's mother Mary, [John 19:25-27](#). John was there at the empty tomb; he was among the first to believe, [John 20:8](#). He was known as the “*beloved disciple*” or “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*.”

For nearly 70 years, John has been a faithful servant to Jesus. He has been a great Pastor to God's people. He has been used by the Lord to pen the Gospel that bears his name and three epistles. John is a precious, special man of God. John is possibly the only living connection to the Lord Jesus Christ, [1 John 1:1](#). This is the man we are talking about today. This is the man God chose to be the conduit through which He would send His Revelation of the end times.

Yet, when the Word of God begins to come his way, John says “*I, John!*” It is as if he is amazed that God would speak to him; much less through him. Yes, John is a special man, but one of the things that made him special is that after all he has seen and experienced, he is still humble and amazed by the grace of God!

{Note: What a lesson for the saints of God! We have been saved by grace and allowed to experience some of the greatest blessings know to man. God has been good to us, and he has even used some in this room for His glory. When that happens, there is a human tendency to want to glory in who we are and what we have done. We need to remember that we were nothing when Jesus found us and saved us; and we will never be anything apart from Him. Paul said it well when he said, “*But by the grace of God I am what I am,*” [1 Cor. 15:10](#).

One of the reasons the Lord used John in such a great fashion was because John remained a humble servant. He will use us if we too can just remember where we came from and Who is the source of our power, [James 4:6, 10](#); [1 Pet. 5:5-6](#).)

(Note: By the way, this verse reminds us that the preacher is not greater than the people! I believe the man of God ought to be respected for the sake of his call and for the Word he preaches; but he is not above the rest of the members of the church.

2. **He was A Sufferer** — John also identifies himself as a “*companion in tribulation.*” John is writing to saints who are suffering for the cause of Christ. They are smiting under the harsh lash of their Roman rulers. True believers in that day paid a terrible price for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must have comforted their hearts to know that even the greatest among them was also bearing his cross for the glory of the Lord.
3. **He was A Servant** — When John uses the phrase “*companion ... in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*”, he is using language that identifies him as one who is waiting and watching for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “*kingdom*” refers to the work. The word “*patience*” refers to the wait. John is faithfully working for Jesus and he is waiting for Him to return. Just because John is an elderly man does not mean that he has

stopped serving. He is still working for the Lord. He is still looking for the Lord. He is still a witness for the Lord.

(Note: This is a description of how we should all live our lives. There is no place to stop; no place to quit; no place to sit down and do nothing. Until the Lord comes for us, we must determine to live every moment for His glory, in His service, looking for His appearance. After all, that is why He saved us, [Eph. 2:10](#).)

B. The Where Question

After telling us who he is, John tells us where he is when this Revelation comes his way. He is “*in the isle that is called Patmos*.” Patmos is a small island located in the Aegean Sea about 30 miles from Ephesus. The island is about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. It is formed from rough, volcanic rock and was used in John's day by the Romans as a prison. Prisoners were sent there to work in the copper mines.

Now, Patmos was not an ideal destination. Those entered there suffered horribly! They did not have adequate clothing, food or shelter. They were forced to sleep out in the open on the bare rocks. They were forced to work in the mines and they suffered terribly under the brutal whip of their Roman guards.

That is where John is when he receives the Revelation. This serves to remind us that God can use even the most terrible of circumstances in our lives for His glory and our good, [Rom. 8:28](#).

C. The Why Question

The Bible tells us that John was banished to Patmos. Tradition also tells us before Emperor Domitian banished John to Patmos; he tried to kill him by placing him in boiling oil. John survived that and was sent away to get rid of him. They couldn't kill him, so they tried to get rid of him; not realizing that God was going to go with him and use him in the greatest possible way.

Why was this poor man, who is at least 90 years old, sent to that harsh island prison camp? Well, there are several reasons why believers in that day were hated and treated so viciously by the Romans. Let me give you a few of those reasons today.

- They were hated for Political reasons — The Roman Emperors were worshiped as gods by their citizens. Romans were required to enter into a

temple dedicated to the Caesars and they were required to take a pinch of incense, place it on an altar and say, “*Caesar is Lord!*” Christians refused to do this and they were persecuted as a result.

- They were hated for Religious reasons — The Roman also worshiped a pantheon of gods, which were represented by idols. Christians refused to recognize the Roman gods. The superstitious Romans believed that Christian refusals were to blame for natural disasters, plagues, wars, famines, etc.

For the first few decades after the death of Jesus, Christians were seen as being just another branch of Judaism. But, when the Romans saw the hatred the Jews possessed for the Christians, the Romans saw Christianity as a distinct religion. Since it was against the law to form a new religion, Christianity was outlawed and Christians became outlaw and the targets of intense persecution.

- They were hated for Social reasons — Roman society was built on a very rigid class system. The upper crust had little to do with the lower classes. Christians taught that all men were equal in the eyes of God. This threatened to undermine the social structure of Rome and Christians were persecuted for this too. Christians also refused to attend the Roman games, festivals and other functions of that pagan society. The fact that they chose to be a separate people marked them for hatred.
 - They were hated for Economic reasons — Because the Christians did not worship idols and even preached against idols, their doctrine hurt the business of the priests, craftsmen and merchants who made their living from idol worship.
1. What John Preached — John was singled out for persecution by the Roman Emperor Domitian because of the word John preached. Instead of preaching a message that was pleasing to the Romans, John preached the truth. He condemned sin and he preached the Gospel. Both of these things brought the fury of Rome down upon him.
 2. Who John Preached — The real thorn in their flesh was John's insistence that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He preached Jesus crucified and risen from the dead. John preached Jesus as the only way to salvation. He condemned the Roman gods, the Roman way of life, the Roman rulers and Roman society. He pointed men to Jesus, and he was hated for it!

Despite everything John faced on that remote island, he rose above it all and found himself in the presence of the Lord for worship. We are told that he was “*in the spirit*”. John's physical location was the island of Patmos; but his spiritual location was in the presence of the Lord. John literally occupied two

worlds at once. Getting lost in worship will allow you to step out of this world for a while. Thank God for people like John who love and worship their Lord regardless of all they face in life.

THE LAMB AND THE LION (Revelation 1:12-15)

In the vision, Apostle John saw his Lord after more than 50 years—and what a contrast! His memories of Jesus hanging on the cross, bloodied and beaten, had to have been vivid. His last glimpse of Christ was when the risen Saviour was taken up to heaven. And now, many years later, John saw Christ in full, radiant splendour as never before. The Lamb was now a Lion.

The Christ we read about in the Gospels, who emptied and humbled Himself when He came to earth and had no place to put His head, now reigns supreme in heaven, ablaze with supernatural glory and honour and power. This is the Christ whom we live for and serve. When we think of Him, this is the image we should have in our minds.

Revelation 1:12-15 describes Him as the High Priest who offered Himself as the perfect and final sacrifice that secured our place in heaven. His hair, eyes and feet are brilliant with His deity, holiness and chastening authority, that seeks to keep His Church pure. He is the High Priest, King, Judge and Lord of all.

We are told that “his voice was like the roar of many waters”. This is the voice we will hear someday that “with a cry of command”, will call us to heaven in the rapture (1-Thessalonian 4:16-17). His words will cause the dead in Christ to rise first, then we will be taken up. It is His voice that will charge the dead to rise either to a resurrection of life or of judgment (John 5:28-29). NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO RESIST HIS SPOKEN COMMAND.

Upon seeing Christ in all His majesty, John fell in reverent worship. Is that the attitude of our heart for Christ on daily basis? When we think of Christ (our Saviour, redeemer, sanctifier), may this be what comes to mind.

CHRIST THE FOCAL POINT (Revelation 1:19)

After Christ revealed Himself in blazing glory to the apostle John, He told His beloved disciple to take pen in hand and write the book of Revelation.

John was to record “the things that you have seen” (the past), “those that are” (the present) and “those that are to take place after this” (the future).

This **threefold** outline provides us with a big-picture view of the entire book of Revelation. John was to document his vision of the glorified Christ (chapter 1), the words of praise & rebuke Christ had and continue to have for His Churches (chapters 2-3), and Christ’s actions in the future—specially, during the end-times and beyond (chapters 4-22).

What is stunning about this past, present and future organisation of Revelation is that from beginning to end, it keeps the spotlight on **CHRIST**. We see that the Saviour who died on the cross is now very much alive. He who yielded His authority to die on our behalf, now wields all authority. He who had been judged by men is now the supreme judge over all mankind.

In Revelation 2-3, we see Christ moving among His people, calling them to pure holiness and abstain from sin. His chastening activity continues today and reminds us that we are His ambassadors, tasked with proclaiming the hope of eternal life to a dying world.

When the Rapture occurs, the Church-Age will end. Then He who is worthy of all glory and honour and power, will unleash a rapid series of judgments upon the world. At the end of this time of wrath, He will return in triumph as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In the same way that CHRIST is the focal point of all the Bible & the entire book of Revelation, may He be the **focal point** of all that we do in our lives.

May the Lord God Almighty help us to just do that.....Amen.