

Revelation 1: The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

Revelation 1 | Sunday, November 30 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

Hal opens the series on the first two verses, and on one word — apokálypsis. Not “revelation” but “the unveiling”: the unveiling of who Jesus really is, which he calls the theme of the whole book, given in its very first phrase. Verses 1 and 2, he argues, state the book’s divine origin more clearly than any other book in the Bible — its source, its purpose, the angel who carried it, and the man who received and wrote it. From there he answers the question hanging over the whole study: why the Church passed this book by for so long. The answer comes out of Daniel 12, where the words are sealed — encrypted, as Hal prefers to render it — until the time of the end. He closes on John’s own testimony: forty-six times “I saw,” thirty-one times “I heard.” A first-century man brought forward to witness things he then had to describe in first-century words.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 1:1–2 — The unveiling of Jesus Christ — its source, its purpose, its messenger, its writer

Revelation 1:19 — The outline: the things seen, the things that are, the things after these things

Revelation 19:10 — The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

Daniel 12:4 — Conceal these words and seal up the book until the time of the end

Daniel 12:8–9 — Daniel hears but cannot understand; the words are sealed until the time of the end

KEY TERMS

Apokálypsis — the Greek word behind the book’s title; better translated “the unveiling”

Meta tauta — “after these things” — the phrase in Revelation 1:19 that divides the book

Encrypted — how Hal renders the Hebrew of Daniel 12:4, usually translated “conceal”

The Church age — the present age — the “things which are” of chapters 1 through 3

“I saw” — John’s repeated claim, forty-six times over, that he is writing as an eyewitness

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. What does apokálypsis mean, and why does Hal say it is the better title for this book?

2. Hal says the first two verses do something no other book of the Bible does. What?

3. What does Revelation 19:10 say about the testimony of Jesus?

4. In Hal's account, why did the Reformers pass over the book of Revelation?

5. What objection does Hal answer about those who teach prophecy?

6. In Daniel 12:4, how long are the words sealed, and what word does Hal prefer to "conceal"?

7. How much of what he had been shown did Daniel himself understand?

8. What happened in 1948, and what did it do to interest in prophecy?

9. What did C.I. Scofield write in 1903 about how this book would come to be understood?

10. What is the key Hal says the Holy Spirit gave him for the symbols that are explained nowhere else in Scripture?

11. How many times does John say "I saw," and why does Hal count them?

12. What three-part outline does Revelation 1:19 give?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal says the theme of the whole book is the unveiling of who Jesus really is, not a timetable of disasters. How would reading it that way change what you look for in it?

2. For most of Church history this book was set aside as unreadable. Is there a part of Scripture you have quietly set aside the same way, and why?

3. Hal makes much of the word “until” — something held off until something else happens. Where has waiting on God’s timing been hardest for you?

4. Scofield expected current events to unlock the meaning of the book. What are the risks in reading the news back into Scripture, and how would you guard against them?

5. Hal describes God putting him in front of hostile audiences for years to teach him to speak plainly and unchurchy. Where has God used something you disliked to prepare you for something else?

6. John insists over and over that he saw and that he heard. Why does eyewitness testimony matter so much for what this book asks you to believe?

MEMORY VERSE

“The unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him to show to his bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place.”

— Revelation 1:1, as Hal reads it in this message