

# **Why Study Future Prophecy as Presented in the Book of Revelation? – Revelation 1:1-3**

Introduction: For years I have been hesitant to preach too much on prophecy. It seems to be a much-misinterpreted subject that for too long has been used as a means to inspire fear in the heart of those that hear it. I feel impressed now, however, considering how drastically things have changed in the last few years, to present to the church what the Bible says about what the future holds. This will by no means be an exhaustive study on all the prophecies of the Scripture, but will be a more directed study of the book of Revelation in general, and how this book relates to our lives today. An understanding of “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” will help us better understand our personal responsibility, and our church responsibility, in fulfilling the commands of our Lord to take the gospel to the world.

It is my desire as the pastor of this church that we all understand that God has given us His Word so that we can be a better servant – a truth that John brings out early in the book of Revelation. If, when we are done with this study of end times, we have not grown in our faith and become better servants, then we have not learned what God intended for us to learn – and this study would have been for naught.

So, to the point – Why study future prophecies as presented in the book of Revelation?

## **I. BECAUSE IT REVEALS CHRIST TO US – VS. 1A**

**A. This is seen in the second word of the book as we have it in our English Bibles – it is actually the first word in the original Greek as it was given by the Lord to John the Apostle**

1. The words “the revelation” come from the word that is transliterated into English by the word “Apocalypse”
2. The word means to uncover, to reveal something that was hidden (literally, speaks of laying bare or making naked)
3. Vincent said of this word – “the unveiling of something hidden, which gives light and knowledge to those who behold it”
4. Considering what the word means, it would seem that “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” is something that He wants us to know about – something that was once hidden but now He makes clear, He manifests, He unveils – He makes naked
5. Barnes: “This is evidently a title or caption of the whole book, and is designed to comprise the substance of the whole; for all that the book contains would be embraced in the general declaration that it is a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

**B. There is a succession of revelation given to us here that we need to understand. It says that “God gave unto him,” speaking of “The Revelation” given to Jesus, in order that He might show to “his servants things which must shortly come to pass” – this was done by Jesus**

***sending his "angel" to John the Apostle,  
who wrote it down for us***

***C. In this "Revelation" of Christ, the Son of  
God, to us is found "all the features of His  
Person and His Work mentioned"  
(Gaebelein, The Revelation)***

1. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last – 1:11
2. The Ancient of Days – 1:14; Dan. 7:9  

*Dan 7:9* I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.
3. The "I Am," that is, Jehovah, "I am He that liveth" – 1:18
4. The Son of God – 2:18
5. "The faithful Witness" – 1:5
6. "He hath washed us from our sins in His own blood" – 1:5
7. "He was dead" – 1:18
8. "The Lamb as it had been slain" – 5:6
9. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" – 5:12 (mentioned 28 times as the Lamb in Revelation)
10. "The First begotten from the dead" – 1:5
11. "He that was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore" – 1:18

12. "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" – 2:8

## **II. BECAUSE IT REVEALS WHAT IS TO COME FOR US – VS. 1B-2**

### ***A. "To shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass"***

1. This sets the stage for the rest of the book – the matter revealed in the Revelation is summed up in this statement
2. There has been much given regarding this statement, simply because of the word "shortly" – however, the best way to view this word is in light of the context of the book and the visions that John had, as seeing things that were yet far in the future as taking place right before him.
3. Walvoord says about this: That which Daniel declared would occur "in the latter days" is here described as "shortly," that is, "quickly or suddenly coming to pass," indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning takes place. The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden.

### ***B. Vs. 2 – what John is about to give he tells us is the Word of God, just as all other inspired Scripture is; it is "the testimony of Jesus Christ," and he was testifying to that fact as well; and he was testifying to all that he saw was from the Lord and is the Word of God***

“I have heard of ministers who can preach a sermon without mentioning the name of Jesus from beginning to end. If you ever hear a sermon of that kind, mind that you never hear from that man. If a baker once made a loaf of bread without any flour in it, I would take good care that he should never do so again; and I say the same of a man who can preach a Christ-less gospel. Let those go and hear him who do not value their souls; but dear friends, your soul and mine are too precious to be placed at the mercy of such a preacher.” Charles Spurgeon

***C. There will be many that tell us the book of Revelation is either an allegory (a story in which people, things or happenings have a symbolic meaning), or it is an account of history past, or it, in some way or another, doesn't apply to us. John, by way of inspiration, is telling us here that what he gives here is to reveal not only Christ, but to reveal what is to come – and he emphatically states it is the Word of God***

### **III. BECAUSE IT REVEALS THE TRUE BELIEVERS – VS. 3**

***A. Verse 3 begins with the word “blessed” – this is an indication it is speaking dynamically to believers – it shows us what a true believer will do with the book of Revelation (this blessing is given at the end of the book as well)***

Rev 22:6-7 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. (7) Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

***B. The special threefold blessing is given to a certain group of people that will continually do what this verse says (the participles are in the present tense, implying continued action)***

1. "He that readeth" – not just the individual that reads the book in private, but also the church that reads it publicly
2. "They that hear" – not only are those that read it blessed, but, especially speaking of the reading in public, those that are there to hear it with the purpose of obeying are blessed
3. "And keep those things which are written therein"
  - a) To "keep" is to fulfill, to observe or pay attention to
  - b) As pointed out in the introduction, if all we learn from the book of Revelation is what will happen in the future, and we learn nothing that will help us mature in Christ then we have missed the point. As this says, there is a special blessing for those that actually "keep" – fulfill, observe, pay attention to – the words of this prophecy

Luk 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

***C. The phrase "the words of this prophecy" is speaking specifically of the book of Revelation – not of the whole of the Bible – again, there is a special blessing to those that follow this book, and in doing so it will reveal the true believer from the false believer to the world***

Conclusion: A fitting conclusion to these verses and a fitting "launching pad" for the rest of the book is found in the final clause of verse 3 – "for the time is at hand." The book of Revelation is given to reveal Christ to us, what is to come for us, and to reveal us to the world – and this needs to be done quickly, "for the time is at hand." The end of this age is near, and the prophecies of this book are about to come to pass – how will we deal with them?

Dan 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Dan 12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.