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Sermon Notes

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A Glorious Unveiling of Christ

Revelation 1:1-20

*Isaiah 64:1 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!*

I. Walking Wisely by an Unveiled Light

- A. What we think about the future greatly affects how we live our lives right now
- B. The Bible ends in one of the most amazing and deepest books imaginable... the Book of Revelation
- C. God wants us to know what is coming so that we can walk wisely in this present age by the light of his unveiled truth

2 Peter 3:11-13 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

II. The Origin and Blessing of the Book of Revelation (vs. 1-3)

- A. "Revelation": an unveiling
 - 1. Fundamental to our Christian faith: truth revealed by God
 - 2. Christianity is not something we make up; its origin is not in the will of man

3. There are things we would never know about God or our present condition if God had not revealed them by his word
4. Even more, we can know NOTHING about the future if God did not reveal it
5. “Revelation” = unveiling... a pulling back of a veil to show us something that was hidden before... literally APOCALUPSIS...
6. the veil is removed and we see clearly what we did not see before

B. What is Revealed?

1. Actually, first, WHO is revealed? Jesus Christ!!

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ

In other words, we could never fully know Christ as we should if it weren't for the Book of Revelation... actually, we know NOTHING about Christ apart from scripture

2. Secondly, what else is revealed: the future
3. Note: what MUST... SOON... take place
 - a. These things MUST take place, because God has willed them and no one can change God's eternal plan
 - b. These things MUST SOON take place... but “soon” to God and “soon” to us are radically different

The next major event in the eternal plan of God is the Second Coming of Christ... four times in this Book of Revelation, Jesus Christ says he is coming soon:

Revelation 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have...

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

And yet, it has been almost two thousand years since Jesus Christ ascended from earth into heaven!!

But:

2 Peter 3:8-9 With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

In light of eternity, these two thousand years are like a blink of an eye, like a watch passing in the night.

C. WHO DOES the revealing?

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him

1. God the Father reveals God the Son to us
2. This is the very thing Jesus said was true:

Matthew 11:27 No one knows the Son except the Father...

John 12:49 I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

D. The Heavenly Chain of Command

Revelation 1:1-2 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw-- that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

1. God gave this book of Revelation to Jesus
2. Jesus committed it to an angel
3. The angel carried it to John
4. John wrote it down for God's servants to read

E. The Angel Carries a Prophetic Message

1. The Book of Revelation unveils the invisible spiritual world
2. And angels... spiritual beings... will play a huge role
3. Angels are mentioned 81 times in the Book of Revelation
4. Hebrews tells us their role to US:

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

5. Angels carry prophetic messages to the prophets of old

Acts 7:53 ... the law ... was put into effect through angels

Galatians 3:19 The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

6. In Revelation, angels will take a very active role in bringing the decrees of heaven down to planet earth
 - a. Angels will sound trumpets that initiate judgments on earth
 - b. Angels will pour out bowls that result in judgments on earth
 - c. Angels will swing sickles and reap the earth
 - d. Angels will hand John scrolls and have him eat
 - e. Angels will observe and celebrate with great worship the events God is doing on earth, crying HALLELUJAH!!
 - f. Angels will sometimes be John's tour guide to show him aspects of the vision God is revealing
 - i) Revelation 17: The angel will carry John away in the Spirit to show him the whore of Babylon
 - ii) Revelation 21: the angel will carry John away in the Spirit to show him the bride of Christ, the glories of the New Jerusalem
7. Stand in awe of the invisible spiritual world God rules, and how joyfully obedient and powerfully active the angels are

F. The Humility of John

1. John calls himself a BOND-SLAVE
2. He also calls all the people of God the same... BOND-SLAVES

G. Blessings on the Book of Revelation

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

1. All scripture is God-breathed and useful (2 Timothy 3:16)
2. But not all scripture has the same powerful effect on our souls
3. The Book of Revelation is special, unique among the books of the Bible... God has assigned it a role that no other book has; it gives us insights into the glories of Christ and the present invisible spiritual realms (of both angels, demons, and the departed saints) AND of course, the future—the coming wrath and the coming glory of heaven that are found in NO OTHER BOOK
4. So, God calls on his servants to READ the words of this book and OBEY its message... to take to heart and act on what we will learn
5. And if we do, he will BLESS US richly
6. Again, note that he says THE TIME IS NEAR

James 4:14 What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

III. Greetings and Doxology (vs. 4-8)

Having taught us the ORIGIN and the BLESSING of this majestic and mysterious Book of Revelation, he now gives us a greeting and give to God a doxology... so, a word of GREETING to us, and a word of PRAISE to God

A. Greetings from John and from the Triune God

***Revelation 1:4-5 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:
Grace and peace to you***

B. John: The Apostle John

1. Earliest traditions identify John here as the Apostle, one of the Twelve
2. According to church history, all the other apostles were martyred for Jesus
 - a. Peter was crucified upsidedown in Rome
 - b. James was the first martyr of the Apostles, beheaded by King Herod in Acts 12
 - c. Andrew preached in modern-day Russia, Turkey, and ended up being crucified in Greece
 - d. Thomas died in India, pierced through with the spears of four soldiers
 - e. Philip converted the wife of a Roman proconsul in Asia Minor; in retaliation, the Roman had him tortured slowly to death
 - f. According to church history, John is the only one to have died of natural causes
3. John: exiled to Patmos

Revelation 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- a. The Roman Emperor Domitian, in the mid 90s of the first century, instituted a persecution against Christianity; as a result, John was exiled to Patmos
- b. Patmos is a tiny, rocky, deserted island off the coast of modern-day Turkey, about 17 square miles in size (about 1/8th the size of Durham county)

- c. John says in verse 9 he was exiled there because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus... and he says that persecution is our LOT in Christ, as must be suffering and patient endurance... BUT ALSO A KINGDOM!
- d. These ideas will be a major theme in Revelation
- e. John calls himself our BROTHER and COMPANION in this suffering, and kingdom and patient endurance in Jesus
- f. These are things we should all share together

1 Peter 5:8-9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

- 4. Numerous times in Revelation, John identifies himself, as though he can't quite believe he is experiencing this overwhelming vision... "I, John..."

Revelation 22:8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

C. Who the Letter was FIRST Addressed to:

Vs. 4 ...to the seven churches in the province of Asia

- 1. These were seven real churches in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey
- 2. Listed in this chapter...

Revelation 1:10-11 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

- 3. Archaeology has located these seven communities in a circular postal route just inland in Asia Minor from where Patmos is
- 4. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day... Sunday, worshiping by the power of the Holy Spirit... though in exile, he was delighting in Christ, filled with the fruit of the Spirit, elevated from his

immediate circumstances, like Paul and Silas singing in the Philippian jail

5. John was commanded by a loud voice behind him to write what he had seen, and send it to those churches
6. The entire Book of Revelation came to us as a result of his obedience to that command to write
7. So he begins in the usual way “GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU...”
8. All of Paul’s epistles start the same way. Reading this letter will be for you a conduit, a pipeline of grace to sustain your faith and build you up in Christ Jesus

D. Greetings from the Trinity

1. This greeting, this promise of GRACE and PEACE is not really from John but from Almighty God, the Triune One, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Revelation 1:4-5 Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits {4 Or the sevenfold Spirit} before his throne, ⁵ ¶ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

2. God the Father: described as “him who is, and who was, and who is to come...”
 - a. This speaks of the eternity of God, the timelessness of God, also the immutability of God
 - b. As when in the Old Testament the Lord said “I am who I am”
 - c. God is the eternal being, who never changes, whose power never diminishes... the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth
3. God the Spirit is described next, interestingly... the SEVEN SPIRITS before the Throne
 - a. This image will come to us again in Revelation 4... the throne is the throne of Almighty God

- b. The way we know this is the Holy Spirit most certainly is this one verse... its presence at this place in the Book... since this is clearly a Trinitarian formula
 - c. So many scholars see it as the Holy Spirit revealed in the perfection of the number seven... the number of completeness or perfection... so some say “the seven-fold Spirit” or the perfect Spirit
 - d. Some find it in Isaiah 11, although it is not certain:
4. Jesus Christ: described as
- a. Faithful witness: faithful to the One who sent him; speaking only the truth, especially when on trial for his life... did not shrink back but declared that he was the Son of God and he is the only way of salvation
 - b. Firstborn from the dead: firstborn means the first in eminence, first in rank; Paul also calls him firstfruits... meaning first in sequence; the first ever to be raised in a resurrection body, never to die again
 - c. Ruler of the kings of the earth: Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords... he rules over all the emperors on earth, including the Roman Emperor; his sovereign power over mighty human kings is essential to his control over history...
 - i) He does it NOW by supernaturally controlling their decisions for his own purposes

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

- ii) He will do it at his Second Coming by slaughtering all who rise up to oppose him

Revelation 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings

- 5. The letter is from the Triune God through John to all the local churches in all history, in all places, for all time

E. Doxology from John to Jesus

1. At this point, John, in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, celebrates his Savior, who he loves more now than the first day he saw him

Revelation 1:5-6 To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

2. To Jesus be the glory and power forever and ever
3. But what does John celebrate about Jesus... he is the one who LOVES us... with an everlasting love; who said "greater love has no one than this, that he laid down his life for his friends"...
4. John says Jesus has FREED US... set us free from our sins by the payment of the infinite price of his blood
 - a. This is the language of redemption
 - b. We were enslaved to sin and to Satan and could not break free
 - c. The BLOOD ATONEMENT of Christ for us is the centerpiece of the gospel
 - d. The Apostle John witnessed Jesus dying; he saw it with his own eyes, how Jesus shed his blood for our sins

John 19:34-35 one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

- e. And all these many years later, John still melts in love and worship for Jesus
- f. He dedicates this Book to him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood
- g. AND now freed from serving sin and self and Satan, we are able to serve his God and Father... Jesus' ransom of us has drawn us

into a Kingdom and made us priests to serve HIS God and HIS Father

- h. We are both a KINGDOM and we are PRIESTS as we are SERVANTS
 - i) Christ has made us a Kingdom... that means that the advancing kingdom of God is about people's hearts, not geography
 - ii) As each elect person hears the gospel, repents, and trusts in Christ, the kingdom of God has advanced a little more
 - iii) We then become rulers under Christ, as well as priests in service to God
 - iv) The priestly ministry is not one of blood sacrifices with animals, but it is of prayers and sacrificial works, including worship and evangelism and financial offerings... as well as the use of our spiritual gifts
 - v) All of these we offer as a continual fragrant offering to God

5. To CHRIST be glory and power FOREVER and EVER, amen.

F. The Second Coming Predicted

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

1. The Second Coming of Christ is a major theological theme of the whole Book of Revelation... it is fitting for John to declare it here
2. The Second Coming of Christ is established again and again in the New Testament, especially when John himself went out with the resurrected Christ to the Mount of Olives outside the city of Jerusalem forty days after his resurrection:
3. He spoke one more time with them, then ascended to heaven:

Acts 1:9-11 he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he

was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

4. Jesus himself at his trial before his enemies had predicted it, in the word of the prophet Daniel:

Matthew 26:63-66 The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

5. But his coming is assured, promised again and again... and here in Revelation, John reminds us of it... BEHOLD, he is coming with the clouds...
- a. The same clouds that covered him in his ascension will peel back and reveal him at his coming
6. And EVERY EYE will see him, even those who pierced him
- a. His coming will not be secret, but something everyone on earth will be able to see

Matthew 24:27 as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

- b. NO FAITH required; NO FAITH possible at that time
- c. John mentions the piercing of Jesus here... referring to his death by his bitter enemies
- d. Every atheist alive at that time will see him in the clouds, and mourn

- e. Every Buddhist, every Hindu, every animist tribalist will look up to the sky and see him, and mourn
 - f. Every Muslim... whether a secularized, peace-loving Muslim in the West or a fire-breathing jihadist in Afghanistan... they will all look up to the sky and see Christ
7. Reaction: ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH will mourn because of him
- a. Why? Because the time of their doom under the wrath of God has come at last

Revelation 6:15-17 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

8. John declares: SO SHALL IT BE, AMEN! The people of God WANT the Second Coming

G. God the Father Declares Himself

Revelation 1:8 I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

1. This is the Lord God, the Almighty One... this is God the Father
2. Alpha and Omega means the one who begins history and who ends it as well
3. As we've already said, he is the eternal, the unchanging God... who is and who was and who is to come
4. He is Almighty, meaning omnipotent... the one whose power makes history flow according to his wisdom

IV. The Unveiling of Christ, Our Glorious High Priest (vs. 9-20)

The rest of the chapter describes John's encounter with the resurrected, glorified Christ, in a very powerful vision

A. John's Circumstances: [Already discussed]

Revelation 1:9-11 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

1. In exile, on Patmos, in the Spirit, on the Lord's Day
2. Hears a mighty voice BEHIND HIM
 - a. The voice sounds like a trumpet... meaning it is LOUD and CLEAR
 - b. A trumpet is an instrument used to call an army to march or the nation of Israel to assemble
 - c. Paul said if the trumpet sounds an uncertain sound, who will follow it into battle
 - d. The first trumpet blast in the bible is at Mount Sinai, when a very loud trumpet blast called the nation to meet God in terror to receive the law
 - e. When Jesus descends from heaven in his second coming glory, he will do so with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God
 - f. So John must have been STARTLED, to say the least, to have his prayer and worship time so powerfully disturbed
 - g. And why was the voice BEHIND HIM? No idea, except that perhaps it shows how even a godly man like John needs to be redirected by the message Jesus is about to give... he has to TURN AROUND to face Christ

B. What John Saw When He Turned Around:

Revelation 1:12-16 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and

among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

1. The Seven Golden Lampstands

- a. We should picture free standing floor length stands, holding oil burning lamps
- b. Jesus is “among” (literally “in the midst of”) the golden lampstands, so it’s not like a menorah or candelabra, but individual lamps
- c. They are made of gold, signifying immense wealth, their value to Christ
- d. They are lampstands, giving off light
- e. They are interpreted at the end of the chapter plainly:

Revelation 1:20 the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- f. Jesus said

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- g. So, the seven LOCAL CHURCHES are immensely valuable, giving off light to all around... at least, that is what they are supposed to do

2. Jesus revealed as “one like a Son of Man”

- a. This is directly connected with the awesome vision of Daniel in Daniel 7

- b. There Almighty God is seated on his throne, ready to judge the terrifying beasts that are dominating his people on earth... from the throne comes a river of fire to destroy the nations
- c. Surrounding the throne are 100 million angels
- d. And suddenly, into the presence of God enthroned comes one like a Son of Man... a HUMAN BEING who receives from God sovereign power and dominion over all nations

Daniel 7:13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

- e. This is Jesus Christ... fully human, fully divine
3. Jesus is dressed like a priest...as he walks among the seven golden lampstands

Revelation 1:13 dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

- a. Jesus is our Great High Priest... his walking among the seven golden lampstands represents his CONTINUAL PRIESTLY ministry to each and every local church on the face of the earth
 - b. The golden sash around his chest gives a symbol of his glorious position
4. Jesus' appearance: ancient, and young... wise and powerful

Revelation 1:14-15 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

Just like Daniel's vision of God:

Daniel 7:9-10 "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

- a. The ancient of Days in Daniel's vision is God the Father... the white hair gives a sense of eternity... of immeasurable timelessness and ancient wisdom from experience
- b. But here, all those attributes are assigned to the SON OF MAN, to Jesus
- c. Jesus is every bit as old and every bit as wise as God the Father
- d. BUT his EYES are like BLAZING FIRE, and his feet are like bronze heated in a furnace
 - i) This is a picture of perfect holiness, and limitless ENERGY
 - ii) Jesus is old, vastly older than you can possibly measure or imagine
 - iii) Jesus is also VIGOROUS and POWERFUL, zealous, with the consuming fire of holiness like the SUN
 - iv) His face is like the sun shining in all its brilliance (vs. 16)

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

- 5. His voice was like the sound of rushing waters... I picture it like the deafening roar of Niagara Falls...
- 6. Out of his mouth comes a sharp, double-edged sword...

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

He speaks and heals His church (like a scalpel, cutting out the tumor)

He speaks and slays His enemies (like a broadsword, slaying an army)

7. John also saw Jesus holding in his right hand seven stars
 - a. The right hand represents intimacy and access... they are able to come very near to him
 - b. The seven stars we are told are the ANGELS of the SEVEN CHURCHES... probably the pastors (messengers) of those local churches
 - c. We will discuss this more over the next few weeks
 - d. But the picture is one of protection and authority

John 10:27-30 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hand

C. John's Overwhelmed Reaction

Revelation 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

1. This is almost exactly like Daniel's reaction to the visions he had
2. This is also Peter, James, and John's reaction to Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration and the glory cloud that surrounded them
3. When Christ appears in his glory, even a small part of his glory, no human being can stand in his presence

D. Christ's Comforting Words

Revelation 1:17-18 Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I

was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

1. The tenderness of Jesus' touch is incredible... Jesus frequently reached out his hand to heal people... on the mount of transfiguration, he touched the trembling disciples and told them not to fear
2. John specifically mentions Jesus' right hand... as though John were given the privilege of being ministered to by the right hand of Christ
3. Jesus identifies himself as FIRST and LAST... dead, and BEHOLD!!! I live forever and ever!
4. Jesus claims to hold the keys of death and Hades (the underworld)
 - a. Jesus has absolute power over death

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

- b. He uses that power to minister hope to his people
- c. They need not fear the grave

John 14:19 Because I live, you also will live.

John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

In this book, we are going to see the power of death running roughshod over most of the human race... death will be one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse; when one of the angels pours out his bowl on the earth, a third of the human race dies... billions of people! And the Antichrist, the Beast, will slaughter anyone who refuses to worship him as God... and that will be Christians...

Jesus tells us HE holds the keys of death and of the grave... we are able to be faithful even to death and we will receive the crown of life

E. John's Mission

Revelation 1:19 "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later."

1. Some take this as a three-part outline of the Book of Revelation
 - a. "What you have seen" is the Vision of Christ
 - b. "What is now" are the Seven Churches
 - c. "What will take place after" is the future
2. In any case, John is meant to write down this revelation for the churches from then until the end of time

F. Summary

In this awesome vision, we have revealed to us by God the Father the greatness of Jesus Christ in his resurrection glory, walking among the local churches, ministering to them, trimming their wicks, keeping their lights burning, rebuking them, correcting them, protecting them, warning them... this is an amazing picture of the ongoing ministry of Christ our Great High Priest caring directly for every local church in the world

V. Applications

A. Stand in Awe of the greatness of God and of Christ!

1. The Book of Revelation is an unveiling of a hidden world, a world that we could not know unless he did it
2. By this amazing book, we will especially see the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"
3. By this revelation we can lose our fear of death
4. By this revelation, we can be driven to zeal for personal holiness

5. By this revelation, we can move out with the gospel with greater zeal and power than ever before
- B. Realize the Greatness of Christ's Triumph over Death
- C. Tremble Before Him in His Power and Holiness
- D. Come to Christ!! He Alone is the Refuge from the Coming Judgment on the Earth
- E. Be Willing to Suffer for Christ... John clearly said it is our lot, our share in Christ
- F. Increase Your Expectancy in the Second Coming of Christ