



# LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



May 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 — Part 3

## Revelation 1:1-3 — “The Revelation and the Blessing”

### The Revelation (1:1-2)

The book of Revelation begins with an introduction or prologue which serves to orient the reader to the overall content of the book, explaining the source of the revelation as well as the way it came to the Apostle John.

Rev. 1:1a— <sup>1</sup>The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.

“revelation” - Αποκάλυψις (apokalypsis)— An uncovering or unveiling. A disclosure of truth, instruction, or events which were unknown but have now been made known.

This revelation is \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ

⇒ *His resurrected glory (1:12-18), His authority as the Head of the churches (1:18-3-22), His worthiness to unfold God’s end-time judgment (4:1-19:21), His earthly Kingdom reign (20:1-6), His new creation (Rev. 21-22).*

This revelation is \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ

⇒ This revelation has been given to Christ, the Mediator, so that He might inform His servants of the events which are soon take place.

Rev. 1b-2— <sup>1b</sup>He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

### The Chain of Communication:

God the  
Father

Jesus  
Christ

His  
Angel

His servant  
John

His  
Bondservants

⇒ “made it known/signified” — This revelation has come to John in the form of imagery that is intentionally \_\_\_\_\_.

### The Significance of Bearing Witness/Giving Testimony

“bore witness” - μαρτυρέω (martyreō)— To be a witness, act as a witness, testify or bear witness.

⇒ This term is highly significant in all of John’s writings except for 2 John, being used in both its verbal (44 times) and noun forms (21 times).

### The Old Testament Background

- Witness and testimony find their roots conceptually in the Mosaic Law where witnesses were needed to establish truth in order that proper judgment might be rendered. (Lev. 5:1; Deut. 19:15)
- Witness or testimony is related to the Hebrew concept of *rib* (lawsuit), which is a major focus in the OT prophets who describe God as being against Israel or the nations in a legal dispute (Isa. 40-55).

“The concepts and vocabulary of testimony are found throughout the canon of Scripture. Because of the cardinal role played by the law in the formation and life of ancient Israel, the roots of testimony are juridical. But because that life was not divided into discrete legal and religious compartments, those juridical roots blossom throughout the biblical narrative into religious proclamation, confession and martyrdom. This intermingling of legal and religious testimony is entirely natural, for the law was given in order that Israel, by obeying the law, might be a living testimony to its author, the Lord their God (Deut. 4:5–8; 26:16–19).”

— The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

For the John, the ultimate example of a “witness” is \_\_\_\_\_ !

John 8:37—Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

- John's claim that he "bore witness" to these things is his way of establishing the solemn truth of this revelation.

He bore witness to: The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ

All that he \_\_\_\_\_

## The Blessing (1:3)

The prologue concludes by explaining the purpose of the revelation, that is, so that those who believe might be blessed by it.

Rev. 1:3—<sup>3</sup>Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

"Blessed..." - μακάριος (makarios)— Blessed, fortunate, well-off, happy.

⇒ In the mindset of ancient Greece, the living who were wealthy and the dead who had entered paradise were *blessed*. They also used *blessed* to refer to the island of Crete because of its fertile soil and wonderful weather.

⇒ In the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT) the term was associated with those who are God's people (Deut. 33:29) and who live in accordance with God's Word (Ps. 1:1).

Ps. 145:5—Blessed (makarios) is he whose helper is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God

The imagery of this verse is of a gathering of believers:

The verse is literally translated:

*"Blessed (is) the one reading and the ones hearing the words of the prophecy and the ones keeping what is written in it, for the time is near."*

Observations:

1. The central place of the \_\_\_\_\_ Word of God:
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Imagery:
3. The Word of God must be \_\_\_\_\_ and obeyed:

Prov. 3:21-22—<sup>21</sup>My son, do not break away, but keep my counsel and insight <sup>22</sup>so that your soul may live and that there may be grace round your neck.

## The Book of Revelation and the Blessing of Believers

The purpose of the Revelation of Christ given to John is that it might be given to believers in order that they might be blessed by it.

Believers are blessed by Revelation when we keep what is written in it by bearing faithful witness:

1. To the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ (*His First Coming*)
2. To the certain promises of God's Word which will be \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with the words of this prophecy. (*His Second Coming*)