

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #2: Revelation 1:3-7 | The Blessing of Revelation

The Blessing of the Book | Revelation 1:3

- There are two recipients of the blessing.
 - First: he that readeth.
 - This is a blessing to an individual. Any individual!
 - This blessing is for the *written* words, which are a summary of all that he [John] saw.
 - Second: they that hear...and keep.
 - This is apparently one group of people, not two.
 - This does not seem to be the same as the *reader*, for two reasons:
 - Readers don't hear (the word ἀκούω [akouo] is the basis of our word *acoustics*).
 - The grammar changed from 3rd person singular (he) to 3rd person plural (they).
 - In truth, you and I who *read* this prophecy are unable to *keep* this prophecy. We will discover that it is “out of bounds” for our dispensation - it is *works* based (as the word keep implies).
- The **time is at hand** – that is, the *kairos* (season) is near, not the *chronos* (time on the clock/calendar).

The Author and the Recipients | Revelation 1:4-5a

- The Author: It is important to distinguish that written words are *from* the Trinity *by the pen of* John the Apostle.
 - From the Trinity:
 - The Father: **him which is, and which was, and which is to come**. That is, the **I AM** (Ex. 3:14).
 - The Spirit: while **the seven Spirits which are before his throne** is difficult to fully understand, everyone agrees that it is a reference to the Holy Spirit.
 - The Son: **Jesus Christ** is given a threefold description:
 - **The faithful witness** (He was a faithful witness of the Father, so that if you have seen Him, you have seen the Father).
 - **The first begotten of the dead** - He is the *protos* (first), but there will be more!
 - **The prince of the kings of the earth** - and His rulership is about to be unveiled!
 - John the apostle is the *penman* of that which is **from** God.
- The recipients: **the seven churches which are in Asia**.
 - The **seven churches** are *assemblies*. Our preaching series will present the idea that they are *future Jewish assemblies* and are thus not representative of the church-age in any way.

- The number seven is the most significant of significant numbers in the book of Revelation.
 - Seven has been seen as the number of spiritual perfection.
 - The number seven occurs 54 times in Revelation. This is 3x3x3x2, with three being a number of *completeness* and two being a number of *testimony*. Three threes (3x3x3) are “completely complete” and then an affirming testimony given in the two.

John's Opening Doxology | Revelation 5b-6

- The doxology: **to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**
- The direction:
 - To Him **that loved us**.
 - While God loved the world (Jn. 3:16), the **us** seems specific in this case.
 - This is the first use of the first-person-plural pronoun in the book. Previously John used **he** (v. 3) and **they** (v. 3). It appears that the **us** is either **his servants** (v. 1) or, more likely, **the seven churches** (v. 4). All other “us” usages in the book are clearly contextually explained.
 - To Him that **washed us from our sins in his own blood**.
 - Note that a textual variant replaces **washed** (v. 5, KJV) with “released” (or some variation). While the effect is the same, the blood washes us from all sin (1 John 1:7).
 - To Him that **made us kings and priests unto God**.
 - A textual variant also affects this phrase. The newer translations say that he made “us” to be “a kingdom” rather than **kings**.
 - The identity of *us* is still important, but in any case, there is no *kingdom* today, only **kings of a future kingdom**.

The First Behold | Revelation 1:7

- The word **behold** is from the Greek word for *look*. It is always in the imperative. It is used 30 times in the book of Revelation. It is a reminder of what we should see!
- The focus is the *revelation* of the coming Savior in His glory. Notice that it is given not with the tone of “what a blessing,” but rather with a tone of terror, for **all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him**. This should serve as a reminder that the *rapture* is very different than the Second Coming.