



DATE: October 9, 2011

TEXT: Revelation 1: 1-3

TITLE: "The Revelation of Jesus"

We are beginning to dig into the text this morning. I am always excited when we begin a new book study. Let me share with you a goal I have had for the past 30 years. I have had a goal to preach through the entire New Testament verse by verse or section by section in my career. I have three books I have not preached through.... Mark (although I have done Matthew, Luke and John and there is not much new in Mark), Romans, and Revelation.

For the next few weeks we are going to do a very detailed study of the first 3 chapters of Revelation.... it will be more verse by verse study than the rest of Revelation, which will be more section by section. Today we begin with the prologue of Revelation. I will share 4 lesson on these 3 verses.

Lesson # 1 The central feature of the book of Revelation is Jesus Christ. *Rev. 1: 1 states*

1 The revelation from 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,

Let me say Revelation is hard to understand at times.... but one fact is not hard to

understand...Jesus Christ is the central figure in the book. John has four visions that make up the book of Revelation. Each Vision gives us a wonderful view of our Lord Jesus.

- The first vision gives the view of Jesus a Lord of the churches
- the second vision gives us the view of Jesus at the lamb of God
- the third vision we see Jesus as the invincible conqueror
- the fourth vision depicts Jesus as the Lord and center of the new Creation.

The Picture of Jesus given in Revelation is, in many ways, richer and fuller than the picture of Jesus given in the Gospels.

- Jesus in the Gospels is the baby born in the manger. A wonderful picture... but still just a baby.
- Jesus in the Gospels is the wandering teacher. Again, wonderful... but a teacher.
- Jesus in the Gospels is a Suffering servant. A man hanging on the cross. Of course that is the central even in all of history.. So far... but it is still a man on a cross.
- Jesus in the Gospels is a resurrected, risen Lord. Wonderful... central... but still human.

Compare that understanding of Jesus to the picture of Jesus given in Rev. *Rev. 19: 11ff*

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Jesus is judge. Jesus is warrior. Jesus is King. Jesus is Lord. Jesus is ruler.

And this is just one... we will see these descriptions of Jesus again and again and again.

Here is what I have been discovering.... The Gospels is the base of our understanding of Jesus ... the letters are the body of our understanding... but Revelation give us the glory of Jesus.

Here is possibly one of the great tragedies of 21st century Christianity. Jesus has become mundane. People say “I believe in Jesus... I am a Christian.” And then almost shrug their shoulders. These people do not understand Revelation and do not have a accurate picture of Jesus. Jesus is never a shrug of the shoulders. Jesus is never to be taken for granted. Let us truly worship the Mighty Conqueror, the King of Kings..

Lesson # 2 Revelation is the word of God. *Rev. 1: 2 states...*

1 The revelation from 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.

We are given here the process that was used to reveal the Book of Revelation. God revealed truth to an Angel... who revealed truth to John... who revealed truth to you and to me.

Let me share with you the key question for the church in the 21st century. The question is this: how much of the Bible is true? Who much is it a writing of man and how much is it the word of God? Do we have the writing of John and Paul and Moses, and Luke and Matthew or

do we have the words of God? This is all one question. How you answer this question determines your understanding of truth. Determines your understanding of morals. Determines your understanding of law. Determines your understanding of Jesus. Determines your understanding of self. That is why it is the key question to answer.

The historical answer.. And the answer that we believe here at new Bedford Church is that all of scripture is the word of God. ALL. We believe *2 Timothy 3: 16*

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 3: 15 states...

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction

Notice in this quote that even Peter already saw Paul's letters as Scripture based on the wisdom of God. We believe all scripture is the word of God. ALL

Yes, Paul remained Paul. Yes, John remained John and Matthew remained Matthew.

They had their own writing styles.. Their own vocabulary.. Their own perspectives... their own

situations they were writing to..... but they were inspired by God. God guided their minds and had them write truth.

John is writing truth. What he writes will take place. The image of Jesus he gives is truth.

It's symbolic.. It's metaphor... but it is truth.

Again to look at the tragedy of the 21 century society and church. Not only is Jesus often given a shrug of the shoulders, his Word is ignored and either given a shrug of the shoulders or totally ignored. We believe we can create God in our own image. We believe we can determine morality on our own. We believe we can determine truth on our own. And we believe God just doesn't care. Read Revelation. God does care. He cares very much... and he will not tolerate falsehood. God is loving... that does not mean God is not just and it does not mean God is a fool.

All scripture is God breathed and is to be used by us to guide us into relationship and worship of God and of Truth.

Lesson # 3 the time of Christ is near. *Rev. 1:3 states...*

Blessed is the one who reads aloud 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.

Does this mean I can give a time for the return of Christ? No, I can not. Does this mean I believe the return of Christ is near? Yes, I do. Do I realize that every generation before me believed the return of Christ was near? Yes, I realize this. Do I believe every generation should believe the return of Christ is near? Yes, I believe John intentionally wrote this so that every generation would live believing the return of Christ could happen in their lifetime.

Peter knew this truth. *2 Peter 3: 8-13 states...*

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: 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. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

11 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, where righteousness dwells

I love verse 11. A very practical question: What kind of people should we be?" We need to live like Christ is coming tomorrow. Even relationship should be based on Christ's return. Every decision should be based on Christ's return. Every word that comes from our mouths

should be based on the knowledge that He hears and we may stand before Him in the next hour.

Finally, Lesson # 4 Notice the Word of God and especially the book of Revelation is intended for believers not unbelievers. *Rev. 1: 1 states....*

1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place

Jesus said something very similar. *Mark 4: 10-12 states....*

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding”

What is the greatest tool used to bring non-Christians to Christ? Is the it Bible? I believe primarily the answer is no. truthfully many parts of the bible are an absolute mystery to Non-Christians. Have you ever tried to truly explain the Trinity to a non-believer. Often it is almost impossible. Have you ever tried to share the fact of total sinfulness. The idea is often rejected. Even the idea of substitutionary atonement... that is that Christ died on the cross and took our sins upon himself, causes many to have a blank stare on their face. And then you try to share the truth about Revelation.

No the primary tool to bring others to Christ is not the bible... it is the Christian. You and I are the Bible to non-believers. You and I are the truth to the non-Christian. You and I are the light in a very dark world.

As I said last week.. We are given the promise of blessing is we live the truths revealed in the book of Revelation. The blessing is this... we share the wonderful picture of Christ seen in Revelation with others. Scripture is the truth. We are men and women of Scripture and we are the conduit of truth to a dark, dark world.

Revelation was written not to be science fiction is a non-Christian world... it was written to be truth to the Church.

We have begun... what a joy to share and to hear the Word of God

AMEN