

## REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

### Sermon no. 1

## A TRANSFORMING ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

Revelation 1:1-20

The centerpiece of this chapter is an encounter. The apostle John, exiled to Patmos for preaching the gospel, is met by Christ on a Sunday, and like Daniel before him, barely survives the meeting.

Yet when we look beyond the surface, the way that the aging apostle encountered Christ, is the way He comes and keeps returning to us when we need it most – a life-changing encounter.

As we begin this series on Revelation, note that the hardest book to understand in the whole Bible takes us to where we all begin, an encounter with Jesus. Look at how it starts:

### **1. A Sovereign Purpose underlies every reality in a believer's life (vv. 1-3)**

- This Revelation to John was *"to show His servants what must soon take place"*.
- We may end up in Patmos, whether imposed or of our own making. Yet in all this we must realize that God has a sovereign purpose we are often clueless about. But it is always for a blessing: *"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"*.

### **2. A Supreme Person underlies every relationship in a believer's life (vv. 4-8)**

- As John connects with the people who matter in his life, and blesses them, don't miss the superlative descriptions he gives of his Lord and of what He has done for them all:

*° Jesus Christ . . . the faithful witness, the Firstborn from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth to Him be glory and power for ever and ever  
... the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty"*.

Now go and read these words to those who say that Christ is not God! It explains why John (and Daniel) reacted the way they did on encountering Christ.

◦ !...who loves us and freed us from our sins by His blood, and made us a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father—

Acknowledging what God has done for believers.

◦ ... *every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.*

Driving home the unpleasant reality of how people destroy themselves by rejecting Him.

### **3. A Specific Plan to serve God may underlie suffering in a believer's life (vv. 9-20)**

- John suffered for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- Note how Jesus gives John his mission:
  - John is given the assignment. *"Write on a scroll what you see and send it"*
  - John is shown an overwhelming vision of the Lord, and revived when he is overcome. *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me"*
  - John is reminded of the glorious sufficiency of the Lord. *"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 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."*
  - John is given everything he needs for his task: *"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later"* a framework, and a helpful explanation (v.20)
- Jesus may do the same things for us when He wants us to serve Him. What is common in every calling will be a glimpse of His glory and a reminder of His sufficiency. The glory of God inspires us, enervates us, and transforms us to serve Him. Then He sets us up to succeed, not fail.

### **Final Thoughts:**

Such transforming encounters with Christ are never a one-time deal. They will recur for as long as the Lord sees you need it, as long as it's part of His plan. For some of you it will come in the midst of blessing, for many of us, like John, in the midst of suffering.

Plead with God for the blessing of such an encounter. For Daniel and John, it came very late in their lives, but it doesn't have to be for you. Perhaps, like Moses, God is waiting for a cry in your heart *"I pray You, show me Your glory!"* (Exod 33:18).