

INTRODUCTION

A. Importance (Aspects) of this Study

A1. Recognize: Revelation as the Culmination of All Things

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is given to the Church to unveil the things that were, the things that are, and the things that are yet to comeⁱ. An all-encompassing conclusion, Revelation stands not only as an index to the entire Bible, but also as the completion of reality as we know itⁱⁱ. Within the words of the prophecy is the culmination of all things. The descriptions contained within the book expand upon the revelation given to Daniel the Prophet, and thus confirm the final events as summarized in Daniel 9:24,

“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.”

It is easily construed from this passage that these events are yet future. For instance, if the end of sins has already occurred, we need to seriously consider our definition of sin!

The book of Revelation stands as a witness to events surrounding the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Somewhat like reading the end of the story first, we are blessed in knowing where we are headed. The greatest story ever told has an ‘ending’, and we are blessed to read it and behold the truth as it comes to pass. For, prophecy stands as a testimony to the glory of God. This characteristic is exclusive proof of the one, true, and living God, who is recorded in Isaiah 46:9-10 as asserting,

ⁱ REV 1:19, Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

ⁱⁱ REV 21:1, I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

“Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and *there is none like Me*, ¹⁰*Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done*, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure'”.

Thus, God alone possesses this unique ability and presents prophecy as His signature of the Scriptures. This is summarized for us in Hebrews 1:1-2,

“God, who *at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets*, ²*has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*”.

As recipients of prophecy, we should become familiar with all that God has written to us regarding the future.

For, God holds us accountable to know the words of His prophets, as He explains to Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18-19,

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹And it shall be that *whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him*”.

Jesus reiterates these same topics as He describes the basis of his own ministry, given in John 12:48-50,

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-*the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*. ⁴⁹“For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰“And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Indeed, it will be worse for those who know the truth but do not respond appropriately, as Jesus explains in Luke 12:47-48,

“that *servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will*, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

We can also learn from this passage that when more knowledge is given, more responsibility is given in addition. Upon receiving revelation from God, a proper response is expected from us: *to prepare ourselves and do according to His will*ⁱⁱⁱ. For, we are accountable to God with all that He has given us^{iv}.

Who will teach us, then, how to prepare ourselves? What has God told us about the future? What are the practical actions we can take that are according to His will? The Sunday school answer to all questions is where we need to look. For, there is only one teacher^v to teach us; our future is in Him^{vi}; He has revealed God's will to us for what we should do^{vii}; and, He presents Himself as the perfect example^{viii} to follow. The answer is Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our Lord. It is our responsibility, therefore, to walk worthy of the calling we have received from Him. Roused by our love for Him, we should find out what He likes and dislikes. We should do those things that please Him, and avoid

ⁱⁱⁱ LUKE 12:47, that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

^{iv} LUKE 19:11-27, as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. ¹²Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' ¹⁵And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' ²⁰Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²²And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' ²⁴And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' ²⁵"("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') ²⁶For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ²⁷But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

^v MATH 23:9-11, Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

^{vi} COL 3:3, For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

^{vii} JOHN 6:27-29, Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

^{viii} JOHN 15:10-17, If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.

those things that displease Him. His yoke is light, but does require us to follow His lead. Revelation is the declaration of where He is leading us^{ix}, and the guidebook of how we get there^x. As we study Revelation together, I pray, for the glory of Jesus, that we redeem the blessings God has in store for each one of us, who read, hear, and learn how to 'keep the words of this prophecy'^{xi}.

^{ix} REV 21:9, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

^x REV 21:7, He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

^{xi} REV 22:7, Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."