

Come Follow Me
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Week 50
Revelations 1-5

The last book of the New Testament. Can you believe it? One more year is about to be behind us and I am extremely excited to study the Book of Mormon again next year.

Most who read the book of Revelations kind of feel this doom and gloom feel from it. And why shouldn't they. It predicts what is coming and the destruction of many people and the awful things they are going to have to go through. In fact the title of this book, the book of Revelations in Greek is Apocalipsis. It is the word that we get our English word Apocalypse from. The English word Apocalypse means an Event involving the destruction or damage on an awesome or catastrophic scale. Quite literally the destruction of all things, the end of the world. But in Greek that is not what this word means. In Greek Apocalipsis means to discover or to reveal. Hence the word "Revelation".

This book is a book of Prophetic prophecy that is full of symbols and illustrative images as it describes the days to come. And some wonder why that is? Well, like parables; these symbols transcend and withstand cultural or language barriers. These symbols allow us to really see what it was that John saw without the words of interpretation getting in the way.

And I am going to try and get past the first 3 verses if we can, but it will be challenging with all that is contained right at the beginning. Chapter 1 verse 1 states:

"[The Revelation](#) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his [servants](#) things which must [shortly](#) come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his [angel](#) unto his servant John:"

This prophetic writing is a Revelation of Jesus Christ, given by God to Jesus to show to John. That was the line of authorization in order to show John, who was stuck on a barren island out in the middle of nowhere. Sentenced to live there in his old age until he dies because of his testimony of Jesus Christ.

There is one word in this verse that most believe doesn't fit. This is a vision of things that are to come "shortly". What a strange word for a prophecy given nearly 2000 years ago. How is that short in any sense of the word? In Greek it is two words "en Tachie". It is where we get the word Tach-o-meter from. A tachometer is a gauge used to measure velocity. So when John says these things are to happen soon. What he means is that as these things get closer and start to take place they will build up speed and they will happen close together, or build momentum as they roll forward. Which makes a lot more sense. When this was written thousands of years ago or even translated hundreds of years ago they would have had a hard time believing that any of these things could happen. But today as we look at them it is easy to see that they have already

begun and we had no problem seeing how this will take place, if not in our day at least in the near future.

In verse 2 and 3 it says:

“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. **Blessed** *is* he that **readeth**, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the **time** *is* at hand.”

Blessed? Really? Blesses mean to be joyous or happy. Happy are those that read this book. As we get to Chapter 6 and all the awful, gory, and disturbing things that are predicted it is hard to imagine that we can be Joyful or happy as we read them. But here is the key: Keep reading... As you get to the end you will discover the grand truth that God and our Savior Jesus Christ are the victors over this battle for the human souls. We win... we will see the adversary bound and cast out forever. Never again to be able to drag us down to his misery and damnation. At the end we find freedom, love, peace and hope.

Here is taste or a sneak peak as we dive into this wonderful book:

“**1** And he shewed me a pure river of **water of life**, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the **tree of life**, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the **leaves** of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more **curse**: but the **throne** of God and of the **Lamb** shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall **see** his **face**; and his **name** *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the **sun**; for the Lord God giveth them **light**: and they shall **reign for ever** and ever.”

(Revelations 22:1-5)

How beautiful is that? I am mesmerized by the image of heaven, and how wonderful it sounds. Blessed are those that read this book and abide by its words for they shall see this place and experience the wonder it will provide.

In verse 10 John starts his vision. And I want you to notice something very important. It starts out by saying: “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day.” Here is what is interesting. In the original text the word “the” was not present. So it is actually to read: “I was in spirit on the Lord’s day.” That changes it quite a bit. Though he was imprisoned on this dreadful island John was in Spirit as he worshiped the Lord on the sabbath. There is a great lesson to be learned here as to how we conduct ourselves on the sabbath. Perhaps reflecting or pondering on this would inspire a change of heart towards the reverence of that sacred weekly time. That is just a seed I wanted to plant, as you study these chapters this week.

This next part is what I really wanted to discuss. Verses 10-20 John sees a vision of Jesus. What I feel it is important to realize is that John already knows Jesus. He walked with him, served with him. He was with Jesus nearly every moment for 3 years. He saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain, He saw Him in the mortal flesh and also as a resurrected body. But, he had never seen Jesus like this. And it astonished him so much that he "fell on his face as if he were dead". And this is what he saw:

" [I] heard behind me a great **voice**, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the **first** and the last: and, What thou seest, **write** in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia.

Just as a side note: Why these 7 churches? There were more than 7 churches at that time. For example the root church that started in Jerusalem was still alive and running. The major churches of Rome and Antioch were left out. Why specifically was he instructed to write to these 7 only? There are a lot of theories and ideas as to why these 7. But here is what I came up with as I pondered this question: We know that God is no respecter of persons. He does not have favorites and He is not biased. And with that understanding we realize that He also does not give out participation trophies. Just because one person receives a great revelation does not mean that He will give that same blessing to someone else just so we feel He is fair. God loves each of His children individually and knows and blesses each child individually with what they need and what is best of them. And that truth, if understood, will set you free.

Let's continue:

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden **candlesticks**; [Verse 20 tells us that these represent the seven churches] And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the **Son of man**, **clothed** with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. [This was a breastplate of Gold.] His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his **eyes** *were* as a flame of **fire**; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his **voice** as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars:

[These seven stars are: "the **angels** of the seven churches" If you look at the Joseph Smith translation we see that Angels means servant, In greek it means messenger, or pastor. There were the people that were leading or shepherding each of the seven churches]

And out of his mouth went a sharp two edged **sword**: and his **countenance** *was* as the **sun** shineth in his strength. And when I **saw** him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: *I am* he

that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Revelations 10-20)

No wonder John fell on his face before the feet of the glorified Savior. What an image of the one who descended below all things in order to snatch us from the everlasting fires of hell. What glory and majesty in the lowly sacrificial lamb who willingly laid down His life for each of us mortal sinners. What mercy in showing the aged, imprisoned John this magnificent vision of the glorified Jesus. May we strive to be as pure as John, so that we may also see Jesus as John did, is my prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.