

Revelation 1 – CBC Sunday evening May 8th 2018

Sermon outline

[a] A persecuted Christian

This book is essentially a letter – note the letter introduction formula in 1.4-5. It is written from a Christian who has been facing persecution for his faith to encourage other Christians in the same position [1.9].

[b] An unusual style

Although the book is a letter, it is written in a particular genre or style of expression. The technical word is ‘apocalyptic’.

[c] A double promise

Revelation opens with two distinct promises, one for the reader and one for the hearer.

[d] A central figure

That is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. We see him - in glorified form - and hear him speaking in 1.12-20. And this evening we shall focus on five things about him that we find in Revelation 1.

[1] JESUS LIVES

What persecuted Christians needed to know was that Jesus was truly Lord, God in human form and that, as such, he had defeated death. And that is why the book of Revelation would have been such an encouragement to them and should be a similar encouragement to us.

**[a] it comes from the Lord who has conquered death
[1.5,18]**

Without him, there would be no 'revelation from Jesus Christ.

**[b] it comes from the Lord who holds the keys of death and
the realm of the dead [1.18].**

The Jews understood that only God held ultimate power over death. But Jesus says that he does – which shows us how we must understand him. He is indeed God the Son.

[2] JESUS RULES

It was because the Emperor Domitian ruled the Roman empire that John had been sent to the island of Patmos. And when persecution and pressure come upon Christians, it is always because someone in a position of authority above those Christians uses that authority against them.

The last word does not lie with the kings of the earth, but with the One who rules over them. Even when they act against the word and ways of God, Jesus is still the ruler of the kings of the earth. He has the power because his father, God, does.

[3] JESUS LOVES

*'Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.'*

But what does the Bible tell us about **the way in which** Jesus loves us? For many people, the notion of Jesus's love is a vague and sentimental one. It is warm and fuzzy, or it consists entirely in the experience of happy times and days.

When you are suffering persecution and pressure you do need to be sure of your ground in the matter of the love of Jesus for you. *'To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood...'*

Here is the place where we can know the love of Jesus – the cross.

[4] JESUS SEES

Let us note the detail in verse 14, *'his eyes were like blazing fire.'*

These eyes see clearly and with authority. If we take the description that immediately precedes it, *'the hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow'*, and if we know that those same words are used in the book of Daniel to describe God himself, [Daniel 7.9] we realise that these eyes of Jesus are the eyes of God.

[5] JESUS RETURNS

Much of John's letter will be taken up with the visions the Lord Jesus gave to him.

But before he gets to those, he is given to see something else. He sees the return of Jesus [1.7]. Before he relates the details of the vision[s] he has been given, John is allowed to look ahead and he sees where all this revelation is leading. He sees it so clearly that he invites his readers to see it, too – 'Look .. he is coming..' We can notice:

Visibility – this is not the appearance in Israel, seen by relatively speaking a few people (out of all the people who have ever lived). This an appearance to every human being.

Accountability – amongst those who see him on that day will be those who pierced him. In the first instance, that is of course a reference to those who plotted and brought about his death. But surely it is not confined to that one generation. All who have pierced him, who have rejected him, will see him and mourn because of him.

The return of Jesus will be the joy of his people, their faith will be vindicated. But those who have opposed him will have no excuse and nowhere to go, nowhere to hide.

Certainty – So shall it be! Amen. John is underlining the fact that there is no doubt about this. It is going to happen.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that Jesus lives, rules, loves, sees and returns. How is all this possible?

We have already seen the answer.

We noted earlier that the description of him in the first half of verse 14 is taken from Daniel 7.9 where it applies to God:

‘the hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow’,

Here, it applies to Jesus and it points to his deity.

It is as God’s Son that he lives, rules, loves, sees and returns. And it is as God’s Son that we must recognise him and give our lives to him, for the sake of our eternal destiny. To God be the glory, amen.