

The Gospel in Revelation

The last book of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation. Like the last chapter of a well-written book, this last chapter in God's book sums up all that has gone before, and brings all to completion. Many folks have assumed that it is too difficult to understand, therefore they devote little or no time at all to studying it. This is a great, and possibly fatal, mistake.

The first verse of this book explains its purpose:

Revelation 1

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.

It is a revelation of Jesus. Jesus is the "power of God" revealed to save men from sin. This is called the gospel:

Romans 1

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

The gospel reveals Jesus. The book of Revelation also reveals Jesus. Therefore, the book of Revelation is also the gospel. It is all about the gospel for it is all about revealing Jesus.

But why then do people think that the gospel is found in every book of the New Testament but not in the book of Revelation? Why, when they seek to understand the gospel, will they turn to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Romans, or Galatians, but not to the book of Revelation? Because they either have an inadequate understanding of the gospel, or their minds have been confused by false interpretations of that last and precious book.

Furthermore, God pronounced a special blessing on this

book which is not pronounced on any other book in the New Testament:

Revelation 1

³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Do you suppose that this is an “optional” blessing? That is, you can have it if you want to pursue it, but it is not essential? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pronounced many blessings:

Matthew 5

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Which one of these blessings are optional? Would you like to avoid being meek...then you will not inherit the earth. Is it optional to be pure in heart? Then you will not see God. Perhaps you think that you can avoid persecution, or that the times of persecution are over? So you don't need that blessing? Not so, for the Bible plainly states:

2 Timothy 3

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Maybe this is not your experience because you do not de-

sire to live a truly godly life in Christ Jesus. But for all who do, they will find persecution of one sort or another, because the same enemy of souls still seeks to oppose God's work, wherever it is found.

Therefore, these blessings are not optional—none of God's blessings are. When He pronounces a blessing, He expects us to receive it. Likewise, when He writes warnings and counsels in a book, He expects us to read and keep them.

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Deuteronomy 29

²⁹ The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

We need every word that God gives. To refuse the “revelation of Jesus Christ” is to refuse the knowledge of God—it is to refuse the gospel. That is a sign of foolishness:

Jeremiah 4

²² For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.

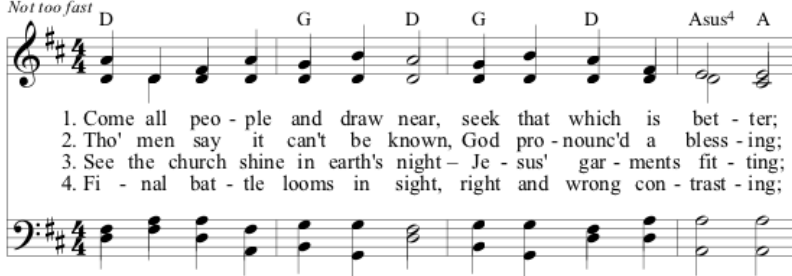
Perhaps one difficulty in the reception of the book of Revelation is that many expositors and ministers have not seen the gospel in that book. Therefore they have presented it simply as a delineation of future war-like events among the nations, with God coming down in great power in the end and wiping the field. That is certainly not the gospel, and in future articles, I hope we can dispel these false ideas, and open up some of the beauties of this book.

But for now, I close this article with a song, and an admonition from Edward Irving, an earnest expositor of the Book of Revelation in the early 1800's. First the song:

Book of Revelation


Not too fast

D G D G D Asus⁴ A



1. Come all peo - ple and draw near, seek that which is bet - ter;
2. Tho' men say it can't be known, God pro - nounc'd a bless - ing;
3. See the church shine in earth's night - Je - sus' gar - ments fit - ting;
4. Fi - nal bat - tle looms in sight, right and wrong con - trast - ing;

A⁷ D A D G A⁷ G/D D



Hear the gos - pel plan most clear, in God's fi - nal let - ter.
On the wise who will be shown, these the book's ad - dress - ing.
Na - tions view the per - fect sight, then the Judg - ment sit - ting.
Hat - ers of God's Law u - nite: per - se - cu - tion, fast - ing.

A D A⁷ D A⁷ D



Clear - est ex - pla - na - tion, bright - est lu - mi - na - tion,
Rich - est in - spi - ra - tion, god - ly ex - ha - la - tion,
Full - ness of sal - va - tion, gos - pel to each na - tion,
Chur - ch's trib - u - la - tion, Ba - bel's dev - as - ta - tion,

G A D G D/A A⁷ G/D D



No dis - sim - u - la - tion, book of Rev - e - la - tion!
Heav'n - ly der - i - va - tion, book of Rev - e - la - tion!
End of me - di - a - tion, book of Rev - e - la - tion!
God's glo - ri - fi - ca - tion, book of Rev - e - la - tion!

Book of Revelation

1. Come all people and draw near, seek that which is better;
Hear the gospel plan most clear, in God's final letter.
Clearest explanation, brightest lumination,

No dissimulation, book of Revelation!

2. Tho' men say it can't be known, God pronounced a blessing;
On the wise who will be shown, these the book's addressing.
Richest inspiration, godly exhalation,
Heav'nly derivation, book of Revelation!

3. See the church shine in earth's night, Jesus' garments fitting;
Nations view the perfect sight, then the Judgment sitting.
Fullness of salvation, gospel to each nation,
End of mediation, book of Revelation!

4. Final battle looms in sight, right and wrong contrasting;
Haters of God's Law unite: persecution, fasting.
Church's tribulation, Babel's devastation,
God's glorification, book of Revelation!

From Edward Irving's *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, vol. 1, p. 10:

The name of the book is therefore the opening of Christ, the disclosing, the unveiling, the discovering of Christ. Now before going any farther, I shall draw one or two inferences from this first head. If the intention of the book be the unveiling or uncovering of Jesus Christ, it certainly must be a book of the very first importance for men to study; for what is there that concerns a Christian but Jesus Christ?—for in Him is hid all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

I know nothing of myself, I can know nothing of myself, I hope nothing of myself. I cannot say I know God, but in Jesus Christ. I know nothing of God, but according as I see Him in the person of Jesus Christ. I know nothing that is to come, or that is past, or that exists around me, but through the same interpretation which Jesus Christ is of God's fullness; for all things were created by Him, and all things were created for Him, and in Him all things consist.

If, then, the person and offices of Jesus Christ be that which all preaching, and all hearing, and all understanding and research into Scripture are conversant with, surely, when God has written a book expressly for the purpose of unveil-

ing and discovering Him , it is a very bold thing for any person to say that book is not profitable for men to search into; that the book is so difficult that it is in vain for men to search into it. For any one thus to speak is to say that God undertook a thing for the good of the Church, but failed in His good intent. He gave it to Jesus Christ to show it unto His servants, and yet His servants have no profit or pleasure from it.

For you to say that this book doth not unveil Christ, but rather hide Him, for you to doubt of its profitableness, for you to believe that it is a matter of uncertainty whether you will derive knowledge of Christ from it, is as much to say that God has been defeated in His object; that God has not attained His wish; that He was trying to unveil Christ unto man, but it is a very doubtful thing whether He has unveiled Him or not to any one.

To entertain such doubt, such unbelief, and to follow such practices, is, I say, very irreverent distrust, and wicked disobedience of God. And here I may observe in passing—for I always love to confirm what I say by my own experience—that let other persons think and state what they please, truth constrains me to declare that I have got more insight into the person and offices of my blessed Lord from the study of this book, than from the study of all Scripture besides: in very truth, it has proved to me the unveiling and discovering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To me it has been the gospel, not indeed of His flesh, (the gospel of the days of his flesh being written in the four Evangelists,) but it has been the gospel of His glory: it has discovered to me my Lord glorified, and shown Him to my soul as the great Bishop of souls; and as the great Head of the Church, for the consolation of the Church, it has shown Him also to my flock; and to myself the minister over them, it has shown Him as the universal Bishop.

And to many who are not of my flock, I have been enabled to demonstrate out of this book, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted of God to be the Prince of the kings of the earth; who does Himself, or the Father for Him does,

bring about all the revolutions of the kingdoms, to the end of reducing all rule and dominion under the man Christ Jesus, of putting all enemies under His feet.

Here, also, we have seen Him setting destruction in array against the apostasy of Rome; and while we behold infidelity advancing with giant strides to the supremacy of the kingdoms, we can look on undismayed, because we see herein written that it shall speedily go into destruction, being overcome by the Lamb, and those who are with Him, who are called, and faithful, and chosen.

Truly has it proved itself in my experience, and the experience of my people, to be a full disclosure and complete opening of Jesus Christ, whose work, since His ascension until this day, is here discovered; and His better work, when He shall come again in the glory of His power, to be honored in His saints, to deliver the world from its oppressors and destroyers, and to bring it at length to pass that all nations shall be blessed in Him, and all shall call Him blessed.

I do assure you, that it has been to me and my flock the book of the Gospel of Christ in risen glory; as the four Gospels are of Christ in fallen flesh. The Gospels are the revelation of Christ's work in the days of His flesh.

The Apocalypse is the revelation of all things which He is doing in heaven. In the one I have seen God manifested in the man humbled: I have seen in the other God manifested in the man exalted. I have seen in the one God manifested by Christ present on the earth amongst men: I have seen in the other God manifested by Christ working in the Spirit, though absent from amongst men. Likewise, God to be manifested in Christ's coming to the earth again, and in all the mysteries of power and glory which He is then to bring into accomplishment. So much does the very name and title of this book commend it to the Church.