

Sermon Discussion

11 April 2021

Read Revelation 1:1-20

Dig Deeper

“Revelation” is the translation of the Greek noun, *apokalupsis*, meaning “a disclosure, an unveiling.” The term “revelation” itself is derived from the Latin word *revelatio* (from *revelare*, “to reveal or unveil that which has previously been hidden”). This was the title given to the book in the Latin Vulgate (a Latin translation of the New Testament by Jerome in A.D. 400).

John’s choice of this particular word assures us that God intends for this book to bring light and be understood by its readers. This means we must understand, from the very beginning, that the book of Revelation is NOT a riddle; it’s a revelation.

In verse 12, John saw **seven golden lampstands**. According to verse 20, we learn that they are the seven churches to whom Jesus is speaking. It is important to note that the churches are no more than “lampstands.” The light is Christ, and they are to show Him forth.

It is also important to note that the focus of this section is on the risen Lord Jesus Christ who is **“in the middle”** of these lampstands (1:13a). This demonstrates that He has a direct relationship with each church. He is in the midst to minister to us, to search us, and to enable us. Bear in mind, the purpose of the lampstand was not the light itself. It was to bear the light. The church is to bear the light of Jesus Christ to a dark world (see Matt 5:14; Phil 2:15; Eph 5:8-13).

Many churches today are known for great worship, great preaching, great facilities, or great programs. Yet, this is not the true measure of success. Ultimately, we are successful to the degree that we reflect Christ.

1. Remember that John is referred to as “the beloved disciple” (John 21:20), one who had been Christ’s constant companion for three years. How did John react to this vision of Christ (v. 17)? How would you explain John’s severe reaction to this vision of His Friend? Think again about your mental image of Christ. How does John’s vision compare with yours?
2. John says he is a “companion” or “partner” with the Christians in Asia Minor in three areas: tribulation, participation in the kingdom, and endurance. Do you see Christians suffering in our culture? If so, what form does this suffering take?
3. In v. 12-16, John sees Jesus in all His glory. What stands out most to you about how Jesus is described here? Why?
4. In v. 17-18, Jesus tells four things: “Do not be afraid,” “I am,” “the First and the Last,” and “the Living One.” How would these words have reassured John and how do they encourage you?

Application & Prayer

- In what ways has the church (universally, not just Bethany) been successful and unsuccessful in shining the light of Christ in our world? In what ways has Bethany Church been successful and unsuccessful in shining the light of Christ in our local context? What could Bethany do to better shine the light of Christ through the darkness present in our area?
- Close in prayer for open minds and hearts for the next seven weeks as we hear what problems may be present within His church. Also pray for wisdom on how the light of Christ can shine brighter through Bethany to those around us.
- Meditate on this: *“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”* Revelation 1:5-7