

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur

Part II: "The Things Thou Hast Seen": The Revelation Of Christ's All-Sufficiency For His Servants Today (Revelation 1:9-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Viewing it from either outside or the inside the Church, the evangelical Church of today is in great need:

(1) Newsweek magazine "declared 1976 the 'Year of the Evangelical,' recognizing the emergence of evangelicalism as a culturally significant force" (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Evangelical: What's in a Name?" in The Coming Evangelical Crisis, John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., 1996, p. 29). However, with the shift in the Western world's ideology toward decided secularism, evangelicalism's influence has clearly declined: Barton Swaim's recent review of Randall Balmer's book, Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter in The Wall Street Journal, May 17-18, 2014, p. C6 claimed: "(T)he religious right is . . . not the force it was . . . (it) has no obvious spokesman."

In fact, secular ideology in the West has shifted so far from Biblical Christianity that Balmer, a self-professed evangelical, "thinks Jimmy Carter was denied a second term because evangelical leaders stupidly . . . panicked about abortion" and "worked themselves into a fundamentalist snit about gay rights . . ." (Ibid.)

(2) The view from inside the Church by conservative Christians is even bleaker: Brannon Howse, president and founder of the conference series Worldview Weekend, in his 2012 book, Religious Trojan Horse, p. 1 claimed: "The great need of the hour is . . . to warn the Church about false teachers that have come in among the Church."

Howse's view mirrors that of many others: in 1996, fourteen conservative evangelical leaders contributed to the book, The Coming Evangelical Crisis to warn of departures in evangelical circles from the historic Protestant faith, and the late evangelical intellectual Francis Schaeffer in 1984 held that "evangelicalism was in serious trouble" in his book, The Great Evangelical Disaster (Ibid., Armstrong, "Introduction: Two Vital Truths," p. 17).

Need: *We then ask, "What does God generally have to tell us in view of the need in today's evangelical Church?!"*

- I. When John wrote the Revelation in A. D. 95 or 96, the Christian Church humanly stood in great need:**
- A. Emperor Domitian was viciously persecuting the Church, and the likely last surviving, aged apostle, John, was exiled for his faith on the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, John 1:9; Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1785.
 - B. From 1 John 2:18-19 and 1 John 4:1 that the Apostle John wrote close to the time of the Revelation (Ibid., p. 1770), we learn that many antichrists and false prophets affected the Christian community.
- II. Christ thus revealed Himself as the Church's All-Sufficient Lord for all of Church History, Rev. 1:9-20:**
- A. John wrote that as he was exiled for his faith on Patmos, God put him in a prophetic trance on "the Lord's day" (John 1:9), on **Sunday** as Christians set to worship Christ **opposite** Roman emperor worship that highlighted the emperor's "day," Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, 1977, p. 76. It was **encouraging** to Christians for **Christ** (Who addresses John here, cf. Rev. 1:17-18) to reveal Himself on **His "Lord's Day"** in **support** of the **persecuted Church's stand NOT to worship the Roman emperor as a god on HIS "day"!**
 - B. John then heard behind him a loud voice like a trumpet (Rev. 1:10), recalling Ezekiel 3:12 where Ezekiel heard a loud noise from behind extolling God's might when Israel was in Babylonian captivity. Christ thus presented Himself as Almighty God amid the human vulnerability of the Church before its Roman persecutors akin to how God presented Himself to humanly vulnerable ancient Israel before her Babylonian captors.
 - C. Jesus called Himself the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last (Rev. 1:11), recalling Isaiah 46:10 where God presented Himself as the **ONLY SOVEREIGN GOD** (versus the Roman Emperor), **again in support of the persecuted Church's stance** of holding to **Christ as Lord ALONE over Rome's Emperor Domitian!**
 - D. Christ directed John to write what he saw, and in the context of the book of Revelation (as outlined by Christ Himself in Revelation 1:19), what John saw is recorded in Revelation 1:12-16 of **CHRIST!** Jesus in all His risen glory wanted us Christians throughout Church History (typified in the seven churches as we saw in the first message in this series) to see that **He was willing and able to meet all our needs in all Church History:**
 - 1. Turning to see Who was addressing him, John first beheld seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven eras of Church History where local churches hold forth the Word of God that reveals God's truth in a world of great spiritual darkness, Revelation 1:12 with Revelation 1:20 and Isaiah 8:20.
 - 2. In the midst of the candlesticks, that is, dwelling throughout Church History in churches holding forth the illuminating Word of God (cf. Phil. 2:16a), John saw "one like unto the Son of man," the Messiah who would rule the entire world in His Second Coming as presented in Daniel 7:13-14 (Revelation 1:13b).

3. Christ was wearing the clothes of a priest who intercedes for believers' sins and weaknesses (Heb. 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1) and a judge who judges believers, Revelation 1:13c NIV; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to Revelation 1:13.
 4. Revelation 1:14a describes Christ's head and hair as white like wool and snow, the picture of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 Who, **in the context**, sovereignly judges even the end-time antichrist with millions of angels to carry out His bidding as Almighty God, Daniel 7:8-10. In John 5:22-23, Jesus had announced that the Father, the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13, had committed all judgment unto the Son, so Christ in full deity equal with the Father will in the end carry out all judgment in divine omnipotence on the world!
 5. Christ's eyes presented as a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14b), His feet as fine brass, glowing as in a furnace (Rev. 1:15a NIV) also picture His judgment (*Ibid.*, ftn. to Rev. 1:14; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 931), and the sound of His voice as of rushing waters (Rev. 1:15 NIV) typify the authority of His Word as Judge.
 6. In Christ's right hand of honor (Eph. 1:20) and "sovereign possession" (*Ibid.*) He held seven stars (Rev. 1:16a), **human** messengers (*aggelos*) of His Word to local churches in Church History (Rev. 1:19): (a) the word *aggelos* often rendered "angel" initially means "messenger" and could be used of humans as in Luke 7:24 and 9:52 (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 7-8). (b) Angels do not preach the Word to Christians in Church History -- human messengers do, so (c) *aggelos* in Revelation 1:9-3:22 was likely a code word for "pastor" used to avoid spurring the Romans to seek more pastors to persecute!
 7. Out of Christ's mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword (Rev. 1:16b), identified in Hebrews 4:12 as the Word of God, so Christ heralds His Word in all of Church History by way of His human messengers!
 8. Christ's face shone as the sun in its strength, typifying the full glory of God especially to be revealed in Christ when he rules in His Messianic Kingdom on the earth, Rev. 1:16c with Isaiah 24:23 and Matt. 17:2!
- E. This presentation of Christ's divine power and sovereignty caused John to fall down at His feet as dead, but the Lord laid His right hand that holds the messengers of the Church like John, a hand accompanied by Christ's call for John not to fear, that He as the Sole, Sovereign God versus the emperor (the First and the Last, cf. Rev. 1:11) was alive, He had been dead, but now was alive forever, and He ruled all aspects of the believer's life and death and the movement of his soul at death to heaven (even under Roman persecution), Rev. 1:17-18.
- F. All this divine sovereignty, might and will was poised to use John even under persecution to **serve Christ effectively** as he heralded God's personal message unto every believer in all of Church History, Rev. 1:19-20.

Lesson: *Jesus Christ in His current glory via Revelation 1:9-20 reaches out to us Christians in our era of Church History amid all the ungodliness we face in living for and serving Him, revealing that He is our All-Sufficient Lord so that we CAN and SHOULD EFFECTIVELY live for and serve Him! Thus, He calls us to rely on His priestly ministry for help and to heed Him as our Judge Who holds us accountable to fulfill His assignments for us!*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) As believers, may we rejoice in Christ's current Almighty All-Sufficiency to address every need we face today in life and Christian service, and so by faith HEED His call to fulfill our assignments from Him!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Christ's all-sufficiency was seen His help in clarifying the basis for the Revelation 1:10 term the "Lord's Day".

Before writing up this sermon's first draft, I had always held the "Lord's Day" was Sunday, for that is what I had always been told, but I never knew **why!** I knew Jesus rose from the dead that day, but if that is why Sunday was called the "Lord's Day" by early Christians, I wondered they used that term and not "Jesus' Day" or "Christ's Day"!

Dr. John Walvoord, Dallas Theological Seminary's late President and a scholar whose works I highly respect, in his commentary on Revelation 1:10 (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 930), suggested the term referred to the prophetic "Day of the Lord," but there is nothing in the context to suggest John ever had that idea in mind at that verse.

I went upstairs to our Church library and viewed the reputable Wycliffe Bible Commentary and found it only stated that the "Lord's Day" meant "Sunday." Finally, I spotted there Robert H. Mounce's commentary, picked it up and read his explanation that the term was the early Christian replacement for the Roman emperor's "day." Mounce's claim in view of the Church's persecution by Domitian for not worshiping him as "lord" made the Church's coining of **Sunday** as the "**Lord's Day**" in honor of the **true** Lord's resurrection make perfect sense! For **Christ** then to give John the Revelation **ON** the **true** "**Lord's Day**," **supporting believers persecuted for NOT worshiping the Roman emperor on his "day" made wonderfully edifying sense!** I then put in the notes what I did about the "Lord's Day"!

Christ is with us today to help us serve Him, but He also holds us accountable to use His help to fulfill His assignments for us. May we rejoice in Him, may we rest in His help, and so may we fulfill His assignments!