

REVELATION: CALL TO HOLINESS IN VIEW OF PROPHECY
Part I: "The Things Which Thou Hast Seen': Positioning To Obtain God's Blessing In OUR Era"
(Revelation 1:1-19a)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In view of our human inability in ourselves to peer effectively into the future, if we live life perceived only as it happens to us, we can become very insecure. Consider:

(1) This past week, we have seen pictures coming in from the enormously destructive earthquake that hit India. It is assumed that upwards of 100,000 people might have perished, and several hundreds of thousands have been injured and laid in outside, makeshift hospital wards. If we did not have a clue as to what would happen in the future, we might be tempted to feel dread over considering what might happen to US if such an earthquake were to hit HERE in Connecticut!

(2) A commuter plane carrying two basketball players from the University of Oklahoma crashed this past Sunday, killing everyone on board. It was the last thing that the Oklahoma team expected. If we did not have a clue as to what would happen in the future, we might feel dread over considering what might happen if a plane carrying University of CONNECTICUT players were suddenly to crash, killing all on board!

(3) Nadine and I heard of a tragic accident that occurred in Torrington this past week. Copying a stunt performed on MTV, two young teens poured gasoline on a friend, Jason Lind, and lit the fuel. He ended up going to a burn unit in a special hospital in Boston, fighting for his life!

What concerned us was hearing the boy's name, and thinking it was Jason LYNN, the eldest son of Rich and Joanne who attend our Church. Though it turned out to be another boy, the CONCERN that was there was real.

Is there any way to peer into the future or see or know what God expects of us so we can ADJUST to it, and do so with God's comments on OUR era so that we can live with CONFIDENCE in His BLESSING for us?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need:** "When I hear the earthquake in India killing up to 100,000 people, and see unsettling twists in the economy, hear of terminal diseases of associates, etc., I feel a need to know about the FUTURE. WHAT is going to happen, and HOW do I adapt for BLESSING?!"*

- I. **The book of the Revelation was penned by CHRIST'S leading so WE Christians could PREPARE for OUR FUTURE in BLESSING!**
 - A. The Revelation is a revelation **from** God through Jesus Christ by way of John the Apostle's pen, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Rev. 1:1-2.
 - B. As such, God promised a **special BLESSING** for everyone who serves the Lord and who reads and applies its insight to his life, 1:3a.
 - C. The **reason** this action would **bless** is found in its application to the future of every believer in the history of the Church: hence, heeding its truths gives one a great advantage toward being blessed in his life:
 1. The word translated "at hand" (KJV) and "near" (NIV) is **eggus**, meaning of close proximity to a party, T.D.N.T., vol. II, p. 330.
 2. Since John lived hundreds of years ago, **eggus** means Revelation includes both distant prophecy of eternity (Rev. 21-22) **and** insight pertaining to **every Christian in current CHURCH HISTORY!**
 3. Hence, the information in Revelation deals with all history from John's day to the end of world history, making understanding and then applying it of great advantage for gaining blessing **today!**
- II. **Thus, John revealed how we are to ADAPT our VIEWPOINT to USE Revelation's prophecy ADVANTAGEOUSLY as follows:**
 - A. First, we must have a **high view** of **God** to view prophecy well, 1:4-8:
 1. John wrote of the unmerited favor and its resulting peace that was directed to believers from God, Revelation 1:4-5a, 5b-6:
 - a. God's grace, or unmerited favor, and its resulting peace was granted John's readers from God, Revelation 1:4a.
 - b. This peace came from the Triune God: (a) it came from the eternal Father (1:4b), (b) from the "seven spirits" [a figure of the perfect Holy Spirit in His seven ministrations in the life of Christ predicted in Isaiah 11:1-2, (Rev. 1:4c)] and (c) from Christ, shown to be God's Messiah by His resurrection, 1:5a,b.
 - c. This grace was shown in Christ's making all who **believe** in Him kings and priests unto God, Rev. 1:5-6 with John 1:12.
 2. John also wrote of the hope of Christ's return to rule the world in the kingdom of Almighty God, the Eternal Creator, Rev. 1:6b-8.
 - B. Second, we are to view the **Lord Jesus Christ** as **that** Almighty **God** Who has total sovereignty over our existence in future events, 1:9-18:
 1. John mentioned he was then being persecuted through banishment to a rocky isle of Patmos, Rev. 1:9, Z.P.E.B., vol. Four, p. 619-620.

2. However, Christ revealed Himself in a prophetic trance, exposing His divine Person and power over all the troubles John faced:
 - a. John heard a loud voice from behind, claiming to be the Jewish "beginning and end", or One, True God, 1:10-11; Isa. 46:9-10.
 - b. This One commanded John to write what he would see in this trance and send it to the seven Churches of Asia, Rev. 1:11.
 - c. Upon turning around, John saw God in His glory and power as absolute Sovereign over all: (a) He appeared in the midst of the seven candlesticks, representing the Churches, carrying in His right hand its messengers, or ministers, Rev. 1:12-13, 20. (b) God was clothed as a Sovereign Priest and a Judge, One who interceded in behalf of the godly and stood to judge the godly and ungodly in infinite authority and power, Revelation 1:13-16b with Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Revelation 1:13 (cf. Dan. 7:9 where similar symbols are used of Almighty God).
 - d. When John fell at his feet as a dead man in being overcome with an impression of God's glory, the Lord put His right hand of power upon John to encourage him, Revelation 1:17, 20a.
 - e. This God encouraged John by noting He was full deity, the First and the Last; that He, Who was also hence **Jesus**, had overcome the worst that could happen to John, death itself, and that He, **Jesus** had full authority over John's life, and over his death and where he and everyone else would go when they died, 1:17b-18.
3. Thus, John was not to fear, but see Christ's **fully DIVINE** power was available to help him do God's will for his life, Rev. 1:17, 19.

Application: *To be blessed in the future, (1) we must believe on Christ as Savior from sin to be made king-priests unto God. (2) Then, we TRUST and YIELD to Jesus Christ as ABSOLUTE Lord of ALL in the universe, and DO His WILL as revealed in Scripture. (3) Rich rewards, now and in eternity, will follow!*

Lesson: *The Revelation is Christ's insight to Christians on ADJUSTING to the FUTURE for guaranteed reward, no matter what they face in life: yet, to ENJOY Christ's divine reward, they must START with a full trust and submission to Jesus Christ as Almighty God, Priest and Judge of all!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

In the fall of 1999, a number of Christian leaders predicted an impending international disaster with the Y2K bug. Dave Hunt, in his May 1999 newsletter, The Berean Call, noted even the Urbana Conference, a huge missions emphasis convention for college students canceled its meeting for the end of December 1999 out of concern that flying might not be safe.

Others advocated the purchase of freeze-dried food, generators, gold coins and other survival supplies. Indeed, Mr. Hunt reported that Christians led by fear were even cashing in their retirement plans to buy goods to withstand a Y2K livelihood disaster. Even local Christian leaders had a newsletter, warning us about Y2K!

I recall answering questions by people who worried about their investments. They asked if they should pull out of the stock market, or at least out of technology investments due to the Y2K issue.

Dave Hunt's newsletter was so timely: he showed the Word of God predicted a temporal famine in the then-known Roman world (Acts 11:27-30), but that God did not then tell the Church to respond by storing up food for a world disaster. Indeed, the Bible teaches the Great Tribulation chaos will not come until the rapture of the Church was past, cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-14. Rather, we Christians are to live productive, peaceable lives instead of being upset at an impending doomsday like the Great Tribulation, and thus not jump into insecure, doomsday-reactionary living, 2 Thess. 2:15-17.

So, in faith in Scripture, I recommended people actually invest **in** technology! They had nothing to lose, for there would not be a world disaster until the Tribulation, so investing in tech would be, if anything a **plus**, that tech was most like **oversold** due to the Y2K issue!

Time proved this right! Y2K turned out to be a blimp, and technology stocks went through the roof, with many tech-heavy mutual funds doubling or even tripling in value in just 5 months! The Great Tribulation had not come because we had not yet been raptured!

When we yield to the absolute Lordship of Christ and His Word, we are prepared face an uncertain future with God's full blessing and reward! That's how we can take advantage of the future insight God gives us in the book of the Revelation!