

## Revelation 1:1a-1c

### PROLOGUE AND SALUTATION

#### THE MEANING OF THE WORD REVELATION

The first two words in verse 1 “The Revelation” are very important words to an understanding of this book. The word Revelation means, “an unveiling.” Therefore, we see from the beginning that the book is not shrouded in mystery, as some would have us to believe.

#### THE THEME OF THE BOOK

##### **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, (1:1a)**

All Scripture is revelation from God (II Timothy 3:16), but in a unique way the book of Revelation is the revelation – the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Gospels are also about Jesus Christ, but present Him in His first coming in humiliation; however, the book of Revelation unveils Jesus Christ in all His majesty, power, and glory. He is seen as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus Christ is the main theme of the book of Revelation.

#### THE DIVINE AUTHOR

##### **which God gave unto him, (1:1b)**

The book of Revelation is a gift from the father unto His Son Jesus Christ. Some see this phrase in verse 1b as a connection to Mark 13:32: “But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” Jesus in this verse was speaking concerning the end of the world and His Second Coming. Some hold to the position, that during Jesus’ earthly ministry, and the incarnation, He lost (or lacked) His divine attributes. Those holding this view argue, in the book of Revelation the Father finally gave Jesus the information He lacked in His incarnation.

There are insurmountable difficulties with that view, however. First, according to Philippians, Chapter 2 and verse 7, Jesus willingly surrendered to the limitations of humanity, yet, He never surrendered any attributes of deity. He willingly restricted the use of His divine attributes; He never lost, nor lacked them. Second, nowhere in the book of Revelation does it tell us the day or hour of Christ’s return. Therefore, it is best not to view the book of Revelation in connection with Mark 13:32.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

**to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; (1:1c)**

In Chapter 1 and verse 1c there are two important things to note: First, God gave the book of Revelation unto Christ “to shew unto his servants.” Revelation was not written for the purpose of unbelievers to understand the future. And this is why unbelievers find the book of Revelation so incomprehensible. It is hard for them to imagine such a day as is described in Revelation. Therefore, they scoff at the literal interpretation of Revelation. They do not understand, because they cannot understand, it was not written for them. It was written for the purpose of believers – the servants of Christ.

The divine truth revealed in Revelation is hidden from the worldly-mind and the worldly-wise. Therefore, they see in this book nothing but chaos and confusion. The type of confusion that Peter speaks of in his Second Letter: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Peter 3:3-13).

Second, God gave unto Christ the message of Revelation to explain the “things which must shortly come to pass.” The book of Revelation contains some information about the past and the present (Chapters 1-3); however, its main message is future (Chapters 4-22). Its message is a fulfillment of the disciple’s prayer in Matthew: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

The expression “shortly come to pass” is an expression that scholars seem to differ on because of the Greek words associated with this expression.

The positions are basically two in number: First, the word shortly does not indicate that the events will necessarily occur soon, but that when they do begin to happen they will occur speedily (come to pass swiftly). Second, the word shortly does not express the meaning of swiftly, but the meaning of Christ’s imminent (soon) return.

I personally believe that both positions support the text. For example, the book of Revelation speaks primarily about God’s intervention into human history, whether it is past, present, or future history. God will allow man to have his day. However, God will Himself have His day, in which He will intervene swiftly, speedily, and suddenly into the affairs of men. Also, the text supports the position of Christ’s imminent return. The things described in Revelation, especially in Chapters 2 and 3, had begun and were actually current events at the time of John’s writings. And as the church age comes to a close we note the imminent return of Christ in the expression “shortly come to pass.”

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