

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT

STD X

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Lesson 1

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction

Key verse: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ..." (Rev. 1:1)

Someone has likened the Holy Bible to a great mansion built out of 66 dazzling white stones of marble and its last book as the 'throne-room' of the King. Now let us enter into the inner chamber of this Holy abode, in the same way as the high priest of Israel used to enter with awesome reverence into the holiest of holies. This book which is the 27th of the New testament, is bearing similarity to the book of Daniel which is the 27th book of the Old Testament, because of the visions in it of the divine judgments that will take place in the future. A great deal of similarity exists between the authors as well. While we see Daniel as the "man greatly beloved", we see John as the "disciple whom He loved". Both the books were written by their respective authors at or about the ripe old age of 90.

The contents of this last book of the Bible is revealed by its name itself-" the Revelation of Jesus Christ". The term 'revelation' in its origin denotes the removal or 'drawing aside' of a curtain. The scenes of divine visions are made to appear in a sequence in the most appropriate manner as if a curtain had been drawn aside. The initial scenes are in the majesty of His unparalleled glory, followed by His gracious dealings with the Church and finally reflecting the authority and greatness of His dominion which would literally be established on this earth.

This phraseology "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" means not only that God the Father reveals Him, but also that the book of Revelation belongs to Him. He is the sole author of this book. His beloved disciple John wrote down whatever He dictated. The author has confirmed this by stating "I Jesus has sent my angel to testify unto you these things...."(Rev. 22:16).

Moreover, the statement "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" itself convinces us that the one who was known by that name while on earth, is now speaking from heaven.

No literary work written afterwards can claim to contain 'further revelations' or additional scriptural writings because the book of Revelation takes the position of the last book of the Bible. It is totally forbidden to add anything to it or to take away any part of it (Rev.22;18,19). If anyone claims to have received any personal revelation or vision, it is a violation

of the limits set by the Bible. The book of Revelation as the last book of the Bible, tops up and concludes all the scriptural writings which are necessary for a life of godliness.

This book also proclaims that God has revealed by His grace those things which cannot be known by mere human efforts. Unless it is revealed by God, it is impossible for man to have a glimpse of Christ in all His glory as He would appear in future. While on earth, Jesus Christ revealed the Father. In this great book, the Father reveals His Son, who is now in heaven after fulfilling His mission on earth. This book in the New Testament takes the place of all the prophetic books in the Old Testament.

Being the last book of the Bible, the book of revelation contains the re-establishment and re-gain of all things that were mentioned as lost in the book of Genesis. The new heaven and earth replace the old. In Genesis, the sun and the moon are brought into existence whereas in Revelation they are not found as their presence is no longer required. In Genesis, a garden is made for man; in Revelation the heavenly paradise is revealed. While the marriage of the first man (Adam) is mentioned in Genesis, the marriage of the Lamb is fore-told in Revelation. Satan, the enemy of mankind, makes his appearance in Genesis; but his destruction is described in Revelation. The visions depicting the end of all sorrows and pains, wiping away of all tears and the onset of everlasting happiness are recorded in the book of Revelation instead of the sorrow, suffering, sighing and tears which appear in Genesis. The first book says the way in which mankind was accursed; the last book makes it clear that there will be no more curse hereafter. In Genesis, man is banished from the garden of the tree of life, whereas in Revelation, he is returning to the tree of life. Those who are redeemed for eternal happiness rejoice as their trials and tribulations are over.

This book occupies a special place in the Bible. A promise of blessing is included in its introduction: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein..." (Rev.1:3).

In order to maintain for ever the memory of the blood that was shed by Christ as the sacrificial lamb, the term 'lamb' is used 26 times throughout this book. Matters such as the shedding of the Lamb's blood, the redemption of mankind brought by that shedding of the blood, worship, the Lamb's victory, the Lamb's rule, the Lamb's marriage and the Lamb's glory are arranged in sequential order. Finally we come to the descriptions of the Lamb's throne and that of God in the last chapter. The One that testifies these great things concludes His words by saying "surely I come quickly" to which the bride responds saying, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus". The book ends with the benediction, "The grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all”.

In this book, we come across mostly action scenes. It is packed with actions. Heaven, earth, hades(Sheol) and hell(Gehenna) are the places where these actions take place. The period mentioned in it passes through the ages and ends in eternity. Righteousness celebrates total victory over Evil. The twenty-two chapters in the book of Revelation stand for the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet from ‘Aleph’ to ‘Tau’, representing the Old Testament. Moreover, the Blessed Lord says “I am Alpha and Omega” which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. By this, it is established that He is the total sum of all the languages and literature of the world.

This book which is written in symbolic language is related to the other books of the Bible by the symbols in it. To those who are not familiar with them, the symbolic language in it may be found unintelligible.

As it is mentioned “the words of this prophecy”, it is very clear that it contains visions into the distant future. The phrase “the prophecy of this book” is repeatedly seen (Rev. 22:7, 10, 18, 19). It is stipulated to fulfil all the unfulfilled prophecies. No other prophecy apart from this, is permitted until the second coming of Christ. The fulfilment of prophecies is said to have commenced.

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Many people are putting aside this book as a book of mystery even though it is named ‘Revelation’. Divine secrets are revealed with very minute details in this book.. It is divided into three parts as indicated in the first chapter “...the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter”(Rev.1:19).

If we make a study of this book based on the above divisions, the Holy Spirit will assist us to learn this book in depth.

Questions

1. What is the relevance of considering the book of Revelation as the concluding book of the Holy Bible?
2. Explain how the title of this book “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” is the subject- matter of this book.
3. In what ways the book of Genesis and the book of Revelations are correlated?
4. Describe the way in which the book of Revelation is a manifestation of the greatness of the Lamb.
5. What are the distinctive features of the book of Revelation?