

Revelation 1 (Conrad Bowman) (11-18-07)

I have made us some copies of the Notes on Revelation. This is just the first 40 pages of the Notes. It's not the whole thing by any means. It just goes up to the end of chapter 1. So, it'll get to be a load before we're through. But, she's passing them out now. There're formatted for a book later. So, I printed them in that small page, and just left all the margins on there so you can put your notes right in the margins. And we'll add to that. Next week you'll get the next 40 pages, etc. We're going to start in Revelation, chapter 1, and continue from there.

Revelation of John. It says in my New American Standard, and then right under that, it's got "Revelation of Jesus Christ," is the first line. The first "the" that you encounter is not in the text. So the first word in this is, "Apocalypse to Revelation." Revelation of Jesus Christ. Might as well learn now that "of" is important, it's called the genitive, the genitive in this case of possession, which means the Revelation belongs to Jesus Christ, and is coming from Him, which God gave Him to show to His *doulos*, to His bondservants, His slaves. A *doulos* was one who was indebted to another based on a debt incurred. So, he is an indentured servant, and so this is the Revelation of Christ which God gave Him, the Father gave to the Lord, to show to His indentured servants, and that's you. The things that must shortly take place. So this is something that's going to happen within the near term. That's the first thing that this letter of John is all about. And He sent this Revelation and He communicated it. So the words, "sent" and "communicate" – two different aspects. They came from the Father, and they were communicated in detail. He communicated it by His angel, the one sent with the message, to His bondservant, John. So, He singles out John, but He also at the same time identifies John's relationship to the Father and through the Son. Any questions on verse 1?

Alright. I'm going through these rather quickly and without spending too much time on them, because we've covered this before in that interlude of four classes. They were done, but I do want to make sure everybody is up to speed on it. Ok.

Who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

Now, the testimony of Christ is the time when Jesus explained to His bondservants exactly what He had done on their behalf. And you know when that occurred. That occurred....[Conrad goes to Blackboard].

That occurred here. And the line of time – the point where the cross was. Christ came as the Only Begotten Son, and He came to earth as the incarnation – this is His birth. He lived and grew in favor of a God-Man. And then as an adult, He went into His ministry, and His ministry led Him to the cross. On the cross, He became sin for us, and He took sin and the Law – which is the definition of sin – He took that to the cross with Him. God the Father, who was separated from man, by sin, and by the Law, was satisfied with the price that Christ paid on the cross. Because He was satisfied, Law and sin were taken by the Lord Jesus into the grave, which is “Abraham’s Bosom,” which is where all the OT faithful were. When Christ went into the grave, He gave testimony to all that He had done in the defeat of sin, and in the fulfillment of Law. He left sin and Law in the grave when He rose. So, when He was raised from the grave, here, and that was on the third day, He then testified on earth to the defeat of sin and Law by His post-resurrection appearance to men. And then, on day 40, He ascended to be with the Father taking all of those believers out of Abraham’s Bosom. The reason I’m giving you this much detail this time, is because when it says, Christ gave testimony, and He gave testimony to the slaves, or bond-slaves, or indentured servants of God, or of Him, this is what He is talking about. The indentured servants are made up of all those believers in the OT who died in faith, and all those believers of the NT, or this period right here [pointing to Board] who accepted the witness of Christ to the defeat of sin. Because they were then saved, and they were saved in this period right here. From the time of Christ’s resurrection on the third (3rd) day, to His ascension on the fortieth (40th) day, this happened on the third (3rd) day [the resurrection], and this happened on the fortieth (40th) day [the ascension] – ten (10) days before Pentecost. And the Holy Spirit then came from God on Pentecost ten (10) days after that – ten (10) days after Christ’s ascension. So you have a ten (10) day period in here, and John and I have been talking about that, Phil and I have talked about it a little bit. I am intensely interested right now, in what the condition of man, and the condition of the world was, during those ten (10) days. Christ ascended, and the Holy Spirit didn’t descend until ten (10) days later. Now I know that ten (10) is the number of completion. So, that’s a whole period that took place right here in this little interlude from Christ’s ascension to the Holy Spirit’s descent. I’m looking at that now. And it may be a month, or a year, or ten (10) years, or never when we come up with an answer to that. But to be honest, I am intently interested in that ten (10) days right now. It’s just absolutely fascinating. One, because it’s a complete period. That ten (10) days indicated, ten (10) being the number of completion ...[inaudible]. So, I’m looking at that right now, and we’ll see if our studies yield anything along the way.

So, here you have it. The message has come from God the Father, to Jesus Christ, and an intermediary who bore witness to the Word of God, which would have been the OT at this time, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that He was. And you will notice that they're using the name of Jesus the Christ, because that particularly relates to OT prophecy. And that's His name related to OT prophecy, and Israel, even to all that He saw.

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy [and that's talking specifically about the words in this letter], and who heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near.

And John lived in expectation of the things written in this letter taking place. And some of them did. It's no mistake then that he starts with the letter to the seven (7) churches, because that's the first part of the prophecy – was the fall of the Church. And the complete ruin of the Church, and that's what happens and that's what's addressed in those seven (7) letters that are going to take place almost immediately. And that time was near. In fact, Paul had mentioned in all of his epistles – Paul's message was – do not let these things fall away from you. Don't lose the content of the Gospel as I'm delivering it to you. Because the Gospel I have received is the Gospel of Grace to the New Testament Church. The gospel which you have heard up until now – he's telling those people he wrote to in Galatians, in Ephesians, in Philippians, in Colossians, and what-have-you. What he's told those people is, the gospel you have heard in the past is the gospel of Christ the Messiah having come. The gospel I'm delivering to you is the Gospel of Grace. Jesus the Savior has defeated sin, set the Law aside because He fulfilled it in full, and the Law has no more claim to make on you. He set it aside, and a new day has come, and a new order of grace has come. And that's what – that's what the Gospel of Grace is all about under Paul. So, by the time John writes this, it's thirty (30) or forty (40) years after Paul's death, and after he wrote his last epistle, and the Church has already fallen in. As Phil said a while ago, the Church has already fallen into hard times and it's come apart. Ok? So, we need to realize that. That we have been joined to a universal organization – the Church of Jesus Christ – that has been in trouble for 2,000 years. Ok. It's been pursuing bad doctrine. It's ignoring the truth of grace. And it's been doing that since John's day, and he wrote this between approximately 95 A.D. and 100 or 102 A.D. So, at the end of the first (1st) century, John had already made those observations, and here we are 2,000 years later still dealing with it.

Now, the next thing that comes out of John's mouth is his address to the seven (7) churches.

John, to the seven churches that are in Asia. Grace to you and peace.

And grace always precedes peace. And that has to do with the fact that God has first, freely offered without cost, without any charge, without any requirement of you, freely offered you a move from where you are as an individual sinner, on to the ground of peace with Him, by accepting freely the saving message of Christ. There's no charge to you for that. He doesn't ask you to be sorry for your sin, He doesn't ask you to be busy working for Him, He doesn't ask you for a lifelong commitment on your part. What He says is, here is salvation, paid for and secured. It's yours for the acceptance. All you have to do is accept it as your own, and appropriate it through belief. And once you've done that, He moves you from where you are on to the ground of peace. And the ground of peace, is this ground right here [Conrad points to Board] on which that cross stands. There is the ground of peace. And He takes you from where you are – here, here, here, or let's put it down here where it really is. Here is the age of grace in which we live – that's getting as close down here to the end as possible – and there's you, and when you accept the work that Christ did on your behalf and believe it, He takes you and moves you onto that ground of peace. And that's where you live today. Now, who are you at peace with? Certainly not at peace with one another. Right? Because you can look down the pew and find somebody you don't care for. [Laughter]. Well, isn't that true? That's not difficult. That's right. You can look at the cars around you and find somebody you don't really like. So, you're not at peace with men. You're at peace with God. Now, if we learn to access that peace with God, draw down on that supply of peace that He makes available to us, then we can look down the pew and see somebody that – well, we'll start with they need mercy. So, we extend them mercy. And then they may need something else, so we extend them help. And then, the first you know down the road we realize that God is pouring into us all that we need to make us whole, while we're distracted by trying to satisfy the needs of others. And you see that doesn't negate our trying to satisfy the needs of others. What it does is, it points to that little action as something necessary in order to grab our attention so that God can give us freely of Himself, the assets that we need for living. Because we're not focusing on them, and on their needs, and fulfilling their needs. We're focusing on us, and the things that we need. Then we start to get grabbie. Just like a kid in a candy store. When you discover that God can fulfill your needs, and you get close to Him, and you get focused on the things that you need or want, and you

can't separate those two, Ok, then you start grabbing the things that are around you that make life easier. And when you do that, you're in trouble. Because you start using God's storehouse as your own bank account, and trying to write checks on that. And draw things down that make you happy. And at that point, there's nothing in the world that can make you happy, because you've lost sight of why you're here. You're here to meet the needs of others. As long as you stay focused on their needs, God can fill your life up full. And, the minute you get focused on your own life, and you start trying to figure out what you need to make it full, you're sunk. You're off base. You've moved off the ground of peace. And you've moved over there like all other men, trying to live without that reality in your life. So, when John wrote to the churches that were in Asia, and he said to them, grace and peace, there's so much that is behind that sequence of events. Take it personally. Grace and peace. Grace and peace come from Him who is, and who was, and is to come. That's God Himself. That's going to be repeated, by the way, up in verse 8. That same thing.

I am the Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

So that's going to be defined for us again in verse 8. So he says, here is where grace and peace come from. They come from Him.

And from the seven spirits that are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn out of the dead.

So we can locate that first witness as being Christ. And we know it's Christ, because it also says, "He's the firstborn out of the dead." When Christ was raised, He was the firstfruits – He himself was the firstfruits. And Abraham's Bosom was emptied. The unbelievers of all time, of Abraham's Bosom and of that entire OT period – the unbeliever didn't go to Abraham's Bosom. He went into Hades, or Hell. And there in torments he watched. You remember there's a parable, the rich man and Lazarus from looking across here [Conrad points to Board]. And the rich man is in Hades, and Lazarus the poor man is up here in Abraham's Bosom. And the rich man appeals and says, send somebody back. I have brothers who are lost. Send them back and tell them what the condition is down here. And the answer came back to him. If one were raised from the dead, your brothers would not believe. Even if one were raised from the dead, which is exactly what's going to happen. Here's his brothers up here [Conrad points to Board], and Christ is going to die, go into the grave, be resurrected, and announce Himself victorious over death and sin and the Law, and still He was

rejected by virtually all in Israel. They just wouldn't accept it. So what does it take for a man to accept Christ as his own? What moves one from a condition of unbelief to a condition of belief? What do you think it is? I'll wait. Marilyn?

Marilyn Comstive. For me, Conrad, I was a church-goer. I lived in New York. When I came to Houston, Texas, I was invited to Spring Branch Community Church. And in the process of about eight (8) months I came to the realization I was a sinner and I needed to be saved.

Conrad Bowman. What do you think moved you to that?

Marilyn Comstive. Conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Conrad Bowman. Ok. Didn't have anything to do with your move from New York to Texas?

Marilyn Comstive. No, I believe the Lord was drawn to me.

Conrad Bowman. Put you in a good place, didn't He?

Marilyn Comstive. Yes.

Conrad Bowman. But it was the conviction of the Spirit. Without that, you're sunk. Anybody else? Irma?

Irma Davis. I feel as far as myself that I was predestined so that God predestined me, and that's the way I feel.

Conrad Bowman. You've used the "p" word twice now. [Laughter]. Yes you did. Are you Ok? He predestined you, did He? Alright. You think He always knew that you were going to be there? Always?

Irma Davis. Absolutely.

Conrad Bowman. Wasn't any doubt in His mind or yours. Sounds good to me. Sounds good to me. See, we are fickle friends because, we're Presbyterian right this minute about this. Aren't we? We're predestined. We're hear that Presbyterian "p" word hit around here. And that's Ok. That's alright. We know that God had us in mind from the very beginning. There was no question about it.

Don Fruin. He had everybody in mind. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. He's not willing that any should perish. But some are hardheaded.

Don Fruin. That's their problem.

Conrad Bowman. That's one good way to put that, Don. That's their problem. It is their problem. It really is. See, God has given us enough free will that He will save us based on His sovereignty and His knowledge from the very beginning. He will also allow us to throw away through rejection all the grace that He offers. And, then hold us accountable for it. But, He allows us that latitude. You know, He just offered Himself over and over and over again to His own. He did not demand that they come to Him, but He persistently pursued them. Persistently pursued them. And those that persistently rejected, died, just died, in their lost condition, without grace, without peace. And left with the prospect of coming before their Father, who asked them, what have you? What have you come with here today in pursuit of grace? What's your ticket in? And they are left with their own work? With their own merit. Because they rejected the only meritorious One who paid the price for them. They threw that away, so there they are.

Now, it says that the message that John is delivering has come from God the Father by means of the Spirit

... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn out of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

So Christ is acknowledged for His high position in verse 5.

... to him who loves us and released us from our sins by means of His blood.

Now you remember this from previous classes. Perhaps – [Conrad draws depiction on Board]. If this gets too low and you can't see it, let me know.

In the tabernacle and in the temple there's the courtyard, there's the holy place, and there's the Holy of Holies. Alright. This is the holy place, here. This is the courtyard. The Israelites could come into here. The priests only entered this (the holy place). There's the altar of incense right here. There's the table of shewbread

here. There's the menorah here. So you have the candlestick as the source of light. You have the altar of incense on which the ashes from the brazen altar were taken, and incense was put there representing the prayers of the Israelites rising, the prayers of the faithful rising to God. And you have the table of shewbread on which there were the twelve loaves representing the twelve tribes of Israel. As the blood from the sacrifice that was made on the brazen altar was taken by the priest on the Day of Atonement – and he took it in here, and he anointed the altar of incense. Representing the fact that the prayers of the faithful were bought by the blood of the sacrifice. That was the sin offering sacrifice, by the way. And then he took that and he went around the veil – this great huge veil – and he went to the Ark of the Covenant, which was right here. And on the horns of the Ark of the Covenant, he anointed the horns of the Ark of the Covenant – all four corners – you're looking down on it – with blood of the sacrifice. Which means the Ark was set apart unto God. The prayers were set apart unto God. The sacrifice itself was set apart unto God, and the priest had already made his own offering – so he was set apart unto God. Everything was sanctified – it was set apart unto God. Everything was on the ground of peace, because that's what happens to you up here. Well, when the priest got in there, here's that Ark of the Covenant in there – looking at it from the side. And here's the manna – bowl of manna, right here. Here's Aaron's rod that budded, right here. And here's the Tables of Law. And those three things are in this Ark. And on top of the Ark of the Covenant was a raised place called the Mercy Seat. Or Paul calls it – it's always translated in Romans – “propitiation.” The sacrifice was a propitiatory sacrifice, and the blood was propitiatory. And the priest took the blood around and he put it on this Mercy Seat – he sprinkled it right there. And the angel of justice and the angel of righteousness looked down into this Ark and they saw the manna, the Law, and Aaron's rod that budded. Those three representatives of Israel's – three of Israel's greatest failures – their Sin. So, God is judging Sin, but instead of seeing Sin, God in judgment sees the blood of the sacrifice. Now, He is satisfied. He's expiated. Ok. The propitiation was made and God was expiated. So, propitiation satisfied the character of God. Because God is satisfied, He accepts the one for whom that sacrifice was made. Well, the priest is making the sacrifice for all of Israel and their sins for that year. So, God accepts that sacrifice for a year and He covers their Sin. Atonement was made. And the word “atonement” means to cover. Ok. Atonement does not mean to remove. Atonement means to cover. So, the best thing that could happen to an Israelite in the OT was that their Sin could be covered when the priest made the acceptable sacrifice right here. Now, if the priest was not pure, was not genuine, was not honest in his own person – if he had sin that he was harboring. Ok. That he had not made his own sacrifice for, when he made that sacrifice on the Ark of the

Covenant, he dropped dead. It was a self-correcting system. If you had an apostate priest when he made that offering, in that place, and put that blood on there, he dropped dead. Well, they had a dilemma, because only the high priest could go behind the veil. How do you get that guy out? You know. That's a real dilemma. So, they sewed bells in the hem of his robe. Right down there in that little blue hem. They sewed bells. And they tied a sash around his waist. And they tied a rope to the sash. And, as long as they heard the tinkling of the bells behind that veil, they knew that God was satisfied with the sacrifice that was being made. If the bells stopped, a couple of good strong Aaronic priests grabbed the rope and pulled him out, so they could dispose of him and put a new priest in place, and get on about their business.

Now, you want to know how that exists today? Well, anytime you want to turn to the Catholic channel, and you watch the priest practicing mass today. And at the point in the mass when he takes the wafer, and he's going to raise the wafer and consecrate it to God, usually there's a little ring like this with several gold or silver bells hanging in the middle of it, and he'll grab it, and he'll shake it, and it'll ring, and you'll hear the sound of the bells, then he offers the wafer. When he gets ready to offer the cup, he does exactly the same thing. Now, I've done this before, I've talked to priests, seriously, and asked them why they do that. Well, it's part of the mass. You call attention to the host. You call attention to the cup. I said fine, but why bells? You know, why anything else? The reality of why they do that has been lost to them. Ok. It's very big Jewish. It carried over – over the years. Now, the reason why I'm telling you that is this. When Paul told us to guard carefully the Gospel that he was delivering to us, he meant that. This is how easy it is for an error to creep into something you do if you're doing things on the basis of tradition and habit, rather than on the basis of knowledge. Ok. These things are written that we might know. We need to know why we do what we do. So, here we are.

Phil Richman. Conrad?

Conrad Bowman. Yes sir?

Phil Richman. I was in Galveston in the oldest church in Texas. Last week, Ok, this is St. Mary's on Church Street in Galveston, I encourage you to go down there and see that church. And you will see on the altar there an Ark of the Covenant with a church building coming up out of the middle of it. It's fire. And the angels, you know, it's really just amazing to see that

Conrad Bowman. That same picture.

Phil Richman. Right there, on the – I was looking at that, and I was thinking about some of the things you've said.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Phil Richman. I encourage you to go see that.

Conrad Bowman. A lot of priests will tell you, if you take the furniture, which he calls it, the furniture of the tabernacle, and he puts them back in the tabernacle and closes it up. So, that's where they sit until the next time they have mass. It's right there. It's alive today. It's living. Now, I'm not saying that to take a shot at Catholics. What I'm doing, is saying to you and to me, we have to be very, very careful about what we do and why we do it and what we attach to it, in terms of the things that we do habitually. Because we just practice them. We just do them because we do them. That's what we've always done. You know. My dad would tell you if he were here today, God wrote the King James Version. Everybody knows that. He was a King James Version guy. He believed it. Alright. That's the same kind of thinking that will get you into trouble.

Now, lets press on. When Phil – by the way, when Phil asked you to – if you have questions, write them down, because we tend to wander. He really was being gracious there. Write them down because I tend to wander. [Laughter]. Ok. And if I get started on questions, I may just – I may depart the lesson completely and never get back to it. Now, verse 5.

... from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn out from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth, to Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood [that's the Lord Himself], and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father [that couldn't be clearer] to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

And all, all thought and glory turns to the Son at that point. He's made us to be a kingdom. He's made us to be priests to His God and Father. So,

To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Verse 7.

Behold, He is coming with the clouds [or in the clouds] and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him, even so. Amen.

So this is when God, when Christ comes and returns in great glory.

Verse 8.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” [first and the last] says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Christ.

So John says he received the testimony of Christ and then took him to the Isle of Patmos and he was there studying the Word, and identifying himself as the brother of Christians and fellow partakers in the tribulation. Remember, John is writing in 95 A.D., the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction by the Roman armies in 70 A.D. have already taken place. Christians are being scattered all over the world, and John says he’s on the Isle of Patmos identifying with those people.

I was in – [“the” is not there] – I was in spirit on the Lord’s day.

So, what John is saying, is that I was not in “the Holy Spirit,” I was in “spirit.” I was in the condition of spirit,

... on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.

By the end of the 1st century, Sunday had become designated the Lord’s Day. Mackintosh and Kelly both have good papers on that. Is it the Sabbath or is it the Lord’s Day? We do not practice on the Sabbath. Sunday is not our Sabbath. Our Sabbath is everyday, rest in Christ. Sabbath means “rest.” So, our is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Sunday is not the Sabbath. Ok. The Jew took His rest on the seventh day. Alright? We take our rest when we trust Christ as our own. We live on the ground of peace, which is the condition of rest, on a continual basis. So, we don’t enjoy a day of rest. We enjoy rest as our standing before God. We stand

in rest before the Father because we are not subject to any judgment of any kind. That's what Romans 12:1 tells us.

There is, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who are the called according to His purpose.

None. Now, because there is no condemnation, rest is our condition. Ok. It's the result of our standing. Our position is in Christ. Our condition is on the ground of peace. We are alive at rest with Him. Ok.

Now, we've gone as far as we can today because of the clock has pulled our chain. Thank you very much.

Phil Richman. The other class is starting to mill around out there. We appreciate your coming to this first installment of what we think will be a number of weeks. Anybody has not signed in besides me?

[Comments back and forth].

Evelyn Wamble. Why do we celebrate the Lord's Day on Sunday? Because that's the day the Lord arose?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. That was victory over sin and death. He rose on Sunday.

Conrad Bowman. Closing Prayer: "Father we thank You so much for the way You pour Yourself and Your Word into us. Give us strength, Father, will to learn, the will to walk in the things that You teach us. And we love the appearing of the Son, and look forward to it, even so come Lord Jesus. Thank you. Amen."