

Letters from Heaven ~ Study I

“On the Lord’s Day”

Revelation 1: 1-20

Introduction

Part of our preaching programme this autumn is an eight week series looking at Revelation Chapters 1-3. These bible studies complement and run alongside this sermon series.

Revelation 1-3 contains seven prophetic letters written to the churches of the Ancient Roman Province of Asia (modern day Turkey). First, however, we look at Revelation Chapter 1, which introduces us to John the writer, and his initial spiritual meeting with Jesus, as he was praying – an exiled social dissident on the Isle of Patmos. The chapter describes an arresting vision of Christ, and provides an insightful prologue to this whole remarkable book.

Before reading the passage:

1. Take a few minutes to share your thoughts about and reactions to the book of Revelation
2. Have you read the book?
3. How do you feel about reading it now?

Now read the passage:

vv. 4-8

In his greeting statement, v. 4-8, John describes Jesus in particular ways relating to his character, life, status, and mission.

4. How many different descriptions and phrases can you find in this section? Take time to consider them individually:
5. What do they tell you about Jesus’ character?
6. In what sort of situations do you think these descriptions of Jesus would offer most encouragement or hope?

The phrase “who is and who was, and who is to come” is used throughout the book of Revelation. It might more literally be translated, “the was one, the is one, and the coming one” i.e. always was, always is, always coming.

7. What does this tripartite statement tell you about God and Jesus – both in its totality and in each of its three parts?
8. How might its meaning impact Christians, including you, in the various situations we face?

vv.9-11

John was exiled on the physically harsh isle of Patmos (v9). Yet we read he was “in the Spirit” (v10), when he saw and heard the Lord.

9. What happens when you pray? Share how your experiences of prayer contrast with the immediate surroundings of the world in which you find yourselves.

vv.12-16

10. John turned and saw one “like a son of man” amongst the 7 lampstands (v12-13 & 20) - what do you think John and his early readers would have understood by the phrase, “one like a son of man”?
11. When you meet Jesus in prayer, how does he appear to you?
12. Which aspects of the description in v13-16 do most easily relate to?

vv.17-18

13. Why do you think John fell at Jesus’ feet “as though dead”?
14. Take some time to think about your relationship with Jesus, the way you approach him in worship, and how you sense his response to you.
15. Are there specific areas of your relationship with Jesus that you want to address and feel able to share with the group?

Prayer

Take time to pray together.