

The Return of the King

On Saturday, August 8, 1914, 29 men set sail in a three-masted wooden ship from Plymouth, England, to Antarctica on a quest to become the first adventurers to cross the Antarctic continent on foot. Sir Ernest Shackleton had recruited the men through an advertisement: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success."

Not only was Shackleton an honest man, for the men did experience all that handbill had promised, but he was also an able leader. His men came to refer to him as "the Boss," although he never thought of himself that way. He worked as hard as any crew member and built solid team unity aboard the ship, aptly named *Endurance*.

In January 1915, the ship became entrapped in an ice pack and ultimately sank, leaving the men to set up camp on an ice floe- a flat, free-floating slice of sea ice. Shackleton kept the men busy by day and entertained them by night. They played ice soccer, had nightly songfests, and held regular sled dog competitions.

It was in the ice camp that Shackleton proved his greatness. He sacrificed his right to a warmer, fur-lined sleeping bag so that one of his men might have it, and he personally served hot milk to his men in their tents every morning.

In April 1916, their thinning ice floe threatened to break apart, forcing the men to seek refuge on nearby Elephant Island. Knowing that a rescue from there was unlikely, Shackleton and 5 others left to cross eight hundred miles of open Antarctic Sea in a 22.5 foot life boat with more of a hope than a promise of a return with rescuers.

Now in a little while I'll tell you how it turned out.

But first let me say: Thank you so much for helping me last week by filling out the questionnaire! Once again, Wayne Hills, you exceeded my expectations! I had hoped to have 200 filled out – there were 267!!

I noticed that of those surveyed, 80 % indicated they had never been in a church when the book of Revelation was being preached through as a series. That is such good news for me, because that means for 80 % of you, this will be the best series on Revelation you've ever heard in a local church!!

Revelation is the Bible's last book. Every book has to end somehow, and I have come to understand that this was the best way for God to end the Bible...

Genesis is the book of beginnings: It tells us... "In the beginning," Gen. 1:1
Revelation is the book of consummation: It speaks of "forever and ever" Rev. 22:5

Genesis lets us know how we got in the mess we are in, how paradise was lost.
Revelation lets us know how Jesus is going to get us out of this mess we are in, paradise regained!

INTRODUCE CHART, DANNY!

One more thing: CHALLENGE TO ART: Poetry, Songs, Drawings, Paintings!

Read Revelation 1:1-8 PRAY!

The biggest mistake people make in reading Revelation is probably found right here at the beginning of verse one... The Revelation of Jesus Christ...

Most people rush right past those first four English words and go to the part that says the things which must quickly take place; literally, the things which must happen with swiftness. But...

Verse 1 lets us know that The Book of Revelation is first and foremost an indispensable source for rounding out the Biblical portrait of Jesus!

In the Greek the very first word is apokalypsis. We get the word apocalypse from it. It means “unveiling.”

To show how popular it is to rush past Jesus and to look at the events described in these pages, we need only see that the word apocalypse has become synonymous in pop culture with “catastrophic events.” But...

Revelation is BOTH an unveiling ABOUT the person of Jesus Christ and an unveiling of events BY Jesus Christ.

I will have failed in preaching the book to you if you get more curious about coming events than you are about eagerly anticipating the coming Savior!

Now because the word apokalypsis occurs in 1:1, some say that tells us that Revelation is primarily an apocalyptic book.

Apocalyptic books use sensational language to make their point... So later on when Revelation speaks of a time when a third of the earth’s inhabitants die, if it is apocalyptic literature it could simply mean, “a whole lot of people died.” The other apocalyptic books that have been found were written between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.

Even though Revelation has some similarities with apocalyptic language, like symbols and interesting images, the book itself claims to be much more.

Interestingly, the same word is used in two other 1:7’s from Peter and Paul

So that the genuineness of your faith – more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. -I Peter 1:7

You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
-I Corinthians 1:7

To the best of my knowledge, no scholars say that either of those letters is an apocalyptic book based on those verses!

Only in 1:1 does the Revelation use the word apokalypsis. But verse 3 tells us Revelation is also a prophecy book, and in the last chapter, Rev. 22, we are reminded four times that prophetic words have just been spoken.

With prophecies, we do look for literal fulfillment of what has been prophesied.

I believe Revelation is much more of a prophetic book than it is an apocalyptic book. But from verse four we also learn it is a letter to churches.

Now let's notice how verse one tells us the Revelation was transmitted:
From God the Father to Jesus, then through His angel to John, to God's servants!

Interestingly, John did not identify himself as the author in his gospel or epistles. Perhaps he knew the very nature of this book called for him to use his apostolic credentials. And so four times in this book John is identified as the author.

John wrote exactly 50 chapters of the Bible!

Count them out!! 21-5-1-1-22

Now when you read the Bible there is always a first audience and then subsequent audiences, including all of us!

Verse four tells us John's first audience was the 7 churches in the province of Asia, Modern Turkey. Now why seven churches: why not six or eight? We know of other important churches in that area like Colossae.

**The number 7 symbolically represents completion, fullness, perfection!
So together the 7 churches give us a complete portrait of the church.**

So John was given a revelation of and by Jesus Christ to pass on to the churches.

In verse 3 we get a unique promise: you'll be blessed if you do three things with The Book of Revelation: read it, hear it, keep it!

Hearing is seeking to understand it. And keeping it is obeying it's commands. I sure want to be blessed, don't you? Then let's read, hear and obey this book!!

Verse three also tells us the time is near!

The Greek word there is kairos – God's anointed time!

Unlike chronos, which is more focused on chronological time, kairos is time as significant events.
-Mounce, 732

It does not mean the time is immediately going to happen, but that the time is "imminent," the coming events loom over our time!

When a man or woman has a court date ahead, it looms over them!
The world has a court date with God! You better settle out of court now!

In verses 4 & 5 we get a greeting from the Triune God!

Grace and peace to the churches from the One who is, who was, and is coming. Here it is speaking of the Father! The same phrase will be used of Jesus!

Grace and peace to the churches also is extended from the seven spirits before His throne. There's that number 7 again, speaking of fullness. This is the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah spoke of the sevenfold attributes of the Spirit in Isaiah 11:2-3.
Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge, Piety, & Fear of the Lord.

Grace and peace to the churches is also extended by Jesus Christ.

Verse 5 gives us three titles for Jesus:

Jesus is the faithful witness!

The word witness in Greek is martyr, the word we use to speak of those who die for the faith. When we witness in a world hostile to the good news some of us will die for that witness. Our job is to be faithful no matter what comes- like Jesus!

Jesus is the firstborn from the dead!

And because he conquered death and yet lives in Heaven, we too can have confidence of our faith in Him bringing us life after death – true freedom!

Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth!

Oh, don't spend too much time worrying about what this world's king's do- They will give an account to Jesus one day, the King of Kings!

Verse 6 reminds us of three things Jesus has done for believers:**Jesus loves us!**

John is careful to use the present tense there – despite the sins I have committed since being a Christian, Jesus loves me now!

Jesus freed us!

Now that's in the aorist tense – a past event with ongoing implications! I am freed from my sins by His blood! I don't have to be sin's slave anymore!

Jesus “kinged” us!

What do I mean by “kinged” us?

I think of checkers. When you get crowned, you are still on the playing board but with a distinct advantage that others don't have!

Jesus has made you a royal priest, able to bring Heaven's resources to bear on daily life!

What did a priest do? He helped others get right with God! That's what we do!

People that understand those three things can change their world!

Start your day tomorrow by saying:

“Jesus, thank you that you love me, that you have freed me, and that you have ‘kinged’ me! To you be the glory today and forever!”

Repeat that with me!

Verse 7 is the theme of the book: The return of the King!

Jesus is coming back to earth! The King is returning!

Verse seven reminds us that the prophets had spoken of the coming Messiah:
Parts of Daniel 7:13 & Zechariah 12:10 are in verse 7.

There is not a single specific quotation from the O.T. in the Revelation, but get this: over 260 of the 404 verses contain allusions to over 550 O.T. references.

It is fair to say that The Book of Revelation not only completes the New Testament, but also completes the Old Testament!

The Old Testament told us Messiah would come as a suffering servant and as a conquering King. In His first coming He was the Lamb, the suffering servant. In His second coming He will be the conquering king.

For every one prophecy about Christ's first coming in the Bible, there are eight for His second coming. It has to happen to complete both the Old and the New!

In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 300 references to His Second Coming- one for every 30 verses! 3 times in these 8 verses it says God is coming!

Every eye will see Him! Including those who pierced Him! That's all of us!
And all the families of the earth will mourn over Him!

These are the days people try to take or leave Jesus – but on that day everyone who did not turn to Him in faith will mourn over the many ways they rejected God's revelation in their lives.

Jesus told us that in the last days the love of many will grow cold!

As we get closer and closer to the return of the king we see that even many professing Christians don't have the fervor they once had, and uncertainty abounds in today's saints. BUT...

Verses 7 & 8 tell us the return of the King is certain!

God is the ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet.
He had the first word when he spoke the world into creation!
And despite Satan's efforts, God will have the last word as well!

God always has the last word!

Folks, the certain return of the King should motivate us be ready for Him!

On August 30, after an arduous 105 day trip and three attempts, Shackleton returned to rescue his stranded crew, becoming the hero. But another hero of the story was Frank Wild. Second in command, Wild was left in charge of the camp in Shackleton's absence. He maintained the routine the Boss had established. He assigned daily duties, served meals, held sing alongs, planned athletic competitions, and generally kept up morale. He would have told you he was just doing what he saw the Boss model!

Because "the camp was in constant danger of being buried in snow...and become completely invisible from the sea, so that a rescue party might look for it in vain," Wild kept the men busy shoveling away drifts. The firing of a gun was to be the prearranged signal that the rescue ship was near the island, but as Wild reported, "Many times when chunks fell off the glaciers it sounded like a gun, we thought that it was the real thing, and after a time we got to distrust these signals."

But he never lost hope in the return of the Boss. Confidently, Wild kept the last tin of kerosene and a supply of dry combustibles ready to ignite instantly for use as a locator signal when the "day of wonders" would arrive.

Barely four days of rations remained in the camp when Shackleton finally arrived on a Chilean icebreaker. He personally made several trips through the icy waters in a small lifeboat in order to ferry his crew to safety. Miraculously, the thick clouds of fog lifted long enough for all the men to make it to the icebreaker in one hour.

Shackleton later learned from the men how they were prepared to break camp so quickly and reported: "From a fortnight after I had left, Wild would roll up his sleeping bag each day with the remark, 'Get your things ready, boys, the Boss may come today.'"

And sure enough, one day the clouds of fog opened and revealed the ship for which they had been waiting and longing and hoping for over four months." Wild's "cheerful anticipation proved infectious," and all were prepared when the evacuation day came. -Taken nearly verbatim from *What in the world is going on?* D. Jeremiah, 235-237

Get ready, church, the boss may come today!

- *Prodigal child, repent and return to the faith of your childhood!
- *Praying parents, keep going to the altar of prayer for those you love!
- *Terminally ill friend, do everything you can to finish well!
- *Student who faces trouble at school, press on for your king!
- *Worrier about these uncertain times, trust in the certainty of your King's Return!
- *Weary woman, doing far more than any human can do, rest in the strength of the Lord! You are ALREADY loved, you are ALREADY free!
- *Friend with the dusty Bible: turn off all other electronic distractions, pick up that Bible, turn to Revelation and go get your blessing!

Get ready, church, the boss may come today!

*"Living He loved me; dying he saved me, Buried He carried my sins far away;
Rising He justified, freely forever: one day He's coming, O glorious day!"*