

## Revelation 1:9-12

"I. AM. JESUS.

We return this morning once again to the first chapter of the book of Revelation.

- Moving past the greeting of the letter that we find in the first 8 verses,
  - this morning we will continue through as much of the rest of the chapter as we can
    - I make no promises of getting through the entire chapter!
- There's so much here and so I don't want to spend too much time on introductions
  - But I do want to set a bit of the historical scene so we can have a backdrop in which to understand what John is writing
    - And then we'll break things down verse by verse

The apostle John had been banished to a little island 24 miles off the coast of what is now known as the country of Turkey

- This island, called Patmos, is a small and rocky island that's only about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide
  - John was sent there by the Roman Emperor Domitian some time near the early 90's AD
- According to early church leader Victorinus, John, even though he was likely in his 90's, was forced to labor in the mines located at Patmos.
  - Early sources (Irenaeus, Clement, and Eusebius) indicate that about A.D. 96, after Domitian's death,
    - John was allowed to return to Ephesus when the emperor Nerva was in power.
      - And it's said that he returned to the churches, appointed leaders and set things in order

And it's there, banished from the world onto a prison island to die

- In the most bleak of circumstances, shut off from friends, from church, from ministry, from any semblance of human fellowship
  - That John has the most incredible encounter with the risen and glorified Lord Jesus
- It's there in desolate isolation, that he is given the most extensive revelation of future things shown to any writer of the Bible.
  - Even though John's persecutors could confine his body, they could not imprison the Holy Spirit or silence the testimony of Jesus!
    - What we will read this morning should leave you and I awestruck and astounded

Verses 12 through the end of the chapter is a description of the glorified Lord Jesus, and we will get there this morning (Lord willing)

- But first, we want to see how John gets there. How John is given the blessing of seeing Jesus in His glory and how he is granted access into eternity
  - So, let's pick things up in verse 9
    - 9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John, as we've said already, was exiled to the island of Patmos.

- He was sent there because he preached the word of God and gave testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Even into this old age, John was single minded – he wanted people to hear the truth's of the bible
    - And to know the transforming power of the Lord Jesus!
- I'm dumbfounded to think that this old, weak, unassuming man was such a dire threat to the culture and the ways of the world
  - That the whole Roman Empire, and even the entire Jewish nation, had this single old man sent to a remote island to die
    - They couldn't kill him by boiling him in oil or by any other means
      - So Rome took him prisoner and sent him to a barren island to die
        - To kill him body; to kill his message; to kill his influence on the people

May I say that it wasn't John's power that threatened Rome. It wasn't John's influence that created panic in the Jewish land.

- It was the power of the word of God in his preaching! It was the influence of the Holy Spirit in his testimony of Jesus Christ!
  - This is the power and might of the Gospel! – John was just a willing vessel
    - And this is why we should never shrink back in this world. Because it's not about us!
      - This is why we are never ashamed of the message.
        - The word of God and your testimony of Jesus Christ are POWERFUL!

- Romans 1:16 says “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
  - Rev 12: **10** “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. **11** And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”
    - John did not love his life –He loved the word of God and had a testimony of the blood of the Lamb
      - And that love compelled him to be active in sharing both
        - The results were that his life was so effective that an entire nation tried to expel him from existence!

Oh, that every one of us would have such a life! Such a love to share God’s message and of the transforming power of Jesus!

- Could you imagine what effect we would have in our city
  - If everyone one of us here had the same mindset as the Apostle John?
- But some here might say –“well, but that’s John! He’s an apostle! Of course he’s powerful. Of course God is using him so effectively!”
  - But look again at his description of John in verse 9
    - John calls himself a “brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ”
- John knew that he wasn’t higher than any other. He was a fellow brother in the Lord
  - He was a fellow companion – a fellow partaker - in the sufferings of the church
    - In other words – he’s no different than you or me.
- “God is no respecter of persons,” which means that God is as interested in you as He is in John or Peter or James.
  - He wants to use you and me just like He does Billy Graham or Dwight Moody, Charles Finney, John Wesley, John Knox or Martin Luther.

- God didn't love them any more than He loves you. God didn't listen to them any more readily than He will listen to you.
  - We only need to be a willing vessel and not love our lives to the death
    - This is the life of a true believer in Christ.

Now, John goes on to say in verse 10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, **11** saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia:[g] to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

- John says "He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day",
  - and it's being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day that enabled Him to see what he saw and experience what he experienced
    - But what does that mean? What does it mean that he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day?

Some commentators believe that John is that he was in the Spirit on the first day of the week – on the "Lord's Day".

- Meaning that they believe John was in the spirit on a Sunday
  - The day of Christ's resurrection and the Christian's day of worship
    - The phrase "Lord's Day" has become synonymous with Sunday – as many of us use that today,
      - and so it is thought that this is may be the first usage, or "coinage", of this phrase.
- And I understand why we might think this, since it's become so commonplace in our Christian vernacular
  - but I don't agree with it and think that John is saying something entirely different
    - Even though it is common today to refer to Sunday as "the Lord's day," it is not used this way in the Bible to describe the day the Lord rose.
      - In fact, the New Testament consistently refers to Christ's resurrection as occurring on "the first day of the week," never as "the Lord's day" (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).
      - It's also interesting to note, that this is the only place in the Bible that this phrase is used

- Here in Revelation – a unique book dedicated to the telling of the events of “the day of the Lord”
- And that’s what I believe John is trying to communicate to us.
  - The Day of the Lord, that we see spoken about numerous times in the OT and New, is not a single day like you and I might think
    - But it’s a phrase used to describe a period of time labeled the “Day of the Lord”
      - It a phrase that usually describes the events of the end times
        - It’s a span of time during which God personally intervenes in history, directly or indirectly, to accomplish some specific aspect His plan”
- I believe that John was transported to the future “day of the Lord” period
  - where he received the revelation of the unfolding of the end times.
    - Let me explain

As many of you know, the NT was written in Greek and referencing the Greek is always helpful in interpreting what the writer intended to say.

- In the phrase: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”
  - there are several things to note that will help clarify John’s intent and therefore the meaning.
- The first thing we notice is that there is no definite article before the word “spirit”
  - In the English it reads “the spirit” and, of course the translator capitalizes the word Spirit – adding to some of the misunderstanding
    - But in the Greek, the word “THE” is not there
      - It actually reads “I was in spirit”
- The verb “I was” is <ginomai>, and better rendered “I became” – indicating a change in condition
  - There was a change in John. He was in the physical, in the natural, and became in spirit
    - If we were to render this properly from the Greek text it would read: “I became in spirit”
      - We see this same rendering in Rev 4: “Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne.”
  - It also helps us understand Rev 17: **3** So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness”

- And also Rev 21” **10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,”

See, something supernatural was happening with John. I don’t see that his involvement in the experience was a physical one –

- That he was in the natural man in the Holy Spirit on a Sunday morning
  - But rather, a supernatural change occurred to him spiritually.
- It’s also interesting to note that the word “ON” - I was in spirit ON the Lord’s Day – it can also be rendered “UNTO”
  - What I believe John is saying is that he “became in spirit unto the Day of the Lord”
    - That he was transported by God into the realm of eternity to the period of time known as the Day of the Lord
      - Not a Sabbath or a Sunday, but the future time known as the Day of the Lord
        - The time of Jacob’s trouble.
          - Where God’s wrath is poured out on unbelieving Israel
            - And on the unbelieving world
- And as I read the book of Revelation – which is the account of the Day of the Lord –
  - I am convinced that what John was given an eschatological, or “End Time” message, from the Lord
    - That he was transported into eternity. From the natural world, into God’s timeless dimension
      - And given the privilege of seeing first hand the glorified Jesus and His plans for future events.

And it’s there, as he became in spirit, that he heard the voice of Jesus and given instructions.

- Notice the voice that spoke behind him, in verse 10, was “a loud voice, as of a trumpet”
  - Put yourself in John’s sandals for a moment.
    - John was a close friend of Jesus
      - He’s the only one described as the apostle that the Lord loved
        - Who often rested his head on the bosom of the Lord
          - He loved Jesus; and Jesus loved him

- They had a special relationship
- And it had been nearly 60 years since he heard the voice of His dear friend Jesus
  - When Jesus was on earth, His voice was that of a shepherd, it was kind, loving, gentle, comforting
    - But this voice was different. It was LOUD and commanding.
      - Trumpets were used to for two things in the bible
        - To call people to worship and to call people to battle
          - Surely this is what is being communicated here as well
- Loudly and like a trumpet, he hears the message:
  - Verse 11 saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia:[g] to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

We cannot miss the importance and what our Lord Jesus is communicating here.

- Jesus introduces Himself to John as “the Alpha and Omega; the First and the Last”
  - Did you know that this is a title only ascribed to God in the Bible!
    - Isa. 44:6 ““Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is no God.*”
    - Isa 46:12 “Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I *am* He, I *am* the First, I *am* also the Last. **13** Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *When* I call to them, They stand up together.”
      - At the end of the Revelation given to John, Jesus says again “**12** “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. **13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last*”
- Whoever says that Jesus did not claim to be God, need look no further.
  - There is absolutely no doubt that Jesus is ascribing to Himself the title that is reserved only for God Himself

- And as He is introducing Himself to John – or should we say “re-introducing Himself to John”
      - He does so with the utmost of authority and clarity
- Jesus is proclaiming that He is God and therefore is the unique “uncaused first cause”
  - "Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me" (Isa. 43:10).
    - He is self-existent and outside of the limitations of time.
      - And this is why *He alone* can predict and show the future:
        - “Tell and bring forth *your case*; yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? *Who* has told it from that time? *Have* not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; *there is* none besides Me. (Isa. 45:21)

When Jesus introduces Himself to John, before John even has a second to respond -

- Though I’m sure he trembled at the sound of His voice -
  - Jesus had a message and a mission for him
    - “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches”
      - Literally, “what you are seeing, write!”
        - John’s contributions are to be as a moment by moment observer and recorder
          - of the events and scenes that are shown to him while in spirit
- Could you imagine that? Would you be able to write the things that you are seeing in heaven
  - It would be so hard to write when all you want to do is examine everything and take it in
    - It seemed John had a hard time doing this because he is reminded 12 separate times throughout the book **to write**
      - Write what he has seen; write what he has heard
        - Write of the experiences that he is witness to
- He is commanded to observe and record
  - So that what he sees can be sent out to the churches

Which seems to be different than other times.



- The prophecy in Daniel was sealed
  - Dan. 12:9 - " **9** And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end"
- When Paul was taken up to heaven in 2 Cor. 12, he was not permitted to tell what he saw
  - 2 Cor.12:3 "And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— **4** how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, ***which it is not lawful for a man to utter***"
- But here in Revelation, John is told multiple times to write throughout the book
  - And then to share openly with the churches
    - There is only one time in the Book of Rev. that John was told not to write
      - This was the 7 Thunders in Rev 10

The Revelation isn't a private affair - but for all who love and serve the Lord. We learned that last week.

- I think there are some who mistakenly assume that just because he was told to give the letters to the 7 churches
  - That the messages was only intended for the 7 churches
    - But we know that's not the case as we see in verse 1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants"
    - It was given to show all His servants.

So, there's John. Banished from society and thrown into isolation on a prison island a long 25 miles off the coast of Turkey.

- I'm sure he thought this was where the Lord would have him live out the rest of his short days on earth
  - But one day, as he's spending time with Jesus I'm sure
    - His entire existence changes.
      - What he has been used to in terms of a natural life has been ripped apart
        - And his condition changes. He becomes in spirit!
- And as he whole life is arrested, he hears behind him a commanding voice.
  - A loud, seizing, breath catching voice.
    - Like a trumpet blast behind him – calling him. Awakening him.

- It's an urgent voice. It's a commanding voice. It's a wake up call to pay attention to that voice and listen!!

Many people hear that same call today! That same voice.

- Oh it may not be as loud in volume; but it is just as blaring in the urgency of the message!
  - "I am the Alpha and the Omega! The beginning and the End. I am the First and the Last!"
- It is the **same voice that spoke** after feeding the 5000 that said –
  - "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst"
    - It is the **same voice that can be heard** in Matt 11:28
      - "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
- It is the **same voice that speaks** to every man's conscience
  - **18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.
    - **And it is the same voice that speaks** to everyone in creation
      - **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse
- His voice will speak to you directly in the exact way that you need to hear it!
  - And the message will be just as arresting as it was for John here in Revelation
    - You just need to respond

For me, many years ago, the voice of God spoke loudly! It was unmistakably His.

- As I was riding home on the back of a my cousins bike at the age of 20
  - I arrived home to see the devastation of the Loma Prieta earthquake back in 1989.
    - You remember, it was the very large quake during the World Series; striking at 5:04pm
      - Where the Cypress Freeway collapsed

- For me, that was the voice of God that I needed to hear.
  - That event got my attention to turn towards the Lord

I know that for many of us here, we have the same experience. It may not be an earthquake,

- But God used the perfect event, or the perfect situation, or the perfect person or the perfect message
  - To get our attention and it was as loud as any trumpet!
- But when we hear that voice of God. When we hear that trumpet blast...
  - What then? What are we to do with it?
    - Maybe you're here this morning and you are hearing the voice of God in your life
      - It's loud. It's unavoidable. It's heavy on your life and on your mind and on your heart
        - And yet, you either haven't done anything with that
          - Or don't know what to do with it.
- So let me tell you what you need to do...
  - Verse 12 "Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw"

John did what any sensible person would do when they hear the voice of Jesus calling.

- He turned around to see the voice that spoke with him
  - And only after he turned, was he able to see.

For me, the earthquakes was a reminder of rumors I had heard about the bible

- That in the last days there will be wars and rumors of wars
  - And earthquakes and such; and it woke me up
    - Today, maybe you're watching the news about what's going on in the world
      - And you're starting to put two and two together
- It's time to wake up! It's time to listen to the trumpet call
  - And turn to see the voice that is speaking to you.

The Bible tells us that "...now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" – 2 Cor 6:2

- There should never be a delay in coming to Jesus; repenting of your sins

- And receiving the forgiveness that only Jesus can give
  - He wants you. He loves you.
    - You only need to come
- Jesus said in John 10: **25** Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. **26** But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. **27** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. **28** And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
  - Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He desires for you to be His sheep
    - Will you do that today?