Rev 1:3 – Blessings

Joyfully accept the blessings from God

**Rev 1:3**

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it, and take to heart what is written in it -- because the time is near.

# This is a three-fold blessing.

A blessing is pronounced upon 'the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy.'  In the first century, books were few, so a leader in the congregation would read aloud while the congregation listened.  Sharing in this way can be of immense service to others, so that they too may appreciate the message of revelation.

A blessing is pronounced upon 'those who hear it.'  The act of hearing it for ourselves can benefit us greatly as we get to know what is written in it.

And thirdly, a blessing is pronounced upon ‘those who take its message to heart.'  The first two blessings provide a good starting point.  But, to truly achieve our goal, these blessings must flow through to the final one -- we must 'take it to heart.'

The message comes from Jesus Christ.  While it is from Jesus, equally importantly, it is also about Jesus.

Not every Christian sees Revelation in a positive light.

I have received feedback from friends who reject the importance of the book of Revelation.  They see in it nothing of value.  They just want to hear the simple story of the gospel.  In part, this is understandable -- for so much rubbish has been thrust into the narrative of Revelation that 'what the book actually says' has been buried under hundreds of years of misinformation and confusion.  To a large degree, its message has been buried.

This is not to deny that there are now, and always have been, many serious and devoted students of revelation.  Men and women from around the world, and from every age have helped to open our eyes to important truths in this book.  Many devout scholars have diligently instructed us on Revelation.

But let us pause for just a moment and let us be truly honest -- all of us struggle with some aspects of this book.  It is not the easiest book to understand.  So, we need to approach this study carefully and with humble hearts.  And we need to let God guide us if we want to increase our understanding and genuinely grow in appreciation of its message.

While a three-fold blessing is pronounced at the beginning of the book, a two-fold curse is pronounced at the end.  Let us take a careful -- and sober look.

**Rev 22:18-19**

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.

And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

We are warned.  Do not wilfully add messages and interpretations which have no right to be there.  God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.  If we dare to take away any part of the message, this is our fate -- God will take away from such a person any share in the tree of life, and any share in the Holy City.  Within these bounds which God has set, let us receive the blessing.  The final facet of the three-fold blessing is to 'take to heart what is written in the revelation.'  It is, after all, not only a revelation from Jesus, it is a revelation about Jesus.

There are seven blessings in all.  Here is where each is found -- Rev 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14.

# Understanding Blessings

God’s blessings are not short-term, they are made to last – they are not intended to exist for ‘just one day only’. They are ongoing. In fact, they are eternal.

Some blessings offer an outcome which contrasts sharply with a person’s present situation. A profound distinction is observed between the ‘now’ and the ‘what-is-to-come.’ Other blessings start-out being ‘one hundred percent positive,’ and remain positive. They continually grow in strength, quietly progressing towards their grand conclusion.

See some examples recorded in Matthew. And note the contrast between ‘the condition which exists now,‘ and ‘God’s eternal promises.’

**Matt 5:2-5**

Jesus said:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,

for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,

for they will inherit the earth.”

No one in the Kingdom of Heaven will, any longer, be ‘poor in spirit,’ neither will anyone ‘mourn.’

In the present world, the ‘meek’ do not inherit the earth. By and large, it is the proud and the mighty who own and control the riches of the world. Jesus tells us that in his kingdom, ‘things are different.’

**Rev 21:4**

‘God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain, -- for the old order of things has passed away.’

Here is the second-last of the seven blessings recorded in Revelation.

**Rev 22:7**

Jesus said, “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

Humbly, and yet boldly -- claim this blessing (and all the others) for yourself.

# 'The time is near' (Rev 1:3)

The verse also reveals to us that the time is near.

Naturally, we look at life through the aspect of the average human lifespan.  Therefore, a period of 2,000 years seems such a long time.  This is the time from when John received and wrote the revelation until today.  It is a long time.  How can we possibly say, at any given time, that the glorious coming of Jesus Christ is 'near?'

**2 Pet 3:4, 8-9**

They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised?  Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.  The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.  Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

My mother passed away last year (2019) at the age of 97 years.  Among other things, it made me realise that just 20 people living to her age, with one dying while another was being born -- the lives of 20 such people would span the entire time since Revelation was written until today.  Two thousand years is not such a long time.  In the eyes of an eternal God, it would even appear much shorter.  He wants no one to perish, he is working to bring salvation to all.  He desires the best outcome for each of us.

Because it is only for a few brief years that we have the privilege to live here on earth, time is actually short -- the end of time for each of us is near.  If we continually put off making a firm decision to follow Jesus, our life will be done, and we will not be saved.  Do not procrastinate, do not delay.  Learn what God offers in his Word, and in his Revelation.  See for yourself if it is something which you can embrace with your whole heart and soul?  The time is near.  Inspect the revelation, scrutinise its promises, consider your options, and then choose whether you can fully and absolutely place your trust in God.

View the article online ‘Rev 1:3 – Blessings’ at:

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