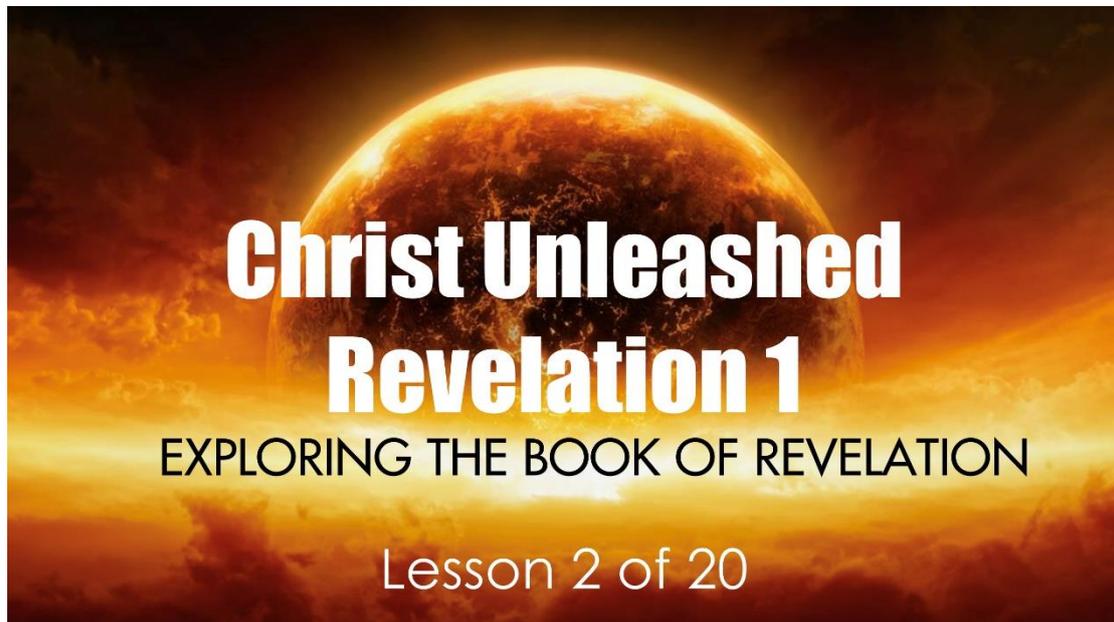


# Christ Unleashed

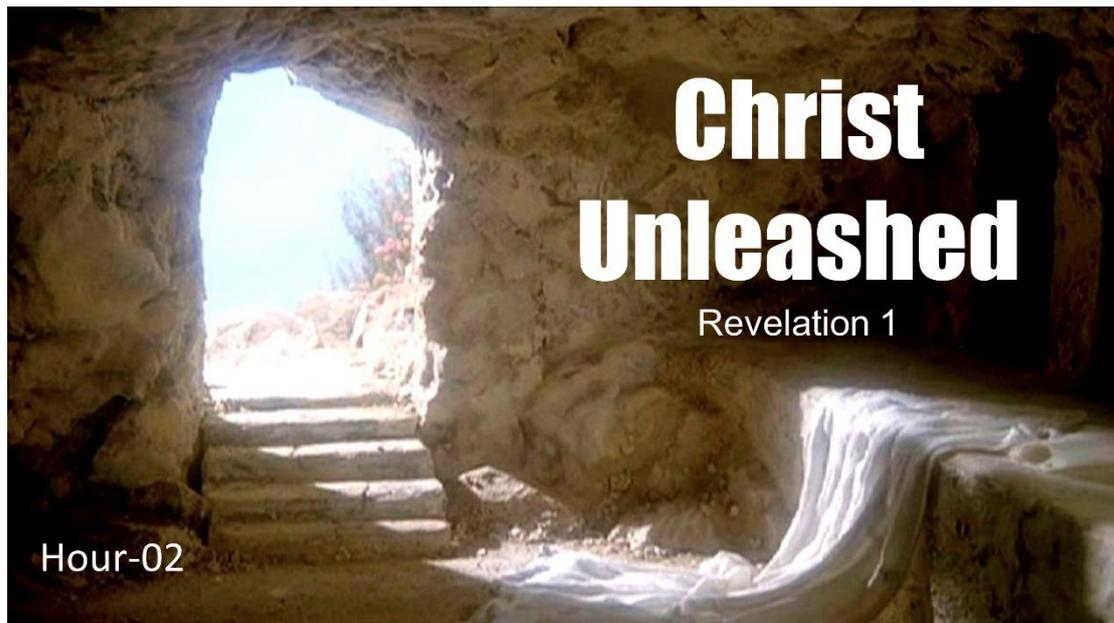
2020Rev-02 -



Welcome to the book of Revelation. This is hour two of, 20 lessons. This is our second lesson in this virtual classroom. I'm looking down to statistics, this class is a full 20-part course that is currently being taken by 300 young men and women. So far, in 19 different countries. They've registered in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. And those of you that are watching on YouTube and joining this class, we welcome you;

- both the next generation, that's what we call the students. They are servants of the Lord in need of training.
- As well as, frontline servants of the Lord who need encouragement.

Some of you I know, just dropped in for this lesson and you're going to watch for a little while, but for all of us on this journey... these classes, the special assignments, and all the resources are on a playlist on YouTube, that's called Exploring Revelation.



What we're looking at, as you see in your slide, is Christ unleashed. I would say probably this lesson is the one lesson most people don't fully understand. It's the purpose of the book of Revelation. Let me read to you verse 1, and you can follow along in your Bible, but I'm only going to emphasize the opening words: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*". That's the beginning of the book. What is being revealed about Jesus Christ? Revelation 1 tells us Christ is now unleashed. That's the lesson today.

Let's have a word of prayer together. I'm going to pray and I'm going to ask the Lord to bless this classroom, as well as all of you the students, as we look at Christ unleashed.

Father in Heaven, you sent this book to us with the express purpose that Jesus Christ would be unveiled, that we would know Him better, that we would understand Him. That we would walk with Him more fully and closely, and that He might even more powerfully live out through each of us. I pray you would accomplish that your purpose for this book would be achieved in our lives. All of us listening with hearts of faith, we asked for you to work in our hearts this hour. In Jesus' name, Amen.

What does it mean Christ unleashed? Let me show you. This is a map. You can tell I love my whiteboard. It's a map of Israel in the first century here we have:

- the sea of Galilee,
- the Jordan River
- We have the Dead Sea.
- This is Jerusalem right there
- This is the land of Samaria,
- Nazareth right up here.
- Caesarea here.
- Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin. Just some of the cities of Christ's life.

Now, this lesson is about what happened when Jesus Christ stepped out of the tomb. I don't think most first century followers of Christ fully were tracking with what had happened after the resurrection.

- You see, Jesus was resurrected right here in Jerusalem and all of a sudden in the 24 hours that followed, He was found on the road to Emmaus.
- He was found back here in Jerusalem.
- And then He talked to His disciples in the upper room and
- He showed up with them right here on Mount Arbel.
- And as far as we know, He crisscrossed all this land.

Let's think of the implications of what Christ unleashed means. As we opened to Revelation 1, think of what got accomplished at Christ's resurrection. Think of the very first Sunday after the crucifixion, when Jesus stepped from that tomb on resurrection morning, God was unleashing what I like to call, the greatest power of all.

- Not only had Jesus paid the price for the sin of the world remember, John 1:29, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.
- He now was no longer limited to being in one spot at a time.
- It used to be He was in Jerusalem. If you wanted to see Him, if you were in the Decapolis or in Galilee up here, or Samaria, you had to come down there.
- That all changed on resurrection morning, He was no longer limited as he had been in His earthly ministry.

# The Power of Jesus Christ Displayed

That means, as you see in your slides, **the power of Jesus Christ was going to be displayed no longer in one place at a time.** Think of what happened in Christ's ministry.

- From the manger to the cross Jesus had been for 33 years in only one place.
- He had humbled Himself, He emptied Himself, He limited Himself, He was localized, He operated in one spot at a time.

- Even in this condition of being localized, Jesus accomplished more than any human has ever accomplished or ever will. Jesus was amazing.
- He grew up perfectly. He mastered God's word perfectly. He related to His family, His friends, and His neighbors perfectly up here in Nazareth for 30 years.
- Then at the Dawn of His public ministry, He obeyed God perfectly at His baptism as He moved from Nazareth down to the Jordan river to be baptized.
- And then, He went out into the wilderness, probably somewhere, in this area by the dead sea and totally defeated Satan as he advanced against Him in temptation in the wilderness.
- And then He began to serve God's will perfectly, as He set out on an inerrant preaching ministry.

Wherever He went, Christ's very Presence made sure that death **fled**, disease **faded**, and despair **melted**. Broken bodies that came in contact with Jesus were **mended**,  
 - ruined lives **repaired**,  
 - sightless eyes **restored**,  
 - empty ears **filled** with sound,  
 - missing fingers **returned**,  
 - and hungering lives **satisfied**.

For three years, Jesus awesomely served in the power of God wherever He went. Christ very presence made sure:

- death fled away,
- diseases faded from people,
- the despair of the common people trapped in their horrible lives of labor and sickness and demon oppression melted away.
- Broken bodies that came into contact with Jesus were mended.
- Ruined lives were repaired.
- If they just could come in contact with Jesus, empty ears were filled with sound.
- Sightless eyes were restored.
- Missing fingers of lepers were returned.
- Hungry lives were satisfied everywhere Jesus went.

Everywhere He went, wherever He was,  
whenever He was there:  
the Presence of Jesus meant that death,  
disease, and despair **were no more.**

But Jesus only did that from **being in  
one place at a time.**

Wherever He was, whenever He was there, the presence of Jesus meant that death and disease and despair were no more. But Jesus only did that from being in one place at a time, meeting with individual groups of people. Jesus, one place at a time.

- Crowds came to him, multitudes, flocked to Him. And no one was disappointed.
- If you came to Him, He helped you. He helped everyone.
- Sometimes the crowds are so great they pressed out and tried to resort to grabbing for Jesus through a crowd or digging through the rooftop and his dust would fall.
- They would lower people down from up above to get near Jesus.
- Others reached down through the feet of the crowd just to grab his tassel.

All this was because, just one person who was limited to being in one place at a time accomplished in one place at a time, so much. It actually says in the Gospel of John, chapter 20, the whole world couldn't contain the books to write down everything that Jesus did in His amazing ministry. It was amazing to see that which has captured for us in the Gospels, but so much done, so powerfully, by one person was only done in one place at a time.

Now, after having said it so many times, I think you notice I'm repeating this. You've caught the drift of where we're going. As we step into the garden, that Jesus was raised from the dead and something changed. The borrowed tomb on resurrection morning witnessed a wonderful change.

# The Unlimited Power of Christ Is Now Available Everywhere

Jesus no longer limited by time and space to be in one place at a time. It seemed like He was in so many places all at once. That's the unlimited power of Christ now available everywhere to anyone. That's the greatest source of peace and hope and joy imaginable. Jesus is always near us.

You see, sometimes we look at the Bible and there's Revelation 1, it's off in the distance. We're looking at Christ unleashed and yeah, that was 2000 years ago. That's the lesson, I said, I don't think most people have realized. **Revelation 1 is telling us that Christ is now available to anyone anywhere all the time. That means you can't get out of range of Jesus Christ.**

Now, where we're filming... by the way this is a class... there are only three in this class right now, those of you that are watching actually are in this virtual classroom because of the shelter at home. We have to shelter at home. So, because we're sheltering at home in Colorado, I'm looking at the bars on my cell phone and I only have one. If I'm not careful, if I get maybe too far into this building, I won't have any cell phone coverage. We're used to being out of range of cell towers, being out of range of having Wi-Fi. Think of this, Jesus Christ was unleashed on resurrection morning to never be out of range. Think of what that means. The greatest source of peace and hope and joy imaginable is, Jesus is always near us.

- Always guarding us,
- always guiding us,
- always comforting us, and
- always nurturing us like we're His very own.

The final and greatest of all the Gospel accounts is in John, chapter 20 and as you read those first 10 verses what you find is ...something changed.

# Something Changed

That's what the testimony is of the early church. The empty tomb on resurrection morning meant something changed and that's one word, Christ's availability. He was now available to everyone. Anyone. Always. Anywhere. For three and a half years, anyone who could:

- find him would have any need met,
- any fear removed,
- any oppression, no matter how many demons we're raging against that person's body. If they could get near Jesus, he'd deliver them.
- Any chains broken,
- any defilement, cleaned and purified out of your life.
- But just if you could find him, that was the key.

# The Power of Christ's Presence

We can call that the power of Christ's presence. Often, we fail to understand the magnitude of what really happened and here's what changed. After resurrection Jesus was no longer limited one location. He could be at any time with everyone.

We'll see in this class, Jesus meets:

- the grieving women at the tomb,
- comforts the sorrowing Mary,
- calms the frightened disciples,
- even restores trembling Thomas with all of his doubts.
- Jesus was just everywhere after that. Jesus shows up at Dawn, by the way, Jesus was here, comforting the disciples and then all of a sudden, He shows up at Dawn on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Every one of those where a tribute that He was unleashed and available anywhere. Why? Because Jesus solves all problems by His presence.

# Jesus Solved All Problems By His Presence

That's the lesson, just as all the multitudes, if they could get into His presence:

- Their sick relative would be healed.
- Their handicapped relative would be delivered.
- Their demonized relative have Satan banished from their body or his demons.

Now that was available worldwide. After the cross and the empty tomb Jesus was now available.



That gets us back to this chart. Do you remember this chart? Revelation's, most important message for us. Revelation teaches us that Jesus was unleashed so that we could live in a very, very dangerous world. The world of the new Testament. Jesus was proclaiming to His early church:

- in that place where most Christians were enemies of the state, most of them had to meet in secret.

- Most of them wondered if they were going to be arrested.
- Many of them knew someone that had been martyred, especially the first three centuries of the church.

It was kind of like a few years ago, the ISIS phenomenon, where were people were being marched out in those orange suits and beheaded or horrible atrocities. That's what went on for 300 years in the early church.

So how do you live through that? How do you live for God in a dangerous world? Well, you find out that Jesus keeps His word. He can stop all evil. He can calm all fears. Why? Because just like He was then, is right with us. That's the message John was to communicate.

# **What Mortal Dangers Did Christ Warn His Church to Beware of?**

What mortal dangerous did Jesus warn His church to be aware of? Well, that takes us from Christ unleashed and Revelation 1 to where we're going to be in the next few classes. And that's chapter 2 and 3. Let me just introduce that to connect, Christ unleashed with what chapter 2 and 3 is going to say.

**Ephesus:** the danger of just going through the motions.

**Smyrna:** the danger of living in fear.

**Pergamos:** the danger of becoming comfortable around sin.

**Thyatira:** the danger of not forsaking personal sins.

**Sardis:** the danger of acting and operating just like the lost people all around us.

**Laodicea:** the danger of getting distracted by anything, from seeing Christ in His Word each day.

In chapters 2 and 3, we find this...

1. Number one, **Ephesus had the mortal danger of just going through the motions.** Now you say... Oh, you just talked about martyrdom. Well, to God, do you know what's worse than me being martyred? Me just living the Christian life on autopilot. I go to church. I read the Bible when I have time. I meet with Christians if I have time, I just go through the motions.
2. **Smyrna had the danger of living in fear.** What's the most repeated negative prohibition in the Bible, what God says most of all that we're not supposed to do. Fear, not. Why? Because God does not give us a spirit of fear 2 Timothy 1:7, but a power, love, and a sound mind. What makes us fear? A lack of faith, the devil. Smyrna, He said, I don't want you fearing the things that are going to happen to you.
3. **The next church Pergamos, is the danger of becoming comfortable around sin.** Do you know what's more dangerous than being public enemy number one and hunted by the empire, blending in and getting comfortable around sin. Did you know, we should never get to the point where we can be seeing sin without it grieving us because it grieves this Holy spirit of God within us.
4. **Number four Thyatira, the danger of not forsaking personal sins.** Did you know if I'm here in this bright colored shirt and I see something on it, a little fuzzy or something, I just pick it up because it shouldn't be on there. I brush it off. To get the dust, you brush against something. Sin should immediately get our attention; we don't want that. We want to not have personal sins clinging to us. We want to be repenting. We'll also see inside us the danger of acting and operating just like all the lost people around. When Christians live in fear. When Christians live in greed. When Christians live in unforgiving spirits, we're just living like all the lost people around us.
5. **Finally, Laodicea, the danger of getting distracted by anything, from seeing God in His word.** Now, if you've been to many classes, you see this all the time. This is the number one distractor these days from this (Cell Phone). Now I know some of you

read the Bible on this, but I'm talking about everything else you do on this besides read the Bible.

- Communicating and socially expressing ourselves, and
- entertaining ourselves, and
- amusing ourselves, and
- calming ourselves and whatever else we do on this.
- Instead of spending time with the Lord of Glory

## **Ephesus:** The Danger of Coasting. Loss of “first love” is when things get old, and we no longer desire Jesus as much as we remember that we did in the past...

Ephesus. I'll just talk about them for one minute, had the danger of coasting. And basically, we're going to see and spend an entire class period on looking at the loss of first love. And what that means is that Christ, no longer was there deepest desire. It was a desire. It wasn't the deepest. They lost their first love when things get old, when we no longer desire Jesus as much as we remember that we used to in the past.

Now, right now, if you can think of a time when:

- You couldn't wait to get to a Bible study.
- You couldn't wait to read God's word.
- You couldn't wait to the fellowship of God's people.
- You couldn't wait to the time of singing His praises.

And it's kind of seems like, yeah, that was a long time ago... when I first got saved. Then that's the first love loss of Ephesus translated into your personal life. We all know that in our job, in our studies, even in our hobbies, things get old and stale, and ho-hum, that's what Christ said to watch out for now.

# **STOP: Let me ask you a question...**

Just stop for a second. We're 18 minutes into the class, a third of the way through. Let me just ask you a question. Cause this is actually what Jesus is building on in these letters. Here's the question.

## **Do YOU live like you're part of Christ's Special Forces that He has deployed behind enemy lines?**

Do you live like you're part of Christ special forces He has left on earth deployed behind enemy lines? Do you actually think of yourself as a soldier? Remember, enduring hard times, Paul said, is a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

- Imagine today you are a special forces soldier.
- You're invited to your final briefing before you go out on active duty. So, you've just been in training and today your final lesson is you're going to go on patrol and let's say you're going through Afghanistan's Taliban controlled territory. If you pay attention to news at all, every month, there are reports of roadside bombs, attacks, all kinds of things going on in that area for any troops that are deployed there.

- Now, imagine today you're on your final briefing. So that means today, you're going to go on patrol in that territory and you know, there are snipers, there are landmines, there are remote controlled IED, there are RPGs, 50 caliber machine gun nest. There are thousands of terrorists and they're all in this scorching desert.
- The commanding officer is leading this patrol and you're going to be strung out in a line behind him. He's the only one who's ever gone on patrol to come back unscathed.
- Now, imagine you're sitting in the last lesson that you're going to have the briefing. You know, what's going to be along every step of your patrol. You know, there'll be snipers watching. You know that the landmines will be there. You'll know that every kind of armament will be pointed against you. And you know that the commanding officer that's giving these last words for you before you go has done this patrol hundreds of times. He's led his troops hundreds of times through enemy territory. He's the only one who ever made it back unscathed at the briefing.
- He's going to introduce you to his personally written field manual, feed field manual for battlefield survival. He's going to explain the key elements of body armor, how you can protect yourself. Does that ring a bell? Ephesians 6, put on the what? Say it out loud, whole armor of God. He's going to explain the body armor. He will show it, he will fit it and also, he'll issue the only weapon, offensive weapon, that will be demonstrated. Ammunition will be issued. Wow.

Wouldn't every one of us being deployed be there in the front row. We'd all be taking notes. We'd stay after, we'd ask him questions. We'd help each other as fellow soldiers get geared up, we'd worked together for our mutual survival.

Yet today, most of the special forces in this analogy, that's believers... deployed by the Lord, that's the great commission, Matthew 28... in the harsh and deadly territory of Satan, the master terrorist. What does God call him, the god of this world? So, we're going into his enemy territory every day. Most of us are riding around, like we're on vacation. Most people sit on open double decker tour buses driving through enemy territory... like they don't even know what's going on. It's amazing. Most believers have no daily preparation.

What does it say in 1 Thessalonians 5, pray without ceasing? The more you understand the battlefield, the more you pray without ceasing.

- Most believers have no body armor.
- They don't take up the full armor.
- They have no attendance at the briefings.
- They forsake the assembling of ourselves together.
- They have no ammunition because it says ... will not overcome, but by every word of God, that's what feeds us and protects us. And there are no weapons in sight.
- The sword of the spirit. That's a personal mastery of this book. That's being able to confront any advance of Satan or the world or our flesh with specific scriptures, the sword of the spirit. We don't have our weapon cleaned and sited in.

Well, what does that mean is going on in the world? Well, I would say this, the daily casualties are horrific in Christendom, as you can imagine. Many wounded believers, soldiers, are strewn along the road of life. Many of them have flaming darts burning in their unprotected lives. What is that? Remember, the adversary Satan can shoot flaming darts.

- Paul said to the Ephesians have you ever been just doing something and all of a sudden you just had the worst thought you've ever had in your life and you think, where did that come from? You should pause and reflect and think, where DID that come from? If we know that our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.
- What did Peter say? Resist him steadfast in the faith.

How do we do that? That's what those daily briefings are about. That's our devotions, our time in the word, listening to the Lord. Most believers nowadays are incapacitated and no longer on their mission. By the way, this isn't new. That's what Revelation 2 and 3 is. When we get out of Revelation 1 and get to 2 and 3, that's what all seven churches are confronted with. Most were out of commission.

- Only a few seem to be at the briefings.
- Only a few are reading and using the manual.
- Only a few are following the commanding officer every day.

That's what Jesus found on His visit to His special forces base. What are those? The seven churches. Jesus went to each outpost that He had strategically set up in the center, the heart of the Roman empire. The most Roman part of the empire, what we would call Turkey, Roman Asia Minor and He checked the seven bases and found that most of them we're not in tune with what they were doing. Are any of us today? If you're in this class, maybe you've listened this far, you weren't even planning on listening as far, or maybe you're actually taking this class, this is more than academic now. Are any of us just going through the motions? Like Ephesus, we're no longer passionate for Jesus like we used to be.

Now, here's a quick lesson. I was a youth pastor for many years. What I would do right now is, I would tell my young people, no matter how many steps you take away from the Lord, it's always just one step back. That step back is called repent. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior. Are any of us starting to fear how bad the world is getting with this COVID-19. 100,000 new cases in the world and thousands of more deaths every day in the world. Are you starting to fear? God doesn't give us a spirit of fear.

Are any of us getting comfortable around sin. I just read a headline today. It says all the things that are considered sin taxes...alcohol, tobacco, other things like that, the journalist called a sin tax. They said the bad habits are coming out in this quarantine time.

- Alcohol consumption is up.
- People have reverted back to smoking.
- They said that porn hub and all the pornography distributors are experiencing unbelievable traffic.

Why? Because we get comfortable around sin and we're not forsaking it anymore. Are any of us acting and operating like lost people because we're so distracted? We don't see Christ in His word every day.

- Beware of coasting,
- Beware of just going through the motions, not being passionate for Jesus like we used to.
- Beware of starting to fear our future or our health. Did you know that no amount of medication will make us live one day longer or any lack of it one day less? If you really believe Psalm 139. Yes. Wash your hands. Yes. Wear your face mask. Yes, socially distance. But remember every day of her life was written in His book before we lived one day of them.
- Beware of amusing and entertaining ourselves with sin.
- Beware of not fleeing sin, beware of getting truth challenged and acting and operating like lost people and so distracted the time with God and His word is gone from our daily vitals. What are your daily vitals? Got to get up, got to exercise, got to have that coffee, got to log in and check in and posts.
- Where does the daily briefing come in with our commanding officer.

Real quickly, Revelation 1.

# Unwrapping Jesus Christ: As He is Now

Revelation 1:9-13

And if you open your Bibles, look at verse 9, Revelation 1 starting in verse 9, down through verse 13 is unwrapping Jesus like He is now. This is what it says in verse 9... *"I John", remember the human author Jesus chose, "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 was saying I'm a prisoner. Of their own empire out there on that Island, by the Roman emperor who picked me as the last of the apostles to put into prison, to limit my ministry. So that's John relating, he's saying... hey, all of you in the seven churches in Asia Minor are going through the same thing I'm going through. Struggles. But now look at verse 10, *"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, I*

*heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet saying..."* and now John, after all these years, probably over 60 years had gone by since the last time he heard the voice of Jesus.

What was that last time? Right here in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Jesus is ascending and it says in Acts 1 and Luke 24, that He's looking down on His disciples and it says, He's blessing them. He's actually verbally saying I'm with you. Do what I left you to do. You have been such wonderful disciples, but now I'm going to be able to be with all of you anywhere, go into all the world. That's the last time he heard Jesus' voice until now. And that familiar, precious, powerful voice says this. "*I am the Alpha*", verse 11, "*the Omega, the First and the Last, what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia.*"

Remember I told you last hour, this book is unique. It's the only book written by Jesus Christ specifically to us. Us who are living in what He calls the end of days. There is no book more important right now to the church than understanding Christ unleashed as Revelation teaches it.

What does Jesus say? If you continue reading, John saw this ... "*then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man...*" What was Jesus' favorite term for Himself in the Gospels? Whenever Jesus self-described who He was, He called Himself most often, Son of Man. Son of Man and that's how John sees him. Like He was, that's the lesson, seeing Jesus after 60 years, He was the same. He was just unleashed to be everything He was back then. Only everywhere, anytime for anyone. That's what John learned .He was clothed with a garment down to the feet and He was girded about the chest with a golden band. First point Jesus' favorite word for himself right there in verse 12 and 13.

When the apostle John received the book of Revelation on the Lord's Day:

- He was living in what we would call hard times.
- He was an exile.
- He was cut off from family and friends, I've been reading the news, even the most famous people, the television people, the movie people; they're all saying this social isolation, this sheltering a home is really hard. I mean, where are you watching this? I mean, you see movie stars, helping their kids brush their teeth. They're just saying, Hey, we're not used to this. Everything has changed. Well, Jesus said, I understand you. I know you're cut off from your family and friends.
- I know you're living in a prison colony on the Island reserved for the worst enemies of Rome.
- I know you're on an inescapable Island. You can't reach the mainland without drowning or being eaten by sharks. Jesus said, I know that.

By this time in history, John was going through hard times. Not just the hardships of old age. It's not a stretch to say at this time, John probably was at the point, a lot of older people were where he was just waiting for his time to go home.

- He was ready to die.
- All of his friends were gone.

- The apostle Paul was dead, that great apostle who planted so many churches, who suffered so much.
- Peter, John's childhood friend, who he fished with all those long years ago, was executed.
- Even John's brother James who sat beside him and listened to Jesus, he had been executed for his faith.

Can you imagine all those huge pains in his life? But, Jesus said, I'm the Son of Man. I understand what you're going through. That's the first lesson. That's what verses 12 and 13 of Revelation 1 say. That Jesus Christ is unleashed to say, I understand. Doubting Thomas reach here and don't doubt anymore. And to sorrowing John on the Island of Patmos was saying, I'm the Son of Man. I'm with you. You're not alone.

# Jesus, Our Great High Priest:

We couldn't go to God,  
so God came to us.

Now, the second element that we see, not only is Jesus the Son of Man, but for centuries to have access to God. Do you remember what the Jewish people remember? The book of Revelation is filled with Jewish backdrops. Now think like a Jewish person. To have access to God for over 1,500 years, from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, there was just one way to have access to God. What was it? Through a priest. Jesus was unleashed at the dawn of resurrection morn to be what we see in these verses, the Great High Priest. Jesus, now was the priest no longer through the tabernacle but when He became the Son of Man, He could be approached by anyone. That's why He called Himself that. And so, Jesus didn't have a Secret Service detail, keeping people at a distance in His earthly ministry. He was approachable. Now that He's unleashed, He says, I'm the priest that can come to you and get you in touch with God.

# **Revelation is God's Reminder to Us:**

Nothing God says in this book is only said here,  
just here, for the first time.

That makes me say this, Revelation is God's reminder to us of everything about Christ that we see in the Gospels and in those Epistles, are now available to us. Remember this, nothing God says in the book of Revelation has only been said here, Revelation is a book of reminders. Nothing is here for the first time. By some counts, some who've spent their whole life studying this book, there are over 800 connections to the old Testament, it's just reminders of what:

- Paul already said.
- What Peter already said.
- What John already wrote to them.
- What God revealed through the gospel.
- And now John, in his suffering and old age is being reminded.

# Understanding Jesus' Greatest Miracle & Our Greatest Need

Revelation 1:5—Our greatest need isn't happiness, It's forgiveness.

We need to understand Jesus' greatest miracle is about our greatest need. Look back at verse 5. If you noticed, I never read verse 5, I skipped over it. See what it says, verse 4 ends and it says, *“from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler over the Kings of the earth. To him who loved us”*... now listen to the end of verse five... *“and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”*

Do you know what Jesus came to remind us of our greatest need? Our greatest need isn't happiness. If you watch the news. If you listen to the television. If you're online. If you're binging on Netflix and everything else... happiness is what everybody's looking for. It's not happiness. It's forgiveness. That's what we need. Jesus performed 30 recorded, amazing miracles in the Gospels during His time on earth, but every miracle, except for one, all went away.

Think about what I mean by that.

- The people that were hungry and fed in the 5,000, guess what? The next day they were, what? Hungry again.
- What about the people who were raised from the dead? Are they still walking around the earth? No. All of them grew old and died.
- What about the people that lost their sight and Jesus restored it? After decades, their sight began to dim.
- In other words, all of Jesus earthly miracles, except for one were temporary. Yeah, they temporarily, fixed a body; fixed eyes; fixed ears; fixed fingers; fixed demon possession; but all of them wore out after decades.

Except for one verse 5, chapter 1:5 forgiveness. Jesus Christ offered endless forgiveness.

# **We are EACH called to OFFER Christ's GREATEST MIRACLE to Our Generation**

My Friend Daniel

I'd like to tell you just one story. It's hard for me to not tell you many stories, but when I was working, actually I wrote a devotional book it's called Living Hope for the End of Days. It's my dissertation from Dallas Seminary about the book of Revelation. I worked on that for 10 years in class at Dallas Seminary and then I worked on it for one more year, editing it for publication...and I edited it at Starbucks. I was pastoring in a town in Oklahoma, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I went to the same Starbucks in Tulsa and edited the manuscript every day on my lunch hour for months.

As I would go there, I started getting to know (going every day for lunch) the baristas. And I'll never forget that there was one barista as the weeks went by... I noticed something was happening to him. I would look at his eyes when he would smile at me and push the cup of coffee across. I noticed that this fellow's eyes, his name was Daniel, we're slowly turning yellow. Finally the whites of his eyes actually had turned orange. Well, I knew enough medically, that I had seen once one of our children had what's called hyperbilirubinemia which meant their liver wasn't functioning and their eyes had started turning orange. We rushed him to the ICU. He was in there for a weekend and they were able to fix that problem.

But for Daniel, it wasn't he was a baby. I knew what it was, he was overdosing. And so, I started getting convicted. Remember I told you in the first class that I always keep that track in my wallet... and by the way, Daniel was quite, quite a character. He was into this metal thing. He wore a kind of ski cap. I can't believe they let him do that at Starbucks. He had piercings everywhere. He had piercings through all of his ears, through his nose. Through his tongue. Through his cheeks. He wore chains all around everywhere. He even had metal studs on his pants. He even had metal studs in his shoes. He wore a chain around his waist. He clinked when he walked.

He was a fun kind of guy. Unforgettable, but I could tell he was dying. So, I said, Lord, I'd like to share my track I carry with me. I'm praying that you give me an appointment with Daniel. By the way that Starbucks was the busiest one in town. I'd never been to that Starbucks

when there wasn't a line. I counted once 25 people in front of me in line. So, I said, Lord, you want me to witness to Daniel? I don't want to do it on company time. No line. When I get there, no line. Every day I'd go there, they're 25 in line. That day I stepped as the 25th person, I walked through the line. It started to get eerie because no one came through the door and I came up and ordered. I knew I had to get my track out because no one came in behind me.

I got the track ready and when Daniel prepared my drink as a barista, he shoved it across the counter toward me and I looked at him. I said Daniel. He looked at me, because I knew his name and he smiled. He said, yes. I said, Daniel, I'm seeing your eyes, they're turning orange. I said, you're overdosing on something; alcohol, drugs, I don't know what it is, but this is what I know. I took the track and I said, one of these days, you're going to wake up in a place you don't want to be. You're going to wake up, totally separated from God in Hell. This is the good news of the gospel and I pushed it across to him. Those orange eyes got this wide. I'd never seen anybody react like that. His eyes got wide. He said, "Hey man, thanks" and he took the track, stuck it in his pocket.

I went off and edited. I came back the next day to follow up and talk to him. He wasn't there. I didn't think anything of it. Next day, next day, a week went by. Finally, I asked the person at the counter or at the cash register. I said, Hey! where's Daniel. She said, that's what we're all asking. Where's Daniel. She said, one week ago he walked out the back door, never walked back in. I looked at my watch and I thought one week ago, that's when I witnessed to him.

Well to make a long story short, I finished writing that book, finished editing. I was there just kind of like a reunion, going back to Starbuck about six months later. I was studying at my table when I heard clink, clink, clink, and I saw the black boots and the metal and the pants and the chains. I looked up and there was the biggest smile. There was Daniel. With big eyes looking at me and they weren't orange anymore. He was so happy, and he said, hey man, I've been looking for you for months. He said, you remember when you gave me that tract? I said, I'll never forget it. He said, you scared the Hell out of me. He said, you didn't explain it to me. He said, I walked right out the back door. After I asked all the employees, if they understood it, he said, I walked down the street until I found someone that explained this gospel track to me.

He said, I got saved, he told me that in the months since he joined a band, he was traveling the country and they would stop their heavy metal, black, whatever concert with all the smoke and he'd walk out on the stage and he shared his testimony. He said, I wanted you to know that that's the power of the gospel. Look at the slide. We're each called to offer Christ greatest miracle to our generation.

# **Are YOU Obeying to Christ's Last Words To His Church, or Just Riding the Tour Bus through life?**

Are you obeying Christ's last words to His church? Are you doing what He asked you to do? Are you acting like you're a special force soldier? Are you acting like the commanding officer and you're going to his briefings and obeying him? That's what Jesus Christ unleashed did for each of us. He wants to go with us through life. He wants us to dispense the gospel and that's the second lesson of the book of Revelation.

God bless you, not merely to be here but let's do what God's word says.