

## Revelation and God's Blessing

Scripture: Revelation 1

Code: BQ040313

### **Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; (1:3a)**

The book of Revelation is bracketed by promises of blessing (beatitudes, as in Matt. 5:3–12) to those who read and obey it (cf. 22:7; Luke 11:28). But those are only two of the seven promises of blessing the book contains; the rest are equally wonderful: ““Is;Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them’ ” (14:13). “Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame” (16:15); “blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (19:9); “blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection” (20:6); “blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city” (22:14).

The three participles translated **reads, hear, and heed** are in the present tense. Reading, hearing, and obeying the truths taught in the book of Revelation (and in the rest of Scripture) are to be a way of life for believers. The change from the singular **he who reads** to the plural **those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it** depicts a first-century church service. It was common practice when the church gathered for one person to read the Scriptures aloud for all to hear (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13). Dr. Robert L. Thomas explains that “because writing materials were expensive and scarce, so were copies of the books that were parts of the biblical canon. As a rule, one copy per Christian assembly was the best that could be hoped for. Public reading was the only means that rank-and-file Christians had for becoming familiar with the contents of these books” (*Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary* [Chicago: Moody, 1992], 60). Since only Scripture was to be publicly read, John’s “obvious intention that the Apocalypse was to be read publicly argued strongly from the start that it be included among those books that eventually would be recognized as part of the NT canon” (Thomas, *Revelation 1–7*, 62–63).

The book of Revelation is God’s final word to man, the culmination of divine revelation. Its writing marked the completion of the canon of Scripture (cf. 22:18–19), and its scope encompasses the entire future sweep of redemptive history (1:19). Therefore it is imperative that believers pay diligent heed to the truths it contains.

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