

**Sermon Title: When God Speaks**  
**Sermon Text: Revelation 1:1-8**  
**Sermon Series: Walk Through the Bible - FBC AZ City - 11/25/18**

**Introduction:**

Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

- Many people line the parade route with the excitement of the Christmas season.
- You don't know which bands you will see
- You don't know what floats will be the parade
- And yet everyone lines the streets with anticipation of what they will see.
- There is uncertainty as to the specific entries in the parade but one thing is always constant and certain.

Everyone knows the last thing in the parade is the appearance of Santa Clause.

Today as we start the end of our year-long series on Walking Through the Bible we're going to take a look at Revelation. For some, the book of Revelation is a great big question mark - more overwhelming and stress inducing than Black Friday shopping. But I don't want you to miss the biggest point of all in the book: Jesus is coming again and He is worthy of all our praise and right living. Much like the Macy Thanksgiving Day parade, we know who's coming in the end. But as we eagerly await His return, let's take a closer look at some of the nuggets of truth and see what we can glean from them in this great book.

**Read Revelation 1:1-3 (CSB)**

***"The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near."***

1. **God speaks.**

This book begins with the phrase, "the revelation of Jesus Christ." The word, revelation, is the title of the book and it means, "to reveal, unveil, uncover, or disclose."

Taking a closer look at verse 1, there is a heavenly chain of communication that is taking place: God - Jesus Christ - angel (messenger) - John. Revelation is from God the Father, which He gave to His Son, which Jesus shares with us through his servant, John. John is the "beloved disciple" who spent a lot of time with Jesus. Revelation is the last revealed, written word in our Bibles. This is the last word. We should pay close attention.

III. - Last words can be so meaningful. On the day of October 18, 1926 'Button' gave a final message to his coach and ultimately to his football and baseball teammates. John 'Button' Salmon's coach 'Pop' Mc Kale, who had been visiting 'Button' Salmon every single day for 13 days at the hospital, was talking to 'Button' when the injured young man whispered 'Pop' come closer....."Tell them...Tell The Team To Bear Down. The Nurse in attendance then noted that John ' Button' Salmon breathed in one last breath and died peacefully at 10:32 am. For 92 years the UofA faithful have been repeating

that phrase. We must not take for granted hearing God speak to us through His revealed word.

In order to hear God correctly, we must interpret Revelation correctly. Revelation uses three writing styles to communicate God's message. This is important to note when it comes to understanding parts of the book. It is a mistake to see Revelation as only ONE kind of book. Here is a brief description of the kinds of writing contained in it:

- **Apocalypse** - The name of the book and the very first verse uses the term apocalyptic (or revelation). Apocalyptic material was not uncommon in the ancient world. Apocalyptic material used symbols and metaphors. The images and symbols represent real truths and real things, but we err if we interpret them in an overly literal sense. Symbols are meant to be symbolic.
- **Prophecy** - Tells what is to come. Revelation is like the prophetic books of the Old Testament that told of future events. It is the only book in the New Testament that tells of future events. Revelation 1:1 states, "what must soon take place." Realize that with any prophecy there will be always be a natural desire within us to figure things out as to what specific time in history God is talking about. The religious history books are filled with people wrongly interpreting these future events. The most obvious group is the Jehovah Witnesses. They just won't quit. Their leaders have earmarked the years 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984 as times of eschatological significance. Many have tried to figure out when Christ would return and have even predicted his coming for years and years.

**Word of Caution:** No one can predict an exact date for Christ's return.

**Word of Caution:** Don't miss the pine tree by collecting pine cones.

- **Letter** - John writes seven literal letters, each one different, to seven literal churches in literal Asia Minor - today that is the area of Turkey, Syria and North Africa. They are recorded in Revelation in the same order as a messenger traveling Roman roads would deliver the book. In 1:4 we see a typical letter greeting.

III. - Back in the 1970's and 1980's there was an advertisement for the American stock broker firm, E.F. Hutton. The phrase was... "when E. F. Hutton talks, people listen." This phrase usually involved a young professional remarking at a dinner party that his broker was EF Hutton, which caused the moderately loud party to stop all conversation to listen to him.

I'm going over a lot of introductory information today to set the stage for what we'll be studying for the next 13 weeks, but I don't want you to approach this as just more Biblical knowledge for you to file away. I don't want you to take for granted the fact that God can still speak His truth to you today if you are listening.

My prayer for this study is: Lord, may I hear you speak. May I be attentive to what you will say to me.

Let's hear from a modern day E.F. Hutton: Billy Graham. Billy Graham made this comment about Revelation: "Rather than getting lost in the smaller brushstrokes,

debating all the details, we need to step back and catch the majesty of the book's 'grand design.' In other words, see the bigger picture. **Don't miss what God is saying to you!!!**

## 2. **When God speaks, He demands a response.**

Example: Doctor being paged in an ER. They have a choice whether to respond right away or delay their response or ignore the page altogether. All through Revelation, we will be confronted with the reality of who Jesus is and we will be confronted of whether to live our life with Jesus and His second coming in mind or live just for today.

**Truth of Revelation:** The book is about exalting Jesus.

You see the big picture right here in the beginning of this book in Revelation 1:4-8.

### **Read Revelation 1:4-8 (CSB)**

**John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.**

**To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

**7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.**

**8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."**

Vs. 4 - identifies this **letter is written to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Turkey, Syria, North Africa)**. In January and February, we will study the direct instruction to these seven churches in Revelation 2-3 at our Winter Bible Study.

Vs. 5 - Jesus is identified as the **faithful witness**. By his perfect, sinless life and by His words and works, He showed us completely the character of God. This is clearly stated by Jesus in John 14:9.

He is also referred to as "**the firstborn from the dead**" and the "**ruler of the kings of the earth**." And he has "**set us free from our sins**". Each of these phrases have great significance.

- **Firstborn** - indicates Jesus is first in time but also in importance as God's first and only born over death. He conquered death. Jesus states in **Revelation 1:18** - "I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades."
- **Ruler** - Jesus is ruler over all authorities, spiritual and earthly. It isn't that He will be rather...He is! This is true now but will be made crystal clear when He comes again.
- **Freedom** - He set us free from our own sin. He died the death we should have died. He paid the penalty we should pay but can't. Through his death, burial, and

resurrection, He can offer you and I forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We were slaves to our own sin and yet Christ has given us freedom from that bondage.

***Jesus is your Deliverer, will you allow Him to deliver you today? Will you ignore His voice or will you come running to Him?*** Brief Gospel Presentation

**Vs. 7 and 8** - the focus is still on Jesus but it switches from the past to the future. John announces to us that Jesus is coming! Jesus is going to repeat this several times in John's visions. In fact one my **favorite verses in this entire book is Revelation 22:20** (the second to last verse). Jesus declares again he is coming soon and John says, "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus!"

The title, "**the Alpha and the Omega**" just like the one "who is, and who was, and who is to come" refers back to the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Jewish people would use this doxology to **describe God as the first and last**. They would declare Him as the Almighty, the fact that He is not Lord over time, but He rules the entire universe.

Here is what we learn by God speaking to us in these last verses:

- ❖ Jesus is victorious
- ❖ God is a god who will do what He promises.
- ❖ In the end, our Jesus (and God) wins!!!

### 3. ***What should our response be?***

***Principle # 1 - Don't abandon the mission.*** It must be noted that our vantage point in history allows us to draw an application that John's day would not have seen. When Revelation was written, Christianity flourished in western Turkey. The regions where the early church flourished (Turkey, Syria, and North Africa) are now Islamic strongholds. It wasn't Islam that wiped out Christianity in these regions, it was that Christianity weakened when Christians took for granted their role in God's plan. We can't abandon our mission to proclaim the good news about Jesus.

***Principle # 2 - Trust that God has everything under control.*** The fact that God is both the beginning and the end, that He is eternal, invites us to remember that nothing can happen to us apart from His plan. No situation we encounter takes God by surprise. God our Creator is bigger than space and time and yet He cares for us. We know in the end, in the long haul, regardless of the circumstances around us, Jesus will come again and He does win!!! He wins over all sin and death! You come to Christ, You live for Christ, you are on the winning team!

### **Conclusion:**

John Allen Chau, the American missionary who was killed by an isolated tribe on a remote Indian island, off the coast of India had a passion to tell others about Jesus.

"You guys might think I'm crazy in all this but I think it's worthwhile to declare Jesus to these people," he wrote in a last note to his family on Nov. 16, shortly before he left the safety of the fishing boat to meet the tribesmen on the island. "God, I don't want to die."

John Chau lived with the end in mind. He wrote this: "Why does this beautiful place have to be have so much death here?" "I hope this isn't one of my last notes but if it is 'to God be the Glory.'" **May we each live with that kind of attitude!**