***John on the Isle of Patmos

RV05-01***

Open your Bibles to Revelation 1:9. John, as you know, has greeted the seven churches which are in the Roman province of Asia. Just to give you a little orientation, Asia Minor, as we call it today, was roughly the area that is today occupied by the country known as Turkey. In the time that John wrote the Revelation, this part of Asia Minor was actually a Roman province, the Roman province of Asia.

You must remember the kind of world that John lived in. This was the world dominated and controlled by the Roman Empire. It had been a world that had been brought to peace. It was obviously prepared by God Himself for this condition, so that when Jesus Christ was born into the world, the Roman Empire was supreme. Indeed, as the Pax Romana, as it was called, Rome ruled every word. The peace of Rome was in force. There were tremendous roads which had been built by Rome, so that there was transportation possible for commerce; for business; and, for military purposes. The Roman army was an effective instrument in the hands of the government. And everywhere that Rome went, the power and the spirit of the emperor followed. It is into such a world, near the end of the first century, that John recorded this book. He was the only apostle yet living. All the rest had died in one way or another. John, a very old man now, up in his 90s (probably 96 or so), is here writing this book.

We have seen, beginning in verse 4, that he has sent greetings to seven specific churches to whom he is writing this book. These seven churches formed a circle here in this Roman province of Asia. They were actually seven churches that existed. When we get to chapter two, we shall begin studying a segment of this letter written specifically to each of these churches. When we have finished these seven, we're going to know a great deal about the problems that face local church congregations. This is what makes it so sad that pastors do not preach on the book of the Revelation – that they do not at least go through chapters 2 and 3, which would be tremendous insight to believers on their own lives, and on the conduct in the ministry of the local church, and what it's all about. A lot of Christians are going to get to heaven and feel terribly robbed, because their churches have had them engaging in Mickey Mouse, rinky-tink operations that have no value in the eyes of God, and which are pure human good, which He simply disposes of and rejects.

So the study of these churches is significant. This letter is written to these churches. As we have found, John brings his greeting from the Triune God. From each of the persons of the Godhead, he brings a greeting to these seven churches. These seven churches begin here with Ephesus. They go to Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. It forms a complete circuit.

In Revelation 1, John expresses a special praise for the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the central figure of the Revelation. So he speaks of Him as the one who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. The Greek says, "Loosed us from our sins." He has made us a kingdom of priests unto God, His Father." Then he says, "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Then he announces the coming of Christ. "Behold, He comes with clouds." That's how He left – up in the actual clouds of the atmosphere. The Second Coming of Christ shall be in the same way. "And every eye shall see Him" – all over the world. The world will probably be covered with a blanket of darkness, and out in outer space will explode the illuminating glory of the returning Christ. You and I will be accompanying Him on that return. "They also who pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." The Jews who pierced him, and all the gentiles of the world who rejected Him will wail when they see Christ coming, because they will know that their doom is upon them. The lake of fire is opening its mouth, ready to receive them. Even so, John, says, "Amen." He uses that word in Scripture which means, "So be it. And the sooner the better."

Then he declares once more, in verse 8, "'I am Alpha and Omega,' said the Lord, who is, who was, and who is to come – the Almighty." This is a final declaration concerning the person of God and the members of the Trinity in particular, all of them forming the Godhead – God all powerful. Then John declares here the Second Coming of Christ to a world which has chosen to reject Him, and which will mourn this choice of rejection forever.

So we pick up the story here with verse 9. In verse 9, we find that John is about 35 miles off the coast of Asia on a little island called Patmos. His headquarters had been in the city of Ephesus. These cities, apparently, were under his apostolic authority. Apostles, remember, had authority over several churches, in contrast to pastor-teachers today, who are in charge of only one local church. But he was on the island of Patmos, and we shall see in a moment why that condition existed.

**John**

Verse 9 says, "I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the aisle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." First of all, let's look at the condition of the exile – the condition of John at this time. He is the author of Revelation. This verse begins with actually the word "I," which is the Greek word "ego." When the Greek uses a word like this, it is an emphatic identifying mark. The reason John does that is because, in verse 8, he has just been speaking about God almighty. He's going to shift to himself. So he says, "Now, I, John" to identify that he is now speaking about himself after his previous reference to God. The name John is the Greek word "ioannes." "Ioannes" here refers to John the apostle – the apostle who was particularly close to Jesus. He was in the inner circle of Peter, James, and John, but it was John who was the beloved apostle of Jesus Christ. For some condition, the Lord had a particular fondness for this apostle, and the two were very, very close.

He is well known to his readers. Obviously, he's the only apostle alive at this point in time. All the others are dead, and he stresses his authorship in order to authenticate this prophecy. He wants to make it very clear that he is the one who is writing it – not some unknown good Christian in one of the local congregations, but that it is really the leading and the chief and only final authority now left in the New Testament church.

This is very similar, you may remember, to an Old Testament prophet who also wrote in terms of that kind of a strong, identifying expression, using the word "I," and then his name after it. That is Daniel. He did the same thing when he wrote his book, because Daniel was also a prophet who was writing a book of prophecy. In Daniel 8:1, we read, "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first." He uses these personal pronouns: "Me, Daniel." He is even more specific in Daniel 10:2, where we read, "In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks." Here he has the identical type of expression that John uses.

It was important for Daniel to identify that he was writing this book. As most of you know, the liberal preachers reject the fact that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel. The reason they say that is because, if the book of Daniel was indeed written by Daniel in his lifetime, then it is a book of predictions. It is sure enough a book about the future of the world. For it was in Daniel that the people of that day learned that God was going to have four great empires to rule the world. One was Babylon, the time in which Daniel was living. That was to be followed by Media-Persia. That was to be followed by the conquest of Alexander the Great, when Greece would rule the world. Then they were to be conquered, in turn, by the Roman Empire. That empire carried right down to our day, but the Roman Empire today is broken up into individual nations. The thing that was revealed to Daniel was that this was how history was going to move, relative to world governments, right down to the end when Jesus Christ would return.

The liberals look at this, and (you know) they must reject anything supernatural. Obviously, no man could have written Daniel. Obviously, he had to get information from God who is really out there, and who is not silent – the God who has spoken to us. This is where the unbeliever stops. This is where he rejects the Word of God. So for this reason, Daniel is very specific that it is he who is writing, and here in Revelation, John is very specific that it is he, John the apostle, the well-known one, who is doing this. "I, John."

**Brother**

Now if you have a pencil, cross out the next three words in your King James translation: "Who also am." This is not in the Greek. "I, John, your brother" is what the Greek says. The word "brother" is the word "adelphos." This word is used here very specifically in terms of those who are in the family of God. God is the Father, and believers are His children. Only those who are believers are in the family of God. And only those who are in the family of God have the right to use this very precious identifying word: "brother." The Word of God speaks about brothers. It speaks about brethren. This is a very affectionate term in Scripture. It is the word which was used indeed by the New Testament Christians. It's alright with me if you want to call each other brother and sister, because it's alright with God, and nobody should really object to it. It's probably the most affectionate term that can be used between one Christian and another. Although I know that many people have turned it into a cornball expression, and have actually denied, by the way they use it, what it really means.

"Adelphos" was what was used in the book of Acts among the believers. For example, Acts 15:23 says, "And they wrote letters (the leaders of the Jerusalem church, that is) by them after this manner: the apostles and elders and brethren (meaning the Christians) send greeting unto the brethren who are of the gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." This is a rather important statement here in the book of Acts, because it was not unusual for Jews to call each other "brother." You remember that the early New Testament church was made up first of Jews, and it was natural for them to call each other "brother." But it was not so easy for them to call a gentile, "My brother." That came harder. However, Peter had his experience with the sheet of unclean animals, the vision that he saw coming down from heaven, and God telling him to eat. That showed Peter that gentiles, who were considered unclean, were indeed part of the body of Christ. After that, they understood that gentiles were also to be called "brothers" in Christ.

So here you have this term applied, "Brethren who are of the gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." So it is being applied to these gentile believers as well. In 2 Thessalonians 3:15, we read, "And count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Christians sometimes have to give each other good advice. They are to do that, not as if they were each other's enemies, and they are not to receive it as if somebody was your enemy, an antagonist. But you are to receive it as coming from someone who is a member of your family, and who has your best interests and concerns at heart, and therefore, speaks to you out of that frame of reference of affection.

2 Peter 3:15 says, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, has written unto you." Peter is calling Paul his brother, and he is referring to the fact that Paul has written some wisdom. He's referring, of course, to that which is Scripture which Paul wrote, and which has been then delivered unto them. But here he speaks of Paul as his brother.

So when the word "brother" is used in Scripture, it is used in a very restricted sense. It means that you belong to the family of God. It means that you possess the same absolute righteousness that Jesus Christ possesses, because He has given it to you since you have received His death in your behalf on the cross. People *become* children of God, in other words. They are not born as such. John uses this word to identify and to stress the fact that he is speaking as one of the members of the family of God. He is not speaking to them as an outsider. The way that you become a brother, as we have said, is by believing in Christ as Savior. For that reason, Paul says in Galatians 3:26, "For we are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." That's how you enter the family of God.

So this should make it very clear that there is no such thing as the brotherhood of man. You've heard that expression. In the New Testament sense of the family of God, there is no such thing as the brotherhood of man. Everyone is not my brother, and everyone is not my sister – only those who have received Christ as personal Savior. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus made this very specific on the occasion when He converted the water into wine at Cana of Galilee. When somebody came to Him and said, "Hey, your mother, Lord, is outside trying to get in. She's looking for You." Jesus said, "Who is My mother? Who are My relatives? Who are My kinfolks? It is not those by simply natural birth. My true kinfolks; My true brothers; and, My true sisters, are those who do the will of God. It is those who, because they have done the first step of the will of God to accept Christ as Savior, have now entered the family of God. They are my brothers. They are my sisters."

So this business of the brotherhood of man that the liberal theologian likes to speak about is pure poppycock in the eyes of God. God laughs at it. There is no such thing in the New Testament sense of the word. It is pure human viewpoint because it is a non-existent concept.

Believers share the place of being children of God with Jesus Christ. That's one of the tremendous facts about this word "brother." It means that you are actually a brother with Jesus Christ. Romans 8:16-17 say, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit (our human spirit) that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." We are actually joint heirs with Jesus Christ, because, as He is a child of God, we too are children of God. So we share what He shares. Those who are born again "brethren" compose our spiritual household. This is the same thing that Jesus was emphasizing: "Who is my real family?" Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, but especially onto them who are of the household of faith."

Now you have human relatives, and you should be kindly disposed toward doing good things for them, but the Bible says that you should be even more disposed toward doing kindly things for those who are members of the family of God. You might have relatives who are not members of God's family. They are not as close to you, and they do not have as high priority then, if they are not believers, as those who are believers. They are in the household of God. The Bible says to them, you give a special consideration.

Ephesians, 2:19 adds to this: "Now therefore, we are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The household of God is the true brotherhood of man. It is the brotherhood that is constituted by becoming part of the family of God. It's a spiritual community, in contrast to our natural relatives, and to human beings in general.

One of the things that all of this points up when John uses this phrase, "I, John, your brother," is that it indicates that he does not elevate himself to some ecclesiastical pedestal. He does not say, "I, John, your bishop," or "your pope," or "your high priest." He does not fall into that trap of the delusion that Satan likes to create: That on one side, here, are what we call the laity; and, on the other side here (above them) are what we call the clergy. There is no such thing as laity and clergy in the Word of God. This is a pure human invention.

Every Christian stands on equal footing. That equal footing is described by this word "adelphos" (brethren). I don't care whether you're a pastor-teacher, or whether you're a member out here in the pew, you are both on equal footing. There is not one who is superior to the other. One has superior authority and responsibility by God's delegation, but, in spiritual matters, here is the only living apostle still left, and what does he do? He says, "We're all of the household of God, and I'm just a brother. You can just call me brother." So when you met John, you called him Brother John. You might want to practice with each other, or you could even call yourself by the word "saint." That's another word that is fitting to the Christians in the New Testament, because everybody who is born again is a saint. He's not some super spiritual Christian. He's just a saint. So you can call one another by the word "saint." That is a word that describes Christians. So John calls himself "brother." That really makes a lot of preachers look like clowns today, because they love to elevate themselves. They love to impress people. They love to carry on in public in order to have people be in awe of them. God is disgusted with it.

So this is a time of tremendous importance to the New Testament church. When John here, their brother, is going to bring something to them of very great importance, as one of them: "I, John, your brother." Immediately there is connected with this place of brother another word: "companion." This is the Greek word "sugkoinonos." The first part of that word means "with" ("sug"), and the second part of the word ("koinonos") means "fellowship." This is our Greek word for "fellowship." Sometimes you hear about a Sunday school class called the "koinonia" class. That means "the fellowship class." It comes from this Greek word for Christian fellowship. Literally, this word ("koinonos") means "partner with," or a "co-partner" or "a coordinated partner." The word means to share with someone in something. A fellow partaker is the idea.

**Fellow Partaker**

In the Greek Bible, you have this condition: You have the definite article, "the brother and fellow partaker" or "companion." There is no "the" before the second title. That means that they are one title. John says, "I'm two things to you: brother; and, fellow partaker. I am your brother in the family of God. I am also one who partakes of something with you." He, of course, speaking to these seven churches: "I am definitely a fellow partaker." Of what? He says, "in," and this is the Greek word "en" which means "in the sphere of." The idea of "en" is this: "Within this sphere, I am your brother, and I am a partaker with you." Of what?

**Tribulation**

Well, he names three things: tribulation; the kingdom; and, the patience of Jesus. The word "tribulation" is the Greek word "thlipsis." "Thlipsis" is a word that means a period of some kind of suffering. It means pressures on a person. It refers here specifically to the persecution that the Christians are experiencing at the hands of the Roman government at the time that John wrote.

Persecution in the Roman Empire went up and down, but it went at a steady pace upward. As the Roman Empire began to come apart, and as the authority of the government began to find itself unable to control the nation and control the outlying areas, the emperors increasingly sought something that would hold the people together to some central unity. So eventually what they came to was making the emperor the god of the Romans. So the Roman citizen was called upon to pledge allegiance to the spirit of Rome, and to the genius of the god-emperor as Lord Caesar, with the word Lord meaning "deity."

This was for the purpose of governmental control, authority, and survival. The Roman Empire said, as our society says today, "There is nobody in the upper hemisphere. There is no God up there. Furthermore, this God has not broken through to say anything to us." As a matter of fact," they said, "Here is the way it is. What we call something out there is just what is here. There is nothing out there." The first Russian cosmonaut that went out into space made the idiotic remark that when he was out in space, he didn't see any angels out there. He didn't see any supernatural creatures. What was he saying? He was saying that what we call the supernatural, the spiritual world, is down here in the material world. So in man's thinking today, these two are one in the same.

This is the expression of humanism. We looked at that in a previous session. All of this is based on the premise that there's only one thing, and that is material. Materialism is the basis of humanism. And all must come from material things. Therefore, you are up against the fact that you can talk to a chair, and ask the chair, "Is it right to kill my mother?" The chair is a material thing, and it can't tell you anything. You can ask a chair about morality. It can't tell you anything. You can ask a piano about rock music, that is designed to break down the inhibitions of the soul so that the person is pliable to sin. That is the basic purpose of rock music. No matter what you ask the piano, the piano is a material thing, and it can't give you any values on that.

So the result is that the Roman Empire arbitrarily made laws, and it arbitrarily set values. So the Roman Empire said, "Abortion is okay. If you don't like a child, kill it." As a matter of fact, the Roman Empire not only practiced abortion on a wide scale, but it practiced infanticide. That is, it killed children even after they were born. If a family decided, "We want a son," and a baby girl was born, they simply took the girl out and threw in the water and drowned her. You could do it, because the Roman Empire had made the rules. They had asked a material thing, and a material thing has no rules. So they made the rules that they believed were acceptable.

Now, along comes this thing called Christianity, in such people as John. Christianity talks from the frame of reference of a written Bible. Here we have all these propositions of truth which have come directly from the Triune God Himself. He is out there, and He is not silent. He has spoken to us. The Christians say, "Roman Empire, you are wrong. The emperor is not God. We condemn you for saying that he is God. We Christians won't say that he is God. We won't take that oath." Were the Christians stealing? No. Did the Christians do their work slovenly? No. They were the finest citizens the empire had. But the Roman Empire looked at this and said, "Just a minute. These Christians are a threat to us. These Christians are saying that they are able to judge what we do, and they are condemning the very base of our empire. They're condemning our materialistic basis. They are condemning the spirit of Rome. They're condemning the concept of the genius of the emperor as God."

And that was the threat that all the Roman emperors recognized. That's why they persecuted Christians. Christians would never have been persecuted in the Roman Empire if they had stood up and taken the oath of allegiance to the emperor as god. You would think that some of them might have said (and maybe they did), "Well, I'll take the oath. I don't really mean it. I'll go ahead and say it. I've got my fingers crossed while I'm making the oath to you, emperor god. Then I'll go and I'll worship Jesus." And they would have let them worship Jesus to their heart's content. There were all kinds of religions in the Roman Empire. They never touched them.

By the time John came along, the Roman emperors recognized that the threat above all threats to the existence of the authority of the Roman Empire was Jesus Christ Himself. They saw in the Lord Jesus the one who was going to bring the empire down. They saw in the Lord Jesus one who could destroy the power of the Roman Empire through the believers in Christ. So the attack centered upon Jesus Christ Himself.

This was the result of a world that says, "There is no God out there. All that is, is material things. Material has always existed. Material made itself. Material things are god." This is the concept of communism today. Communism is based upon that material premise. All of the concepts (the morals and the beliefs) of communism are based upon that materialistic, humanistic viewpoint. Remember, that when we say humanism, we mean that man is autonomous. Man is independent of God. There is no God. There is only man, and man can run his own destiny, and determine his own future.

This is why John here says, "I am your brother and companion in "thlipsis" (in tribulation). What was he talking about? Well, he was not talking about the future tribulation period. We are living in the church age. We're living right down at the very end of the church age. The tribulation period, which follows our being called up to meet the Lord in the air in the rapture, is the seven-year period when God pours out His wrath upon the Jews and gentiles who are left behind – all of them unbelievers. Following that comes the Second Coming that we have looked at previously here, a few verses before that John referred to, and then the 1,000-year reign of Christ here on the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We believers, who came from this church age, are going to rule with Him. This will be earth's golden age. It will be its finest hour. And then eternity begins. There's no such poppycock as a judgment day when everybody is going to be raised, and some are going to be sent to hell, and some are going to be sent to heaven. That, again, is human invention, and it is not in the Word of God.

But now, John (my point is) is not speaking about this tribulation. When he says, "I am your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation," he does not mean this technical official period which the Bible calls the tribulation (and the Bible calls the last three-and-a-half years "the great tribulation"). This is an era in which you and I will never participate. We will never be in the tribulation era. You are not going to be in the tribulation. We've already gone over this in John 14:1-3. This is the old meat hook that the people who believe you're going to be in the tribulation are stuck on, and they can't get off.

So this does not refer to that future tribulation period. One of the reasons we know that is because here we have not only tribulation, but we have also kingdom and patience of Jesus tied in. These other two things existed now at the time that John was writing, and they exist now today. So these are current conditions: tribulation; kingdom; and, patience. The principle that John has in mind is stated for us in such passages, for example, as Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith. And that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." What's he talking about? That we are going to come through the period of the tribulation era to enter the kingdom of God? No. He's talking about tribulation in general; that is, that Christians will suffer. When you are a believer, you are not free of all the diseases of the world. You are not free of all the cruelties of the world. You're not free of all the breakdowns in personal relationships in the world. You have better assets with which to deal with those things, but you experience everything that this world of Satan has to put upon us, as any unbeliever does.

So we are going to come into the kingdom of God (and this is an expression for the royal kingdom family of God) through much tribulation. That's the thing that John is referring to. That's the thing that Jesus had told his disciples to be prepared for – that they would experience this kind of tribulation. This is the kind of thing that we don't know anything about because we're Americans. We're fat-cat Americans, and we've always had it good. There's nobody standing around outside the door ready to haul you off to the police station because you attended a religious meeting here today. But there are many of our brethren, who are also our fellow partakers in the family of God, in other places of the world, such as in socialist and communist countries, who meet in groups like this at the very danger of their lives. They indeed are experiencing the tribulation which is a weigh station for them on the way to their final happiness with the Lord in heaven.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5, we have another comment on this: "So that we ourselves glory in you (in the churches of God) for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure (what New Testament Christians were enduring). This is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer." The Word of God says, "Don't worry if somebody causes you to suffer because you're a Christian." But if you suffer as an evil-doer, then you've got something to be ashamed of. But don't be ashamed of the fact that you experience suffering and tribulation because you are a Christian.

Why are you going to experience this kind of suffering? Well, because we live in the United States in a post-Christian society. In the United States, the Bible is no longer viewed as the Word of God. With our current generation, the average kid in high school and the young person in college doesn't even know what you're referring to when you talk about the Bible. And certainly he would laugh in your face if you were to say to him, "That Bible came from God who is out there, who wrote it through men, and He spoke to us on this side." He'd laugh in your face. You could come to him and say, "You must not do the things you're doing. The Bible condemns these things." He would say, "I don't care if the Bible condemns them."

Now, you put yourself in the position of some of the sacred writings of the East. If somebody comes along with the Book of Mormon, and says, "Hey, you shouldn't do this. The Book of Mormon says this." Are you going to be impressed with what the Book of Mormon says? You know that it's bah humbug. You're not going to be impressed with it. Somebody may come to you with the Koran, the second book of the Mohammedans, and say, "Here's what the Koran says." Are you going to be impressed with it? You'll laugh in their face, because you know that the Koran is a human production. It is not the sacred, supernatural book that God has given.

Well, in today's generation, in our post-Christian era, all of our young people and all of our young adult generation view the Bible the same way that you and I view the Book of Mormon or the Koran. It's nonsense to us. The Bible has no authority in their eyes whatsoever. They are in the same position as the Roman Empire was, being threatened by a Bible in the hands of Christians who say, "Hey, I can judge you. I can judge the government for what it says, and I can say that the government is wrong here on the authority of the Bible." This is the thing that John was suffering, and Christians, in some parts of our world today, suffer. Our society is increasingly going to be oriented to the idea of persecuting believers. You and I may yet get our chance to know what it is to suffer physically – maybe even with our blood shed for the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because we are threatening the materialistic base (the humanistic viewpoint) of our society.

Christianity claims to have an absolute standard by which to judge rights and wrongs. But the humanist says, "No, there are no absolute standards whatsoever." This is what John was facing on Patmos. And except for the grace of God, the way our government is going today, and the destructive course upon which it has set this nation, it's going to happen to you and me too. We may find ourselves up against the wall as well. So don't kid yourself.

**Kingdom**

"I, John, your brother and companion in tribulation (personal suffering) and kingdom." It just adds the words "and kingdom." The word "in" is not there. The word "kingdom is the Greek word "basileia." "Basileia" refers to the royal family in which we Christians are priests. You have this in 1 Peter 2:9: "We are a royal priesthood." Colossians 1:13, perhaps, would clarify what John is speaking of here. You and I belong to a royal kingdom: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated as into the kingdom of His Dear Son." You and I, by salvation, have entered a special kingdom (a spiritual kingdom), though it is true that someday you and I will reign with Jesus Christ in that earthly millennial kingdom as well. But that isn't specifically what he has in mind here.

**Perseverance**

Then there's a third thing, and that is the "patience." That is the Greek word "hupomone." This is a Greek word. I didn't make it up. This is what the Bible says. If I told you what these English words mean, you might think I'm making this up. So you have to argue with what God the Holy Spirit wrote. That's why these words are important. The "hupomone" means "an abiding under," literally, or "a patient enduring." We should translate it as steadfastness or perseverance. John takes part with them in the hanging in there as a believer. There were no summertime soldiers where John is concerned. He is not speaking of Christians who are closet Christians. He is not speaking of Christians who are certain to keep their Christianity to themselves so no one else will discover who they are; who their allegiance is to; and, what they stand for.

**Patmos**

John says, "I'm your brother and I'm your fellow partaker in the tribulations (the sufferings) and in the kingdom and in the patience (that is, the endurance) of Jesus." The word "Christ" is not in the Greek. The status of John was that he was on the isle that is called Patmos. As we've already shown you, the isle called Patmos identifies where he was here in 96 A.D. The word "called" is the Greek word "kaleo." It simply means that it was identified by this particular name, the isle of Patmos. The Greek for Patmos" is "Patmos." Patmos was in the Aegean Sea, 35 miles off the coast of modern Turkey. It's a rocky volcanic island. It's ten miles long, and it's six miles wide. It is barren. It is treeless. The highest point on the island is 800 feet. If I ever traveled in that part of the world, I'd like to make the 35-mile trip out to sea, to stand on the isle of Patmos.

As we shall see, one Sunday morning, John was sitting there on a rock looking out across the Aegean Sea. And suddenly he almost jumped off the rock, because the Scripture says that there was a sound like a sharp trumpet call, and it just scared him. He turned around, and the visions began. It all happened right there on the island of Patmos. I think it'd be great to walk around there, and to envision maybe where it happened. It's a very small place. He was exiled by the Roman Emperor Domitian to work in the mines. Banishment meant loss of all civil rights, and most of your property. A small amount was left for the person to survive on. The person on the island was free to have dealings with the people there, free to earn some money. But he's cut off completely from the outer world, though he may not have been treated with cruelty. He was on the island of Patmos. Why was he there?

He was there, "For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus." Again, the word "Christ" is not in the Greek. He was there on account of the Word of God. That means the revelation (the information) that God has given. John was there because he says, "I have a Bible, and I have information from God, and I can judge the Roman Empire which is built upon materialistic concepts, and the empire is wrong." You may yet suffer because you say, "I have a Bible. I have heard what God said. I have His standards, and I can judge American society, and say that American society is wrong here, here, and here." And that society, as a humanistic society, will not tolerate you judging it, and condemning its standards.

The testimony is the "marturia;" that is, the witness of John about Jesus Christ.

One of the interesting personalities here, of course, is the emperor. The emperor was Domitian at the time. He is quite a fascinating character. It will help you to understand a little more of what John went through here on this island (the suffering and the condition that a 96-year-old man was put to because of the Emperor Domitian), if you knew a little more about the character and the personality of Domitian. We will go into that next time. I think you will find him rather fascinating, and you will understand a little more of the hardship that John suffered.

"I, John, your brother and companion, in tribulation, in kingdom, and patience (endurance or perseverance) of Jesus, was in the island that is called Patmos on account of the Word of God, and on account of the testimony of Jesus. This was because we told the world that God has spoken and what He has said. This was because we told the world that absolute righteousness is available through Jesus Christ. For that reason, I sit here on this volcanic, barren rock, cut off from communication with the outer world." And during the suffering, some of the early church fathers told us that they made John work in the mines that were on the island of Patmos. That's tough duty for a 96-year-old man. He knew tribulation. He do what being part of the royal family of God was. He knew what steadfastness was, in spite of what Domitian the emperor was bringing upon him. We will tell you the end of the story – the conflict (the contest, so to speak) between John the apostle on the one hand, and the most powerful man in all the world, the emperor Domitian, on the other hand.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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