***A Great Voice like a Trumpet

RV05-02***

Once more, please turn with me in your Bibles to Revelation 1:9. We are now looking at verses 9 through 11 which deal with the commission delivered to the apostle John. This is the second segment. John is the apostle whom Jesus especially loves. He is the author of this book. John introduces himself, as you see in these verses, as a brother in God's family, and as a partner of the New Testament Christians. He was a partner with them, specifically he says, in their suffering as believers within the Roman Empire. He was a partner with them as a member of the royal family of the kingdom of God. He was a partner with them in their perseverance as witnesses of Jesus Christ – those who were standing by the truth had been revealed to them.

John, at this time, is under an imperial decree of exile on an island called Patmos out in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of the Roman province of Asia. The reason for this banishment was that, John says, he has been engaged in the proclamation of the authority of God's Word. That is, he was using the Word of God to judge the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire would tolerate many, many things. But because it was an atheistic, godless, and idol-worshiping system, the one thing it could not tolerate was an authority that was superior to the government itself, and particularly to the head of that government, the emperor. The matter of personal brutality became a thing that began eating away and corrupting the Roman Empire. This brutality was expressed in such things as the gladiator games in the Coliseum, where human beings were actually faced one with another so that one of them was going to die in combat right there in the stadium before the eyes of the rest. Christians themselves were thrown, eventually, to wild beasts. This was public entertainment. Idolatry certainly was a rampant thing. And the Christians came along with their superior information from the Scriptures, and said, "We condemn the idolatrous practices of the government, and particularly this business of making the emperor god.

So for these various reasons, and others like them, John was banished, because he was proclaiming the authority of the Word of God. That's what he means when he says that he's on this island of Patmos, "For the Word of God" (on account of the Word of God). He was there on account of the fact that he was saying, "There is an authority. This authority comes from God. God is out there beyond our material sphere. He has spoken, and He has given us a basis for judging the government of the Roman Empire. That was the thing that the Christians could never be forgiven for. That was the reason John was exiled. He was also in this exile, he says, because of his testimony about Jesus Christ, the Savior and King of Kings, because he was faithful to the testimony of who Christ was and what He had come to do. He was brought under the condemnation – the banishment of the emperor.

So let's have a little bit of isagogics. The word "isagogics," as you know, has to do with the background of the times, and the background of the situation in which a certain book of the Bible was written. When we know the background, we understand the book of the Bible better. So we need to know a little bit about the political background at the time that John wrote.

**The Flavian Dynasty**

When John wrote this book, the Roman emperor, who was at that time on the throne, was a man named Domitian. Domitian reigned from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D. Domitian was the last of a line of emperors called the Flavian dynasty. You students of ancient history will perhaps recognize that dynasty. This dynasty actually only had three emperors. Number one was Vespasian. He was the father. Vespasian had two sons. You will recognize the name of the older son: Titus. The younger son was Domitian. This whole dynasty actually ruled for only 27 years. It was not very long-term before this dynasty ended.

**Nero**

It had been preceded by the notorious Nero, who had burned Rome to the ground in order to give himself the elbow room that he needed to exercise the grandiose building projects that he had in mind, and for which he blamed the Christians. It was Nero who brought Christianity into the category of being an illegal religion. Therefore, anybody who practiced it was liable to the death penalty. On this basis, Nero was able to behead the apostle Paul. It is Nero who executed Paul. Nero reigned from about 54 A.D. to 68 A.D. So there was a little bit of a lag between Nero's reign and, finally, the time that the Flavian dynasty came into full power with Vespasian.

**Vespasian**

The father, Vespasian, was the man who began the siege against the Jews in Palestine, and who had successfully operated that campaign to the point where the Jews were restricted now in siege within the city of Jerusalem itself. Thousands upon thousands of Jews were being killed. Vespasian, in the midst of the campaign, and as the siege was mounting in intensity, received word from Rome that Nero was dead. There had been a little jockeying of power for taking the position of emperor. He was ordered back to Rome to take the position of emperor, which he did. So he turned over the campaign in Palestine against the Jews to his son, Titus. It was Titus who finished the campaign, as you know, in 70 A.D. He tore the city of Jerusalem apart; destroyed the temple; and, then carried all of the sacred objects from the temple. He also rounded up hundreds of Jews; transported them back to Rome; and, there having his great victory parade, as was their custom in that day.

The word had gone back of the great victory, and they prepared a reception. This consisted of Titus riding in the chariot before his troops. His troops were marching in full military array. Then, coming after them were the various items of the booty that they had captured – the various things that they had secured, such as things from the temple, and the other things that they had captured (the booty). Then following that came the people that had been taken captives (Jew upon Jew upon Jew), who were to be taken out and put upon the slave market block, and sold as slaves. You can go to Rome to this day and find carvings that depict (on Titus's victory arch in the city of Rome) his capture of the various things from the city of Jerusalem to parts of the temple (the instruments that were used in the temple worship), and the slaves (the captives) that he brought back.

**Domitian**

So this was a family that began in a very auspicious way, because they had a great military victory – one that had taken quite a while before the Jews were finally broken and then dispersed throughout the Roman world. Domitian, in time, followed Titus to the throne over the Roman Empire, and he became the emperor. Domitian himself was a very autocratic type of ruler, but he was also a very able ruler. One of the things he recognized, interestingly enough, was that part of the problems that were plaguing the Roman Empire was a problem of morality. Therefore, he tried to do something about public morals by, first of all, slamming down upon prostitution, and secondly, upon the licentiousness which was portrayed in the theaters. He recognized that people were being influenced by public entertainment, and the public entertainment, now in the Roman Empire, was extremely licentious. This was another reason the Christians were hated, because, again, the Christians came with their superior authority, a word from God outside of this world, and said, "That's wrong – what you're doing in public entertainment. The things that you are showing people is evil." And they condemned it.

Domitian was, in that respect, sympathetic with the Christian moral code, and he tried to do something about it. However, being an unbeliever, his old sin nature was fully operational, and he did not hesitate to be calculatingly and deliberately cruel, and he was noted for that. He had a deep desire for power, and one of the things that he desired very, very much was military glory. Obviously, he had seen his father and his brother enjoy a great deal of that. When he became emperor, he wanted the glory of victory, of combat. He deliberately sought that. He would commemorate some of his operations, which he had indeed. He did accomplish some great victories out in the outer fringes of the empire, out on the Rhine River where the Germanic barbarian tribes were threatening invasion of the empire. He had some great victories there on the Rhine against these Germanic tribes. One of the ways he commemorated them was to change the months of September and October to Germanicus and Domitianus. So that instead of seeing September and October as they had, they would say, when they came to those months, Germanicus and Domitianus, in order to commemorate his victories.

He was a very suspicious man. If he thought somebody was trying to muscle in and threaten his position as emperor, he didn't hesitate to have him executed immediately.

Interestingly enough, under Domitian, there was also a religious revival. Domitian not only saw that morality was a problem with the stability and the strength of the empire, as they had known it in the past, but he also sensed that there was a religious problem. People were not as religiously active, and not as devoted to the gods as they had been in the past. So Domitian proceeded systematically to revive the temples of the older gods, which had fallen into disuse, and to suppress outside religions which had come in, and which were prospering. After a military victory over a rebellious group in Africa, the Nasamones, the courtiers were so impressed by his victory on this occasion (and the poets were so impressed), that they began calling him master and god. They began addressing him as "Master and God Domitian." And Domitian liked the idea. This sounded good to him. So he proclaimed himself a god-monarch. Some of the people around him, seeking to flatter Domitian in his god-emperor role, actually made sacrifices to him. And he liked that. He thought that was a good idea.

Gradually the idea came into the mind of Domitian, "You know, the way to bring this nation together, and the way to bring this empire back together on a religious basis so that we all have a common anchor point religiously, which he felt was important, is to have a different kind of God than we've had in the past. Instead of these idol gods that our traditional mythology has told us about, why not have a living god and center him in the one who heads up the whole empire, the emperor himself? And why not recognize the emperor as god by bringing sacrifices to him? So consequently, oaths in public documents thereafter were sworn in on the basis of the genius of the living emperor-god. And Domitian made it a practice to require of everyone a sacrifice once a year to the emperor-god. This sacrifice was viewed as an expression of loyalty, and as an expression of allegiance to the Roman Empire; to the Roman government; and, to the emperor himself. It was an act of patriotism to make this sacrifice to the emperor-god, who was, at this time, Domitian himself.

If anybody refused to make this kind of a sacrifice, the charge of atheism was brought against the individual, and the charge of disloyalty to the emperor, and of being a traitor to Rome, was lodged against the person. This was, of course, punishable by execution (by death).

The god-monarch, Domitian, rose to such power under this arrangement, where he was looked upon as the living god that all the nation worshiped, that he actually didn't need a Roman Senate which had been so powerful in the past in Roman history. So he simply disbanded them, because his lust for power was so great that he could not tolerate any kind of legislative body above himself. He announced his rise to full deity status by the coins which he issued. The remains that we have, and the archeological discoveries of coins which were minted in Domitian's time, clearly declare that he was god-emperor. He became the focal point of trying to hold the empire together.

Domitian, however, found there was a certain group within his empire that strongly resisted this concept of patriotism being associated with a sacrifice to a god-emperor. That group, of course, was the Christians. The Christians would never say, "Lord Caesar." The Christians would never make a sacrifice to the emperor-god. Of course, among these was our man, John the apostle. Consequently, Domitian was the first Roman emperor who waged a systematic campaign of persecution against the Christians. Before that, there had been sporadic campaigns. Even under Nero, it was not an organized regular campaign against the Christians. It was for various reasons, on various occasions, to serve certain vested interests, and so on. Now Domitian made this a point of national policy – that Christians were to be persecuted. So he demanded that Christians worship the emperor-god by making this sacrifice; Christians refused to do so; and, Domitian proceeded to destroy them.

Please remember, again, that this was the reason that Christianity was persecuted in the Roman Empire. It was not because they worshipped Jesus. That was okay with Domitian. It was because they refused to worship the emperor-god as the genius of the nation, and as representing the spirit of Rome. It was a matter of patriotism.

So Nero had executed Peter and Paul simply because he considered them seditious Jews. But Domitian recognized that there was a greater threat than just the individual Christian. He recognized that Jesus Christ was the problem, and that these Christians, who were pledging loyalty to Christ because of that, refused to pledge loyalty to the emperor.

There were many other religions in the Roman Empire. These people had their own gods, and they pledged allegiance to their own gods. But they didn't mind pledging allegiance to an empire like Domitian at the same time. As long as they did that, everything was OK. But Domitian recognized that Jesus Christ was the fly in the ointment of his plan, and that anybody who had associations with Jesus Christ would not worship the genius of the emperor.

So he came to a really systematic, nationally-organized persecution against the Christians. By the end of his reign, however, he was feared by Romans; by Jews; and, by Christians alike. It's understandable that John, the last living apostle, should have come into conflict with this emperor on these very issues. Perhaps because John was so influential a leader, and because perhaps he was so widely-known (we don't really know why), Domitian did not execute the apostle John. Instead, he exiled him to the island of Patmos. In this way, he sought to neutralize this key leader in the Christian movement.

Well, in time, Domitian met the fate of so many emperors before him. He was assassinated. This ended the Flavian line of emperors. The new emperor, Nerva, rescinded all of the regulations of Domitian. Domitian was so hated and so despised by Romans, as well as by Jews and gentiles, because of his mounting brutality and because of his rejection and destruction of the Roman Senate, that after Domitian was assassinated, they just rescinded all of his regulations.

Well, that included the banishment of John the apostle. As a result of the death of Domitian and the rescinding of his orders, John was able to leave Patmos, and probably return to Ephesus, and perhaps even brought the book of the Revelation with him. Domitian died in 96 A.D. That's probably the year in which the book of Revelation was written. So, perhaps, shortly after the Revelation was written, God was ready for this book now to be transferred to these seven churches, and thus to all Christians everywhere throughout the empire, so the Lord then moved in, in His sovereignty, and He removed Domitian from the scene so that John could return and bring the book with him.

**Revelation 1:10**

That was the background of verse 9 in John's condition here on this island. Domitian, at this point in time, is in power, and John is under the exile decree. One day, one Sunday morning, he's sitting on that rocky shoreline of Patmos, and he's looking out there across the Aegean Sea. Verse 10 says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." The word "I was" is the Greek word "ginomai." "Ginomai" doesn't mean "was," but it means "to become something." John came into a certain condition, which we're going to see here in a moment, as that of being filled with the Spirit. It's in the aorist tense, which means it's at a point in time when John entered this condition of being filled with the Spirit. It's in the middle voice, but it has an active meaning, which means he had the status of being filled with the Spirit. That is, John had made confession of all known overt and mental sins. It's indicative voice – a statement of fact.

So he says, "I became in" (as the result of using the technique of the confession of sins). "In" is the Greek word "en," and that means "in the sphere of." Here, it means "under the control of" the Spirit. "Spirit" is the Greek word "pneuma" that we've had many times. "In the Spirit" here refers to God the Holy Spirit. The Greek does not say, "In *the* spirit, as the English does. It simply says, "Spirit," which stresses the quality of being related to the Holy Spirit in temporal fellowship. The reason it doesn't use the definite article is because it stresses the quality of spirituality.

Of course, this is the normal status at the point of worship. John perhaps sat down that Sunday in order to spend time in a personal worship service. He was all alone. There were probably no other believers with him on the island of Patmos. He was there, in a state of spirituality, with sins confessed, and therefore, in the state of being filled with the Spirit. His status of being filled with the Spirit, of course, was prerequisite to his being able to receive any divine viewpoint communication. What he is going to have is a vision type of communication which we don't have today anymore. But the kind of communication we get from the Word of God requires the same thing – that we be filled with the Spirit, or else God the Holy Spirit cannot teach us and He cannot direct us.

So John is in the status where he is ready and capable of receiving divine viewpoint information. We have this other times in the Scripture, where God has spoken to the writers (the authors) of the Bible, when they were in this kind of a status of spirituality. You may compare on your own Ezekiel 2:2 and Ezekiel 3:12-14. You may compare also Peter's experience in Acts 10:10-11, and Acts 11:5. You may compare this to Paul's experience in Acts 22:17-18. In all of these cases, the individual who's going to receive information was in a status of spirituality.

So when John says, "I had become in the Spirit on the Lord's day," he means, "I had come to the status of being filled with the Spirit." The word "Lord's day" is somewhat of a problem. The word "Lord's" is actually an adjective, "kuriakos." "Kuriakos" pertains to the Lord, or to a master. So we would perhaps translate this best as the "Lordian." It's an adjective. Here, of course, it refers to Jesus Christ who is the "kurios;" that is, He is *the* Lord, and the word implies deity. But the adjective "kuriakos" is "Lordian."

We can illustrate this use in 1 Corinthians 11:20. This is the only other place that we have it used in the Bible, where it is used again: "When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." And the word "Lord's" there is again this word "kuriakos," meaning the "Lordian" Supper, or "the Supper pertaining to the Lord."

So here in Revelation, John says that he was filled with the Spirit on the "Lord's day." That is the Greek word "hemera." This word "hemera" simply refers to a 24-hour period (the days of the week). He says that on a certain day that he calls "the Lord's Day," he was in a status of being filled with the spirit – on a day pertaining to the Lord. Well, in all likelihood, what he was referring to is the day that we call Sunday. In the New Testament church, Sunday had become the day on which the believers gathered for fellowship; for worship; and, for the study of the Word of God. The reason they did this was because Sunday was the day that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead. Also Sunday was the day that the church began, on the day of Pentecost.

It is true that the usual way in the New Testament to refer to Sunday is as "the first day of the week." When you find Sunday being spoken of in the Bible, it's under those words, "the first day of the week." We have this in Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Mark 16:9, Acts 20:7, and 1 Corinthians 16:2 – "the first day of the week." However, this seems to be a different reference to Sunday from that usual pattern.

The question, of course, is: could this possibly be referring to "the day of the Lord?" "The day of the Lord" is a technical term in Scripture that you have, for example, in 2 Peter 3:10, and it's a period of time in prophecy. The day of the Lord refers to the tribulation period plus the millennium. It's a very specific, identifiable period of time. It begins with a period of darkness and tribulation, the seven-year period, and then it ends with a period of light, the period of the 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth. The Old Testament prophets many times spoke about "the day of the Lord." Sometimes there might be some question whether John is referring here to the fact that his vision took him into "the day of the Lord," which it did, because the things that we are going to see in this book take place during the tribulation period, which is part of the era known as "the Day of the Lord." You can take either one. I'm inclined to think, myself, that what he was talking about here in the "Lord's day," the day pertaining to the Lord, and that it was Sunday, probably a Sunday morning that he was on that island in meditation and personal worship.

On that occasion, that particular Sunday morning, John, suddenly, as he's thinking about things of the Lord, hears something. The word "heard" is the Greek word "akouo." "Akouo" is the usual Greek word for hearing sounds with the ears. "Akouo" is used in two specific ways in Scripture. There is a little bit of grammar, but it's important so that you will understand specifically what he's saying he heard. If "akouo" has with it the accusative case (that is, the object of this verb is in the accusative case), then it's speaking about hearing intelligible sounds. Let me show you in Acts 22:9 which is one of the places that the critics think they have found a contradiction in the Bible. It's a contradiction only because they don't understand Greek grammar. This is concerning Paul's conversion experience: "And they that were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke to me."

Paul says that those who were with him did not hear the voice that he heard speaking to him from heaven. In this case, you have the word "akouo" with the accusative case, and what this denotes is intelligible sounds. What Paul is saying here is that he heard Jesus Christ speaking to him in words that he could understand, but the people who were around him (the soldiers and the others), while they heard a voice, they did not hear words that they could understand. They heard words, but they were not intelligible words to them.

We know that simply from the Greek grammar. Acts 22:9 says they heard sounds, but this voice they heard was not intelligible to them. But on the other hand, Acts 9:7 is where the critics think they have found a contradiction: "And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." Well, Acts 2 says they didn't hear a voice. Acts 9 says they did hear a voice. What's the explanation? Well, the explanation is that Acts 9 again uses this word for "hear," the word "akouo." But this time it has it with a different case; that is, it has it with the genitive case. And when it uses the genitive case, it means that they hear sounds without meaning. That is, these people heard a voice, but the genitive case here in Acts 9 tells us that they heard a sound, but it did not have intelligible meaning to them.

So actually both Acts 22:9 and Act 9:7 are saying the same thing. Acts 22:9 says they did not hear intelligible sounds. Acts 9:7 says the same thing. They heard a voice, but it was not intelligible to them. Acts 22 simply says (with a negative), they didn't hear intelligible sounds. Acts 9 says they heard unintelligible sounds, without using a negative. So Acts 9:7 says the bystanders heard a voice, with a genitive. It was unintelligible. Acts 22:9 says they did not hear a voice, with the accusative, meaning one that they understood, because it had a negative. There is no contradiction.

So what do we have here with "akouo" in Revelation 1:10? This same grammatical feature is going to tell us something important. Here we have accusative. Genitive means you cannot understand the words. Accusative means you can understand the words – they're intelligible. Well, in Revelation 1:10, we have the word "akouo" with this accusative case, so it means that John understood the words he heard. In other words, Revelation is a sermon preached by Jesus Christ to a congregation of one, the apostle John. When Jesus Christ spoke, John could understand what he was saying. God always speaks, I remind you, in words which are understood by those who are to receive that communication.

Only Satan, remember, communicates in gibberish, because Satan's purpose is to move the emotions, not to convey information. Because Satan wants to control emotions, and to move people on their emotions to perform his will, he does not need to convey intelligible information, and he doesn't. Now, that's very important, because the charismatic movement today is built upon the fact that God is speaking to them in unintelligible gibberish. You can search through the Bible, and you will discover that God never speaks in unintelligible sounds. So it's important here in Revelation 1:10, when John says, "I was filled with the Spirit (on Sunday morning, or Sunday afternoon, or whenever it was). And I heard intelligible sounds," because Christ is speaking to him here. He did not hear simply gibberish.

**A Trumpet**

He heard this behind him. This is the adverb "opiso." This is used to identify a location. Actually, this word means "back," and here it simply means that the sound came from behind John. What he heard he describes as a "great" (a "megas"). "Megas" is a word to denote intensity. What it means here is "loud." In other words, it was probably so loud that John was sitting there meditating upon the things of the Lord, and suddenly he hears a loud sound, and he calls it a voice again. This is the Greek word "phone." It is a human voice that he hears. Of course, what he heard was actually the voice of Jesus Christ. He heard a voice that was a loud sound, and John is trying to describe this. God the Holy Spirit leads him to select a musical instrument to describe exactly what happened to him. The musical instrument he describes is the trumpet. So you trumpeters, here's your instrument in Greek. It's a "salpigx." A "salpigx" is a musical instrument. It's the same one referred to, for example, in 1 Corinthians 14:8, where it speaks about a trumpet call in the military situation. If it does not give a clear sound, then the troops will not know what to do. Well, it's referring here to the "salpigx," a musical instrument.

John did not actually hear a trumpet trio playing behind him on Patmos. He didn't suddenly hear "If I Were a Rich Man" coming through as a trumpet trio. But he's sitting there thinking about the things of the Lord, and suddenly there is a blaring sound like the blast of a trumpet. I can just see John go, "Wow," and he falls off the rock that he was sitting on, and says, "What's going on here?" And he turns around immediately, because this was a voice, and you just have to imagine how thunderous and dramatic it was as the words came out and said, "What you see, write in the book, and send it unto the seven churches." And this was a big blaring dramatic voice. Well, it's like a trumpet suddenly blaring out at you. And that's exactly what he compares it to. Well, it scared him. I'm sure it did. And immediately he turned around.

Well, God has used trumpets many times in the past. We see that he used them at Sinai, Hebrews 12:19 tells us. God uses trumpets to dispatch angels in Matthew 24:31. God uses trumpets, as we shall see, at the execution of divine judgments in Revelation 8:2, Revelation 2:6, and Revelation 2:13. Of course, He's going to use a trumpet at the resurrection of the church believers in 1 Corinthians 15:5:2 and Thessalonians 4:16. One of the reasons I'm so happy we have a concert band here at our church is because all of you are well acquainted with what a trumpet sounds like, so that when you hear the trumpet at the rapture, you're going to know what it is. At least I hope you will. You may confuse it with Dennis Williams, but it will not be that. It will be the real thing, and you will know what is happening by other things that will accompany that trumpet blast.

So John hears this voice, and it says, "As of a trumpet;" that is, like the sound – the dramatic blare of a trumpet. Then verse 11 gives us his directives: "Saying." The word is "lego." This is the word for verbal communication. "Lego" is the word for saying something that stresses content. It doesn't mean simply words that were spoken, but it means what those words mean. Again, God the Holy Spirit uses a word to convey the idea that the meaning is what is important. When he says, "Say this," He means say it in such a way that people will understand. It is in the present tense. Christ continued talking to John. It's active. It is the voice of Jesus who speaks here with this word, "Saying." It's in the genitive case as a participle, so it connects it back here with this trumpet. This trumpet-like voice tells him to say something.

The words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and" are not in the Greek text. You can cross those out – that whole line: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." But it does have the words, "What you see." The word "see" is the Greek word "blepo." "Blepo" is the word for seeing specific details. It's not like that other Greek word "horao" which means to see in terms of a panoramic overview. "Blepo" means to look at the specific details. So again, John is being told that this vision he's going to see is going to have many, many important specific details, and he is to look at them as such so that he can report them in detail. So the study of the Revelation requires a study of details.

Then he tells him to, "Write." This is the Greek word "grapho." "Grapho" is a command to John to record his vision in detail on paper. This is the aorist tense which means at the point that he sees the vision he is to record it. It is active. John himself takes up the pen and parchment and does the writing. It's imperative. That's a command from God that he record this. It says to record it, "In a book." The word 'in" is the Greek word "eis" which means "into," and the word "book" is the Greek word from which we get "Bible:" "biblion." "Biblion" means a scroll or a roll, which is the way they made what we would call a book. Actually, "biblion" is a diminutive of "biblos." The "biblion" is that little diminutive. It has a kind of a connotation of preciousness. We use that with names. Instead of calling a boy James, we call him Jimmy, and instead of calling him John, we call him Johnny. Those are diminutives. They connote a certain affection. And even the Word of God has this little diminutive name here, which is "biblion."

Then after he writes it, he's given another direction, and that is that he is to send it. That's the Greek word "pempo." "Pempo" means to deliver something. Here it is the written record of John's vision. It's in the aorist tense, at the point that it's to be dispatched, which probably came when Domitian died and John was free to leave the island. It's active. John himself is responsible for sending this book – this revelation that he's going to write. Again, it's imperative. God commands him to deliver it. It is important to God that believers receive the information of Revelation. The people who are specifically to receive it are the seven churches. And, again, cross out the words "which are in Asia." That's true. That's where they were. But that's not in the Greek.

Then he names these seven churches that we have named before, these seven local churches, the "ekklesia." This is the word that means "the called out ones" from the mass of humanity. These are to receive these letters. Then it say, "to," and the word "to" is "eis," which means "into" or "unto;" that is, "within." The idea is within these cities. There were perhaps many homes in which churches met within each of these cities. The cities are these which we've mentioned before: Ephesus; Smyrna; Pergamos; Thyatira; Sardis; Philadelphia; and, Laodicea, and we will look at those in more detail later.

All of this brings us to a brief reminder that we have here, in the book of the Revelation, something that God himself has delivered. This is something that God himself has prepared and spoken to us. The way He did that is through the doctrine of inspiration. When John wrote the Revelation, the New Testament had not yet been completed. So the word for the books of the Bible that are Scripture, we call "canon. When we speak about the canon of Scripture, we're talking about the authorized 27 books of the New Testament, for example. These had not yet been completed, so the canon of Scripture was still open. Today, the canon of Scripture is closed. When Mormonism comes along and says, "We have another book from God to add to the sacred writings," they are mistaken. When Mohammedanism comes along and says, "We have another sacred book to add: the Koran," they are mistaken. The canon is now closed, and this was the last book.

John was qualified to write this particular book of Revelation as Scripture because he was an apostle. Everybody who wrote a book of the New Testament had to either be an apostle or closely related to an apostle to qualify for writing an inspired book. The author himself, of course, at the time, was not necessarily aware that he was writing a book which was inspired. The Holy Spirit guided John, as he wrote what he had seen and heard, so that this book of Revelation, like all the other books of the Bible, was written without any error. There was not a single error in the whole book. God has communicated information from His side to our realm here on this earth.

There are two passages of Scripture, on which we will not go in detail here. If you want to hear about this in greater detail, we have this on the doctrine of inspiration tapes in the basic series, and you may get those. The first important passage is 2 Timothy 3:16-17. That passage tells us that the contents of the entire Bible came to the writers from God. That is God breathed it out to them. So that is the idea of inspiration – God breathing information to the writers of the Bible. The other critical verse is 2 Peter 1:21 which reveals to us that the Bible authors were men who were carried along by the Spirit of God as they wrote, so that they would be preserved from error.

**Inspiration**

Here is the definition of inspiration. This is what we have read tonight – that John was producing an inspired book. Here is the definition that pretty well covers the idea of inspiration: "It is the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures without destroying their own individuality, literary style, or personal interests, as a result of which, these Scriptures possess divine authority and trustworthiness. And possessing such are free from all error in both words and thoughts."

**Verbal Plenary Inspiration**

What that definition is saying is that, without affecting the way a person normally spoke (the words he would normally use), God the Holy Spirit brought him information so that the thoughts were right. Then God led this man, out of his own vocabulary, to select words that exactly conveyed the meanings that God the Holy Spirit intended. For this reason, we say that the extent of inspiration is to the individual words, and equally to every portion of the Bible. That's called verbal plenary inspiration. It tells us what is inspired in the Bible – all of it. But it doesn't explain how God did it. So if you want to know the mechanics, I can't tell you that. I can tell you that it was not a mechanical dictation. It wasn't as if the author suddenly blanked out, and he just became a pen that wrote on paper as the Spirit of God took his hand and wrote this out. The writer probably was not even aware that God was leading him to be writing an inerrant sacred Scripture at the time.

The reason we follow an exegesis of the Scripture (that is, a word-by-word study) is because every word came under the direction of God the Holy Spirit. So there is real truth for us here in the book of the Revelation, because the doctrine of inspiration is covering these three verses. This is what these verses are describing to us – how God moved in and gave us His truth in a way that we could get it without any error mixed with it. And yet, if you could read the Greek New Testament, you would see that Revelation sounds just like the gospel of John. It was written by the man who had those particular qualities, and that particular style.

So this was the commission to John to write this book. This was the condition which surrounded him. Beginning next time, we'll actually turn with John, who has been somewhat startled by this trumpet-like voice. We will then see Jesus Christ in a very significant symbolic way.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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