

# NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

“The Messages of our glorious Lord, sent through the Apostle John and given to us in the symbols of the book of Revelation, are as truly the Savior’s messages as those uttered during his earthly ministry and those subsequently sent us through the apostles.

“The book of Revelation was written at a time when severe persecution was upon the infant church - near the close of the first century, probably A.D. 93-96, in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, though some date it nearly thirty years earlier, in the reign of Nero. No matter - in either case it was written at a time of special peril and severe persecution. For a time the Lord allowed the truth to become well planted and to take root; the gifts of miracles and other gifts in the church at that time assisted in this matter.

“For a time, although there were persecutions of individuals such as are recorded in Acts, the believers as a whole were not subjected to the severest of trials at first. It was when the truth began to spread, and had not only the enmity of the Jews, but also of the Greeks, that emperors and governors found favor with the masses by persecuting the followers of Jesus. And for aught we know, so it will be in the not far distant future. For a long time the pure truth has been hidden from men, and worldliness in the form of godliness has had the upper hand in influential circles; but doubtless, as the troublous times the Scriptures predict for the end of this age draw closer, those who will stand firm for the word of the Lord’s testimony may expect to be made the scapegoats under various pretexts. We shall not be surprised to find a considerable measure of persecution against all the children of the light, who will walk up to the light, developed within the next seven years. John, the beloved disciple, in some measure or degree typified or represented the last living members of the little flock. Doubtless this was the meaning of our Lord’s statement, ‘If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’ John did not tarry, but a class whom he in some respects illustrated are represented to tarry - a class who see with the eyes of their understanding the visions and revelations which John saw in symbols in a trance.

“John at the time of the trance vision was a prisoner, exiled to the Isle of Patmos, a penal colony of those days - an island almost uninhabitable, rocky, barren. The crime for which he suffered this banishment was his faithfulness as a mouthpiece of the Lord. At the time he must have been between sixty and ninety years of age, supposing that none of our Lord’s disciples were younger than himself at the beginning of his ministry. If his exile in any degree symbolized

ostracism, which the Lord’s followers may expect in the close of this age - a complete isolation from others and a treatment implying that they are prisoners - we may take comfort in the thought that as the Lord’s favor and revelations to John more than offset his persecutions, so the opening of the eyes of our understanding and the granting to us of greater lengths and breadths and heights and depths of knowledge and appreciation of our Lord and his plan will far more than offset the various experiences which in his providence he may permit to come upon us. His assurance is that all things shall work together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to his purpose. Whoever rests his faith securely upon his promise may indeed with the Apostle Paul count all tribulations as loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.” (R3568:3; 3569:1)

**1:1, 2** — “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants [Gr. *doulos* – bond servants; Siniatic MS., Saints] things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified [sign-ified] it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

The Revelation here referred to as “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” is not the revelation of Jesus himself, but the revelation by God of His eternal purposes as given to Jesus after he had proved himself worthy of it; i.e., not until he had fulfilled his consecration in death itself. This revelation is thus represented in “the book” (scroll) of Rev. 5:1, 2, 7-9.

“Jesus had not proven himself worthy of this great honor when he made his consecration, but when he had finished his course in death he was then worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. After his resurrection and ascension the scroll was given into his hands to be opened. **This means that the divine plan as a whole was here made known to him** - for he already had knowledge of much of this - but all things were given him to unloose. There had been some things that our Lord did not know. He had said, ‘Of that day and hour (of his second coming) knoweth no man; no, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but my Father only.’ (Mark 13:32) A part of the plan was written on the outside of the scroll, and a part was written on the inside. The things that were sealed were not proper to be understood by our Redeemer until he had received the all-power, after his resurrection. The execution of God’s plan was then given into his hands” (R5943:5)