

# Revelation of Jesus Christ - Part 2 of 10

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the profound implications of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the ultimate authority over all creation and the challenges faced by His followers in a world of competing powers.*

**Duration:** 48:17

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:17, Revelation 1:1-2, Revelation 1:9, Revelation 11:15

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the significance and importance of the book of Revelation. He states that it is not just a printed book, but a revelation of Jesus Christ and a settling of a long-standing issue. The speaker highlights the growth and impact of the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, which has reached into all nations. He also mentions the victory of Jesus and the downfall of the Roman Empire as prophesied in the vision of a stone cut without hand. The sermon encourages the audience to recognize the tremendous business at hand and the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation.

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## Transcript

Quite a large number of you were not with us this morning. The word then was foundational to what the Lord has given me for this conference. I will do my best without wearying those who are present with a repetition to help you all into the message.

We are occupied with the revelation of Jesus Christ. Or the word can be changed and retain the same meaning, the unveiling of Jesus Christ. I think it is impossible to take up this book which has that as its title and begin to read without very early in our reading becoming aware that a tremendous piece of business is on hand.

The impression that very quickly begins to take hold of us is we are in the settling of some big issue. We are faced with some tremendous and momentous decision. Everything here says now a long outstanding question is going to be answered.

A long standing issue is going to be settled. Time has come when what has been a matter of controversy and conflict for a very long time is going to be headed up and settled. Surely that is what ought to be the impression as we begin to read.

Anybody who can take up this book and begin at the first chapter and even in the first words and just read it as something printed without becoming aware that there is something tremendous involved and in view surely has missed the whole meaning and value. Of the book. And that is just what the book is all about.

It is the settling of this controversy which has gone on through the ages. This answering of the question. This concluding of the whole matter.

And writing forever and ever finished to one face. And that matter, that issue, that controversy, that question is just who is going to govern this universe throughout the ages of the ages. Who is going to govern? That has been a matter of contention through thousands of years from the creation.

All history has circled round that matter, that question. Now says this book we are going to settle it once and for all. And when you have really got hold of that you have got the key to the book.

And to everything that is in it. It will interpret all that is in this book. Much as we said this morning that is difficult to understand in itself.

Almost bewildering in its detail and the manner and form of its presentation. But as you go on you say now what does that mean? Well in some way that relates to this ultimate and consummate issue. Government of this universe as God intended when he created it.

The issue is now is come the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. The climax of history. Well now that helps you right into where we were this morning with a great deal of detail.

And we proceed from that and with that. We are going to look into the part of the first chapter we read earlier. And work right to this very matter we have mentioned.

Notice begins with the revelation of Jesus Christ. That's grand, that's fine. All that is coming subsequently.

The warfare and the welter of kingdoms and nations. All the manifold movements comes back to this. All right.

The revelation of Jesus Christ that stands over it all is the answer of it all. The unveiling of Jesus Christ. How he stands related to everything in this universe.

It is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Same word here as Paul used in his prayer in the letter to the Ephesians. He would grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

Spirit of revelation. Unveiling in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. That's what it is.

And this unveiling of revelation is here said to have been something that God gave to his son. Needs a good deal of perhaps imagination. Quite thought to grasp the significance of these statements.

But here in the language of men it is said that God let his son see his place in relation to all the consummatory movements and activities of the ages. Where he stands as the ages are brought to their culmination and their consummation. Father God gives to his son to see his place in it all.

Which he showed or gave to his son. And then it goes on to show to his bondservants. That is general, not particular.

Not just to apostles. Not to some special people. Just to his bondservants.

You and I come into that category. The bondservants or bondslaves of Jesus Christ. This unveiling is given by God to the son through an angel to John for us.

Point is that any true servant of God ought to be acquainted with all that appertains to the purpose of God in Christ Jesus. And he sent and signified it to his bondservant John. Notice the title John gives to himself.

He does not say John the apostle of Jesus Christ. He calls himself the bondservant and then in verse 9 he says I John your brother. John always speaks on the family basis and level.

Brings himself into very close relationship with those to whom he writes as a member of the family. Brings them right in. Not on official ground.

But on the ground of life. We are in this with John. That is what John is saying.

We are in this with him on the very basis of family life. I John your brother. Brother.

In the isle, it is called Patmos. For the testimony of Jesus he says. For the testimony of Jesus.

And being there I am your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus. Be patient as we work on through these details. In the isle.

Patmos. For the testimony of Jesus. Partaker with you in the tribulation, kingdom and patience in Jesus.

Now the question at once arises. This gets us very near to the heart of the whole matter. Why was John in Patmos? Because he says for the testimony of Jesus.

That is not very enlightening. The question is a bigger one than that. Why was John in Patmos and being in Patmos in the tribulation that is in Jesus? And the answer to that question is in this whole book.

It takes the whole book really to answer that question. And may I say here by way of parenthesis. Incidentally the answer may account for the tremendous battle that has raged over this book.

You know or you may not know the very great battle raged over the admission of this book into the canon of the scriptures. Oh what a battle. To have it bound up in the divine library.

To allow it to be included in the bible. Real big battle raged over that. But at last the battle was won for its inclusion.

I take that as having some significance. But then what a battle over the book since it's been in. Pointed out this morning the many diverse schools of interpretation.

The controversy that has raged over this book through the centuries. The confusion that has been brought about by the way in which the book has been handled. All the divisions that have sprung up.

And there is no end to them. Only about a year or so. A year or 18 months ago a new division sprang up in America over this very book.

A fresh split on its interpretation. And they are fighting there at one another's throats. About this quite minor point of interpretation.

But there it is. What does it mean? I say that there is an explanation to all that. It is not just.

The answer to our question I think may be the explanation of that long drawn out controversy around this book. The answer then to why was John in Patmos is in the first place found in that which obtained in the world at that time in the form of emperor worship. Some of you will know that the Roman Caesars claimed to be divine.

And therefore they claimed human worship. Somebody has said they posed as gods and did the work of the devil. That's significant.

Julius Caesar was worshipped. Octavius was called Augustus, reverend. Caligula demanded that his image should be put up in the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem.

He was killed before he was able to do it. That carries some significance. And this emperor under whom we believe John was exiled to Patmos, the Mishian, was called, actually called, our Lord and God.

They usurped the place of God. They claimed the worship of man. They took to themselves deity.

So, the issue is clear. There is no mistaking it. It is Caesar or Christ.

For the apostolic proclamation everywhere was, without any mistaking it, Jesus Christ is Lord. That's the testimony of Jesus for which John was sent to Patmos. The issue is clear cut.

Quite clear cut. It's a very significant thing that the Jews were dealt with comparatively leniently with the Christians. They did suffer under Rome, but they suffered nothing like the sufferings of the Christians.

I say that's significant. They had crucified the Lord of Glory. Therefore the devil is not so much concerned about them, but these people.

These people who will have no compromise on this matter, the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ as God, as the Son of God. There can be no reconciling of Caesar and Christ. Christ and Caesar.

That's the issue. And dear friends, when John says, in the tribulation in Christ. The implication is that the tribulation or the suffering is always proportionate to the place that you give the Lord Jesus.

If you give him a second or a third place, well you'll have a comparatively easy time. Put him where God has put him. Make him Lord of all and of everything.

And you're in for tribulation. In for tribulation. So it was with John.

All this surely is gathered up into the very title. Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth. Say that in the face of the Caesars.

The ruler of the kings of the earth. You're in for it. You're in for it.

When you realize what store the Caesars set by their divine prerogative. The ruler of the kings of the earth, Jesus. Jesus Christ.

You and I, dear friends, never realize the implication of that title. You know that Christ is only the Greek for the Hebrew Messiah. The whole conception, birth of the Hebrew and the Greek Messiah and Christ was his kingship.

Anointed, anointed. Christos, the anointed of God. And that anointed meant nothing less than absolute rulership, supremacy.

To speak that name, Jesus, the anointed, Jesus, the Messiah, is at once to throw a trowel at that whole empire of the Caesars. No wonder the apostles said that no man can call Jesus Christ but by the Holy Ghost. They knew it.

You've wondered what that means because you can all call Jesus Christ. Flippantly easily say Jesus Christ. But go into that realm.

Live in that day. And it would be the most terrifying thing to publicly say Jesus of Nazareth is the anointed of God to be the ruler of the kings of the earth. You need the Holy Ghost to make you bold enough to say that.

And dear friends, that is not so remote in the past. There are many, many today who are afraid, so to speak, of him. And afraid for their lives.

You go into fanatical Mohammedan countries and proclaim Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. You do it with your life in your hand. You need the Holy Ghost for that boldness.

Well, you see, here we are right at the heart of this thing. Jesus Christ. The faithful and true witness.

That word witness, as you probably know, is the same word as martyr. Martyr. The faithful martyr.

All right, John's in good company. Jesus Christ, the faithful martyr. The faithful and true witness.

It cost him his life to stand for his kingdom. It cost him his life at the hands of every devil-inspired instrument that knew the issue. Knew the issue.

The issue of that man was nothing less than the dominion of this world. And the devil knew it. So he would say, you're of your father, the devil.

He was a murderer from the beginning. They murdered the Prince of Life. On this one matter, his place in the eternal counsels of God.

As Lord, as King. Firstborn from the dead. I have something more to say about that shortly.

The ruler of the kings of the earth. Well, these titles just set forth the stages of his progress to the throne. Faithful martyr.

That was the way of the cross. Firstborn from the dead. The way of the divine vindication.

Ruler of the kings of the earth. That is the glorious end of the cross and the resurrection. Ruler.

Ruler of the kings of the earth. Satan. Who knew him? Satan's agents and fires betrayed their knowledge of him when they, the demons, said, I know thee whom thou art, the Holy One of God.

Satan knew him and knew his divine destiny. And so he took him up into a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof. And said, all this will I give thee if thou wilt.

Now here we are. Back on this thing. Worship me.

Worship. Where worship is to be. You see, here's the Caesars again.

Worship me. Jesus refused that dominion at the hand of Satan and took it by the cross. And here, this book sees him in possession of it.

The ruler of the kings of the earth. If you have any question about that by reason of the seeming power of world rulers in our time, power of world systems, how they do afflict the church and the saints. Read the book of the Acts again and you will see in that book the ruler of the kings of the earth wielding his power.

A herald learned something of that and others. We know now, we know now that this wonderful book of the revelation of Jesus Christ has been fulfilled in a very large degree the very empire that denied him his place and lordship and set itself to destroy every trace of his kingship has gone to dust. Daniel has a very, very real place here, hasn't he? You remember then the vision and the fourth kingdom of iron, which undoubtedly was the Roman Empire.

And in the days when that kingdom has been reached from Babylon onward, in the days when the Roman Empire has come into being, the vision goes on. And I think we've lost a good deal of the real point of that vision. The God of heaven, the God of heaven produces a kingdom.

I saw, I saw in the vision a stone cut without hands. Hold, I would like to dwell upon that for half an hour. A stone cut without hands and it smoked the image.

And the image, by that smiting, crumbled to dust. The stone itself rolled on as it rolled, gathering momentum. It gathered volume until it filled the whole earth.

Well, we're in the, in that, we're in that. This empire which set itself up against the Lord and his Christ was smitten by that stone cut without hands. And it has crumbled to dust, there's no doubt about it, it's literally fulfilled.

But the stone, the stone of this other kingdom of our Lord and his Christ has gone on gathering momentum and gathering volume as it has gone on, reaching into all the nations. Well, that perhaps doesn't stir you very much, it's so commonplace you know it. But here we are.

The ruler of the kings, Advia, he came to that position through the suffering of death. For the time being, as I have said, I'm leaving out that section which gives us the revelation of Jesus Christ in person. We'll come to that again perhaps.

Here let us note that we are now introduced at this point to two things. Firstly, his victory, his victory. And that can be summed up in two or three verses.

I am the first and the last, the living one. I became dead. Behold I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death and of Hades.

That's his victory. The other is his character, which we shall reserve for another time. Just a few minutes on this, his victory.

I am the first and the last. That's victory in a statement by itself. And it's important to recognize the significance, the particular significance of the use of that title in relation to this book.

Here we are at the end, at the consummation of everything. Now we have come to the culmination of all things. And he declares, I was the beginning of all things.

Go back to Paul's letter to the Galatians, aren't we? For that, in him, through him, unto him, were all things created. Go back to Paul's letter to the Galatians, aren't we? For that, in him, through him, unto him, were all things created. Things in heaven, things in earth.

He is before all things. I am the first. As I was at the beginning and as I was the beginning of all things, I am the last.

I am the end. The end corresponds to the beginning. It's no other.

It's no other than himself. I am the first and the last. That's a tremendous statement.

I am simply gathering up all things into my hands. All things in the end are with me. Everything has got to answer to me at the end.

In all things, he has the preeminence. I am the living one. I became dead.

Now, I want to say a word about that way of expressing in a minute, but let's stop again. I am the living one. I became dead.

I am alive unto the ages of the ages. There was a reason why the Lord Jesus said that. You know, Nero, under whom the apostle Paul suffered and was executed, was regarded as perhaps the most ferocious of all the Caesars up to his time.

But there was one who exceeded him, and that was the one under whom John suffered. This Caesar, the Mincian. Do you know what was said about him? This Caesar was said to be Nero, come back from the dead.

He was called Nero, Nero survived. Raised from the dead, back again, to carry on his nefarious work. John is suffering under the one who is said to have died and risen again.

Jesus takes hold of that. Rides hold of it. Says, I am the living one.

I became dead. I am alive, not for a human tenure, but unto the ages of the ages. So we can accumulate all this data, material, on this one great issue.

The absolute supremacy of the Lord Jesus. I am the living one. I became dead.

Note, that's really the correct translation. And he did not say, I was killed. I was murdered.

I was slain. I was put to death. He had already in his lifetime said, no man taketh it from me.

I lay it down of myself, mine own self. This, this authority have I received from my father. Today, as we think of all those movements toward the cross, we can so clearly see through men.

And their counsels and decisions, and we can see that the thing is in his hands. He is dictating how it shall be and when it shall be. They are saying, not this, and he is saying, yes, this.

Not on the Passover. He says, yes, on the Passover. He is dictating his own death, its time, and its manner.

It's in his hands. Not they took away my life. I laid it down, mine own course.

I became dead. I became dead. Why? There's another great question.

Arise it at once. Why did he himself deliberately of his own accord, by his own decision, go into death? Well, the letter to the Hebrews throws a lot of light upon it, doesn't it? That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And might deliver all those who all their lifetime were in bondage through fear of death.

He tasted death in the behalf of every man. That's why he became dead. But here it is.

Here it is. In this beautiful statement here, unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom and priests unto his God and Father. That's why he became dead.

This mighty us. This mighty us. Who loveth us.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it. Who loveth us. Who loosed us.

He might redeem us from all iniquity. Who made us kingdom and priests unto his God and Father. That's why he became dead of his own choice.

For us. For you. For me.

For his church. For the mighty us. There it is.

That's the answer. Christ loved. Christ loosed.

From death and alive. Became dead and alive. To deliver us from death.

Death is the sum total of all human sin. Death is the sum of all Satan's power. Death is the sum of Satan's kingdom.

He plunged in his imperial strength. To gulfs of darkness down. He brought his trophy up at length.

The foiled usurper's crown. That's why he became dead. To do that.

That's the answer. And. I have the keys of death.

And of Hades. Of course keys are authority. We know that.

Authority over death and of Hades. Jesus has said. Upon this rock I will build my church.

The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I have the keys of Hades. What is that? For all their lifetime.

In bondage through fear of death. Bondage through fear of Hades. He has plundered Hades.

He has broken its gates and its bars. He has snatched the keys from the usurper. And wears them at his own girdle.

And his church is delivered from that bondage of fear. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. This is all tremendous.

But you see. You've got to place the cross over this whole book. The cross stands over everything in this book.

Because it's the book of the lordship of Jesus Christ in every realm. And therefore it is the book of the Lamb in the throne. In the throne.

The cross is the explanation of everything. Well. I trust you catch a vision.

The revelation of Jesus Christ. In this which comprehends all that follows. And all that with which you and I have to do, dear friends.

I said this morning. This is the book which is introduced or in its very introduction. Tells us that there's a blessing attached to it.

What blessing do you want and do I want? What is the greatest blessing that can come to our hearts? It would be to realize the glorious triumphant issue of this long, long drawn out battle in which we are. How it's going to end and to realize it's going to end in glory. In glory.

It's going to end with us. With Christ in the throne. To realize it.

Not just to be informed. It doesn't have enough weight with us to be told about it. But oh, if it could come as a revelation to us as it came to John.

Impatience. Intimidation. Impatience.

Suffering. Because of this same issue we have made Jesus Lord. We have put him in his place.

We have no other Lord. All things for us are subject to him. He is over all.

And that brings, whether word persecution or not, it brings spiritual conflict. It brings tribulation into the life. It touches us everywhere.

In our families and our homes and our businesses. And everywhere this thing is touching us. If only, if only we would let go of something.

Make some compromise. Let down our standards. Not be so utter.

For Christ we have an easier time. It is possible. You can.

You can for the time being. But you cast away your crown. That is it.

But to realize that in the tribulation and the patience. The suffering and the conflict. The pressure.

The issue. The issue is absolutely certain. Jesus is coming out on top.

And we are coming out with him. If that could really come into our hearts. The greatest blessing that could come to us.

It would explain so much. It really would explain so much. All the problems and enigmas of our lives.

All those things which come because of our relationship to this one. Which God's destined heir of the universe. That provokes quite a lot.

I say this is the blessing of this book. To know that. Not just to understand all its mysteries and symbols but to know that.

That he is Lord. And that nothing can alter that. And Lord give us that blessing in our hearts.

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