

God's Final Say on Scripture

Revelation 1.1–11

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • June 6, In the year of our Lord, 2016

Prelude:

I. It is written that God said to Joshua, as the Lord prepared Joshua

- A. to lead Israel into the Land of Canaan and
- B. to lead them in seven years of wars to conquer the Land,

7 “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Jos 1.7–8).

II. After they entered the Land, but

- A. before they began the elimination of the wicked Canaanites,
- B. Joshua did something extremely important,

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them (Jos 8.34–35).

III. The psalmist set the stage

- A. for the Book of Psalms and
- B. for the rest of the Bible,

**1 Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,**

And in His law he meditates day and night.
(Psa 1.1–2)

IV. Therefore, we cannot ignore the last Book of the Bible, because

- A. the Book of Revelation is the word of God, and
- B. Christians must know what it says;
 - 1. they should want to know what it says, for
 - 2. it has a powerful message for us.

Persuasion:

I. God Has the Ultimate Say

- A. God has the first say.
 - 1. God has the last say.
 - 2. In between, man tries to have the final say, but
 - a) it always ends in failure, because

**23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.
(Jer 10.23)**

- b) Invariably man chooses the way that leads to harm,

**25 There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.
(Pro 16.25)**

- B. So then we have to listen to God, but...

II. Do We Hear God?

- A. What happens when you take the spoken word and
 - 1. make it the written the word?
 - a) Something is lost;
 - b) something is gained.

2. We lose

- a) the tone of voice,
- b) the expressions of the face, and
- c) the face to face encounter.

3. We gain

- a) the ability to go over the written word repeatedly,
- b) the possibility of memorizing the text, and
- c) the mobility of having it with us wherever we go.

B. However, it can also become something

- 1. that we just analyze and study, hence
- 2. do not take seriously,
 - a) except as an academic quest.
 - b) Doing such makes us feel good, but
 - (1) does not get us closer to God, because
 - (2) we have to do what He says,

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt 7.21).

C. Therefore, when we open God's Final Say on Scripture,

- 1. the Book of Revelation,
- 2. we do well to pay attention to the opening blessing,

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near (Rev 1.3).

- a) In the Bible, “keep” not only means to guard and possess, but
- b) to do what the writing, the commandment, or the teaching says to do.

D. When you read God's Finale,

1. keep in my mind what the written word is.
2. The word, whether spoken or written,
 - a) allows one heart to connect with another heart.
 - b) When we read the Book of Revelation,
 - (1) God pours the rest of His heart into our hearts
 - (2) that we might see what He wants us to see.
 - (a) We read that written account and
 - (b) our hearts link with God's.

E. Think of it this way.

1. You gave a card to someone you love for his or her birthday.
 - a) You liked the artwork on the card.
 - b) You especially liked what it said.
2. However, you knew that you wanted to add your personal touch.
 - a) So you wrote a personal note,
 - b) telling that person what he means to you.
3. Then you gave him the card and
 - a) watched him open it, and then
 - b) he read the words of the card, and finally
 - (1) he read your personal note.
 - (2) What did you think and feel as you watched your loved one read?
 - (a) God gave His last card to us, the Book of Revelation.
 - (b) He watches you read His personal note to you.
 - i) How does it affect you to know that He watches you read?
 - ii) What do you think of what He says to you?

III. Hear God's Final Say on Scripture

A. John wrote the Revelation and then

1. Jesus wanted him to send it to seven churches in modern Turkey.
2. Since they would all be receiving it for the first time,
 - a) Revelation 1.3 pronounces a blessing upon:
 - (1) the one who read it publicly,
 - (2) those who heard the public reading, and
 - (3) those who kept the words of the Book of Revelation.
 - b) If you had been a member of one of those churches and
 - (1) you heard the report that John,
 - (a) the last living apostle,
 - (2) had received a vision from God and
 - (a) the apostle wrote it down, and
 - (b) this coming Lord's Day you could hear someone read it.

B. How would you hear?

1. You would listen like lovers listen to one another.
2. You would receive it personally.
3. You would remain in a state of awe for a long time.

IV. See God's Final Say on Scripture

A. By yourself you worship in the Spirit, because

1. your government has exiled you to an island.
2. Suddenly this happens,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet... (Rev 1.10).

- a) The voice identifies himself and
- b) tells you what he wants you to do,

11 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea” (Rev 1.11).

B. What is the first thing you do?

1. You do what John did,

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me... (Rev 1.12).

2. Then the ears and eyes of John synched together.

a) What magnificent sights and sounds he then experienced!

b) Read Revelation thoughtfully, and see and hear as John did.

V. Smell God's Final Say on Scripture

A. John could even smell something during one part of the Revelation,

3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand (Rev 8.3–4).

B. Even as we enjoy the pleasant aroma of incense,

C. so God enjoys the prayers of His people.

VI. Taste God's Final Say on Scripture

A. To the church at Laodicea, Jesus said,

16 “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Rev 3.16).

B. John ate a little book that an angel gave him,

10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth... (Rev 10.10).

C. Babylon would experience the wine of the wrath of God,

6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her (Rev 18.6).

D. John saw a wedding feast in heaven,

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God" (Rev 19.9).

E. See how the Book of Revelation activates your senses?

VII. More Than Just an Intellectual Pursuit

A. Reading the Book of Revelation is more than an intellectual pursuit, but

1. the Lord wants you to have a total body experience.
2. See that the Book of Revelation is not
 - a) one man's idea on God, but
 - b) God's final message to us, and He wants it to affect your total person.

B. Remember how Revelation starts,

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev 1.8).

C. Also, come to know how it ends,

13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev 22.13).

D. God identifies Himself as the Alpha and the Omega,

1. the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet,
2. as if He said, He is the A and the Z.
 - a) However, not only the Alpha and the Omega, not only the A and the Z,

- b) He is all the letters in between, for
 - (1) He uses them all to speak to us.
 - (2) God is the Alpha, the Beta, the Gamma, and the rest of the Greek alphabet.
 - (3) God is the A, the B, the C, and the rest of the English alphabet.
- E. According to one writer (Eugene Petersen),
 - 1. the Book of Revelation has 404 verses and
 - 2. 518 references to the rest of Scripture,
 - a) both Old and New Testaments, especially the Old, yet,
 - b) not one direct quotation.
 - (1) Therefore, if you do not, in the words of Revelation 1.3,
 - (2) read, hear, and keep all the other parts of the Bible,
 - (a) do not expect to understand the one that completes them all.
 - (b) More specifically, you have to know the Books of
 - i) Exodus,
 - ii) Psalms,
 - iii) Ezekiel,
 - iv) Daniel,
 - v) Zechariah, and
 - vi) the Gospel Accounts.
 - 3. Therefore, even as you cannot read the New Testament
 - a) in isolation from the Old Testament, so
 - b) you cannot read the Book of Revelation in isolation
 - (1) from the previous 65 Books.
 - (2) And why would you want to anyway?
- F. We seek to use Scripture or Revelation as we desire, but

1. it uses us and
2. makes us fall down before the God of all creation and of heaven!
 - a) Do not use Revelation to increase your knowledge, but
 - b) read it to listen to God and
 - (1) see that He runs the show and
 - (2) He knows how it all ends, and
 - (a) it ends in favor of His people.
 - (b) Are you one of His people?

Exhortation:

I. Turn from the world,

- A. which Revelation shows has an end, and
- B. become part of the people who are headed for heaven.

II. Here is what you must do...