**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Jesus’ Knocking**

**Revelation 3:20**

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

September 24th In the Year of Our Lord 2023

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

 **Revelation 3:20** simply states. . . 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

 Witnessing this verse to a person who is not a Christian or who is unfamiliar with the Bible is both revelatory and, at the same time, can bring to mind a number of questions.

 There are obvious symbolisms used in this verse bringing spiritually rich meaning and questions to all of us. . . to all people, in all times.

 Who is the “I”? . . . Who is standing at the door and knocking?

 To whom is the “I” speaking?

What kind of door. . . is the door physical or spiritual?

 Can people hear God?

 From the time of the Resurrection. .

.does Jesus have a voice we can hear?

 Can we choose to open the door?

 If Jesus is God. . . then why does He not just open the door?

 Are people in a life-presence-state to participate with God?

 Can people be in God’s spiritual presence?

 What does “will dine with” mean?

 We can add to this list but we do not have time to respond to all of these questions. However, in this sermon, we will reflect on all of them.

 In preparation to understanding Revelation 3:20, which is in the last book of the Bible, we first need to read the previous 65 books. Ok, I mean. . .not this morning. But it would help to give some biblical context to the words Jesus Christ directed the Apostle John to write. Laodicea is the last of seven churches addressed by Jesus.



**Revelation 3:14- 22**

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness,

the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"

and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich,

and white garments so that you may clothe yourself,

and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed;

and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

 19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.

 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock;

 if anyone hears My voice

and opens the door,

I will come in to him

and will dine with him,

and he with Me.

 21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne,

 as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

 Now that we have read the Scripture. . . let us first understand the immediate life-context of the Apostle John’s writing in the book of Revelation. The broadest scholarly consensus is that the Apostle John wrote for God in the last decade of his life in the first century (90’s). John was the last remaining Apostle who walked with Jesus. John’s life experiences with Jesus were sixty plus years prior. It is most fitting that God inspired him to write during the last years of his life. Throughout history, the prevailing view is that the Apostle John wrote five (5) of the twenty-seven (27) books of the New Testament (Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John and the book of Revelation).

**Who was John to Jesus? John was one of the original twelve Disciples.**

Scripture chronicles the relationship Jesus had with John.

**Mark 3:16-19**

16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder ");

18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

**Mark 5:37**

And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

**Galatians 2:9**

and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

**John 19-26-27**

26 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

**What is in the name of the New Testament Book titled “Revelation”?**

Regardless of modern-day profiteering in selling books about “Dooms-Day” that plays off the Greek word “Apocalypse” used in Revelation 1:1. . . the biblical intent of Jesus’ witness to the whole world is to “unveil/uncover” His will and testimony to the seven churches in Asia that represent all churches throughout history. So, the word “apocalypse” does not directly mean the looming and threatening of human destruction or final doom.

With this said. . . within Jesus’ witness and prophecy that is unveiled to the Apostle John, there is a view on how, and to some degree when, this current temporal world will come to an end. The study of End-Times is called “eschatology” from the Greek word “eschaton” which mean “lasts things.” Within the study of last things there are revelations of judgement and fallen man’s rebellious acts against God and how God responds to evil. These rebellious acts against God’s eternal judgement are what bring about destruction to fallen life (sin and death) on earth. End times are only destructive for those rebellious evil hearts who have freely chosen to be consumed by sin and death.

At the end of these Temporal End Times. . . John sees *“a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea”* (Revelation 21:1).

Therefore, the end result, of Jesus’ unveiling prophecy to the Apostle John, is not the forecasting of doom for all of humanity. . . but the ultimate fulfillment of God’s will and desire for all people to be united with Him forever in His heaven. This comes true for those who have freely chosen to surrender their heart to God. The book of Revelation is the “The revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1).

**Revelation: Strong’s 602 ἀποκάλυψις apokalupsis;**

 Meaning: an uncovering

Usage: revealed (1), revealing (1), revelation (14), revelations (2).

Notes: a Joh 17:8; Rev 5:7; b Rev 22:6; c Dan 2:28f; Rev 1:19; d Rev 17:1; Rev 19:9f; Rev 21:9; Rev 22:16; e Rev 1:4, Rev 1:9; Rev 22:8

 Now, to receive a view to the life-situation of the Apostle John, we read Scripture. Remember, John had been banished to the island of Patmos due to his witness for Christ. He was alone and did not know if he would ever be released.

**Revelation 1:9**

John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Now we read John’s witness and testimony to the eternal will and intent from Jesus Christ in **Revelation 1:9-20.**

9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

 17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

 19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

 20 "As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

**We can now more accurately reflect on Revelation 3:20. . .**

**. . . *Jesus knocks on everyone’s door.***

To start with, due to the biblical witness and my life-experience. . . I believe, I see that all of humanity, that is every person who has ever lived, has had. . . and will have, an opportunity to respond to God’s/Jesus Christ’s/Holy Spirit’s constant and ever-present reaching-out to them. Jesus commissioned His disciples in John 20:19-22, in a very unique way, by breathing His Holy Spirit into them. This is the one-event in human history where God, as the resurrected Jesus Christ, demonstrates that He desires for His Holy Spirit to indwell us. . . and thereby, empowering us to fulfill His Great Commission. Through the disciple’s witness. . . Jesus is knocking on everyone’s heart-door. All Believers are disciples of Jesus who have the same great commissioning.

**Isaiah 53:1** puts forth the eternal question. . . “Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” About seven-hundred years later, the Apostle Paul, for one, does provide the answer in Romans 1 and 10. And we are to note. . . that in Paul’s letter to the Believers in Rome, he quotes from God’s prophets, being Joel, Isaiah, Nahum, Moses and David. All these witnesses represent God’s testimony from the time God asked Moses to write down the first Scripture in the mid-15th century B.C. Therefore, we have more than one-thousand years, make that almost fifteen-hundred (1500) years, a millennium and one-half, of God’s written revelation before Paul lives.

**Romans 1: 19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

 Paul puts forth the question specifically to the Jews and to the whole world in

 **Romans 10:13-21**. . .

13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Joel 2:32)

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written,

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING

GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" (Isaiah 52:7, Nahum 1:15)

 16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says,

"LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" (Isaiah 53:1)

 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

 18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

"THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,

AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." (Psalm 19:4)

 19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,

"I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.”(Deut. 32:21)

 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, (Isaiah 65:1)

"I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME,

I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME." 21 But as for Israel He says, (Isaiah 65:2)

"ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS

TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."

**Did John write after Paul wrote to the Believers in Rome?**

Paul was martyred by 68 A.D. in Rome. John wrote the Revelation of Jesus Christ in about 95 A.D.

**Were Paul’s letters received as Scripture by John and the 1st century Church?**

2 Peter 3 provides critical insight to how Paul’s letters were received as Scripture within the Christian community.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:14-16)

**Did John and Paul ever meet?**

Biblical scholars have accomplished revealing work to answer this question. We know that John and Paul were both at the Jerusalem conference chronicled in Galatians 2:9. Here is an online source (Bible Hermeneutics StackExchange): https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/28799/what-evidence-is-there-the-writer-of-revelation-was-aware-of-the-apostle-paul

Exegetical Evidence: Dave Gifford on his blog listed six parallels in Revelation to Paul's writings (which he notes he got from "William Hendriksen, More Than Conquerors. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986]").1 Those six are:

**Revelation 1.5** and Colossians 1.18 both refer to Jesus as the “firstborn from the dead” in contexts that speak of his rule.

**Revelation 3.3** and 16.15 say that Jesus will come like a thief. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5.2 and 5.4 say that the day of the Lord will come “like a thief in the night.”

**Revelation 3.12, 21.2 and 21.10** refer to a new Jerusalem that descends from heaven. Galatians 4.26 refers to “the Jerusalem that is above”.

**Revelation 17.14 and 1 Timothy 6.15** refer to Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

**Revelation 18.4** calls its readers to come out of Babylon and not take part in her sins. 2 Corinthians 6.17 quotes Isaiah 52.11, which is also a call to come out of Babylon. In Ephesians 5.11 Paul tells his readers not to take part in the sins of darkness.

**Revelation 21.4,** a voice from the throne says that the old order of things has passed away, and in verse 5 God says “I am making everything new!” 2 Corinthians 5.17 says if anyone is in Christ, the old has gone and the new has come.

**Summation**

I have preached this passage of Scripture in the past and emphasized that Jesus is constantly knocking on everyone’s heart-door. It is not just a message to the church in Laodicea. It is a message to the whole Church throughout the ages. It is a message to Believers and non-Believers. I also observe that the heart-door is locked on our side. Jesus’ Holy Spirit presence is constantly making an awareness to all people in their spiritual conscious. . . of their wrong actions and statements (John 16:8). Jesus also encouraged people that did good work. (Matthew 25:23). I know, many see Jesus’ constant knocking as condemning and judgmental. God peering into our lives. However, the Lord is desiring to save us from our own destruction. The reference to a “door” is common in the New Testament.

**Luke12:36** "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding

feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;

and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

**James 5:9** Do not complain, brethren, against one another,

so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

**Matthew 24:33** so, you too, when you see all these things,

recognize that He is near, right at the door.

**John 10:3** "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice,

and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

**A M E N**

**Communion Song Words**

**For What Earthly Reason**

For what earthly reason
Would the Heavenly Father send down His Son?
To suffer rejection
And pay for crimes He had not done
For what earthly reason
Would the Father let Him hang on a tree?
I wept with the answer
That one earthly reason was me

I was the reason
That one earthly reason
I was the guilty
He was the sacrifice
I was the taker
He was the giver
Dying while I go free
That one earthly reason was me

The fairest of angels were not summoned
From His throne up in the sky
To purchase my pardon
Not even the angels could die
The only provision
For my freedom was destined to be
The sweet lamb of glory
And His only reason was me

I was the reason
That one earthly reason
I was the guilty
He was the sacrifice
I was the taker
He was the giver
Dying while I go free
That one earthly reason was me
Dying while I go free
That one earthly reason was me

**Songwriters:** Dottie Rambo. For non-commercial use only.