

"At Hand"

© B. K. Chadwell, November, 2009

This is the second and final teaching of a two part teaching;

1. *"The disciples were astonished"*
2. *"At Hand"*

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The term "**at hand**" is not a particularly common term today. However, whatever the origins, the term's use and history are obviously, at least, as old as the King James English. Today, we can see the first use of the term "**at hand**" in the King James Bible, in Genesis 27:41.

***Gen 27:41** "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, "**The days of mourning for my father are at hand**. Then will I slay my brother Jacob."*

To help solidify our understanding of the term "**at hand**" as it was used in the King James English, we can study through its use in Genesis 27: and other samples of the term's use in the King James Bible;

***1Sa 9:8** ...And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have here **at hand** a fourth part of a shekel of silver. That will I give to the man of God to tell us our way."*

***Jer 23:23** "Am I a God **at hand**," saith the LORD, "and not a God afar off?"*

Isaac's death was imminent.....or "**at hand**". (Gen. 27:41)

The servant was telling Saul he had "here, at hand" the silver. (1Sam 9:8)

God, through Jeremiah, making the point that He is a God; near "at hand" and not far off. (Jer 23:23)

The first use of the term "at hand", in the New Testament, appears in the Gospels, relative to the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God.

Mat 3:2 and saying, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Mar 1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the Gospel."

Matthew 3:2 and Mark 1:15 are speaking of the advent or initial giving of the Holy Spirit to believers. *The Kingdom of God* was defined by Jesus as being; "...*within you*", along with His instructions; not to look for it, here or there. First, John the Baptist and then Jesus said it was "at hand" for the generation before them and it continues to be "at hand" for us. Therefore, the Kingdom or Kings-dominion, or government of God is "*within believers*". That would only be; by and through the work of the Holy Spirit, which was first given to believers over 2,000 years ago.

Therefore whenever we see the term "at hand" used in the King James Bible we should have some sense of its general intended meaning. It would be wrong, then, for Christians to "*force fit*" the King James term; "at hand" that we find in the book of Revelation to mean something else.

The last two times the term; "at hand" is used in the King James Bible, and the only times the term is used in Revelation, is in the first chapter and finally, in the last chapter. Revelation is a very mysterious and often puzzling New Testament writing and certainly can not be understood without the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand,

Rev 22:10 And he said unto me, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand."

I believe the misunderstanding of the term; "at hand" in the first chapter of Revelations, verse 3 has contributed to some misunderstandings of the last chapter and the term; "at hand" used therein as well. Therefore, as usual, one understanding builds a foundation for another understanding or as I believe, in this case, misunderstandings.

I believe the misunderstandings, of which I speak in Revelation 1:1-3 are generally the result of *name* and *time* issues which are relatively simple to describe. However, perhaps, not as simple to prove or accept, especially if one has already formed an opinion.

I can attest to the fact that once I subscribe to something and "*put away*" what I may consider to be my facts...they are often very difficult to dislodge. My flesh, I find, is reluctant to "*face up to*" or admit the necessity for change. Further, if my beliefs in one area are challenged or found to be incorrect, I have often found that those beliefs have been a part of some foundation for

another tower of beliefs which may require significant time and effort to tear down and then rebuild.

The Holy Spirit over many years has often directed me to Jeremiah 1:10 as a reminder of the necessity for Him to sometimes; root out...pull down and then rebuild.

***Jer 1:10** See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."*

The pulling down and destroying is most often a "*pain in the neck (flesh)*", and the building and planting seems to fall under God's "*laws of the harvest*";

"you always reap what you sow", and.....

"it takes time from planting to harvest".

Such spiritual clean up and building programs always seems to take **way** to long and most often are **way** too painful for my selfish, prideful, impatient, soulish desires to want to embrace or to accommodate. **However**, if I want to get anywhere spiritually, I will eventually find the need to humble myself to the illumination and the work of the Holy Spirit. This, without force fitting anything to pre conceived ideas or beliefs, even if the entire picture is not yet complete.

With the above in mind, I will concentrate on Revelation 1:1-3 and what I have studied out and believe to be the general misunderstandings of these first 3 verses of Revelation. I will only attempt, for now, to outline and provide background support reasons for what I believe to be, the misunderstandings, of these 3 verses.

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John,

Rev 1:2 who bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

John who? Simply put, I believe "**John**" may have been mistaken for "**John**", which is not hard to do when "**John**" is only identified as; "**John**" and there is more than one "**John**" to be considered.

Was Revelation 1: verse 2 written by "John (the Apostle)" OF John (the Baptist) and not of himself? If that were true, then it follows that the activity described only in verses; 1 & 2, would all have been historical at the time "John (the Apostle)" wrote the book of Revelation.

Let's see if there is any scripture to support or even suggest such a thesis could be true:

First, The "**John**" in the 1st verse is never clearly identified except by assumptive association through the context. Further, the writer of the book of Revelation follows quickly to introduce and identify himself in verse 4 of this first chapter.

Rev 1:4 John, To the seven churches in Asia.....

A clear enough introduction to establish, with context and perhaps some added historical information, that the "**John**" in verse 4 is "**John (the apostle)**".

Let's consider chapter 3: verses 27-36 of the Gospel of John,

written by; "John (the apostle)". These verses provide a fairly comprehensive, complete and continuous direct quote of "John (the Baptist)" by "John (the apostle)" and should help to develop some possible background context for Revelation 1: verses 1, 2 and 3.

(Scripture *highlight emphasis is mine*):

Joh 3:27-36 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from Heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but that 'I am sent before Him.' He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. "He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from Heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, to that He testifieth, and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set his seal to this: that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Now let's look at some of the writings of Luke regarding "John (the Baptist)": (Highlight emphasis in the following scriptures are mine):

Luk 3:2 *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the Word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

Luk 3:3 *And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,*

Luk 3:4 *as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

`Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.

Luk 3:5 *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*

Luk 3:6 *and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

Luk 3:7 *Then said he to the multitude who came forth to be baptized by him, "O generation of vipers! Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

Luk 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say among yourselves, `We have Abraham as our father.' For I say unto you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

Luk 3:9 *And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees. Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."*

Luk 3:10 *And the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"*

Luk 3:11 *He answered and said unto them, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none. And he that hath meat, let him do likewise."*

Luk 3:12 *Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, "Master, what shall we do?"*

Luk 3:13 *And he said unto them, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you."*

Luk 3:14 *And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, "And what shall we do?" And he said unto them, "Do violence to*

no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Luk 3:15 *And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts whether John was the Christ or not,*

Luk 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the straps of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

Luk 3:17 *His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable."*

Luk 3:18 *And with many other exhortations preached he unto the people.*

Note that in verse 2 above...." ***the Word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness***". We are never told, here, the details of how the word of God came to John, so without the benefit of further descriptive scripture we would not know for sure if it came by an Angel or in some other manner. However, there are numbers of accounts in the Bible that would provide support for the idea that God sends angels as a messenger to His prophets. And, by scriptural definition; "John (the Baptist)" was the last and the greatest of the old covenant prophets.

Now, read again the words by "John (the apostle)" as he describes the works of "John (the Baptist)" in John 1:6-8:

(Highlight emphasis in the following scriptures are mine):

Joh 1:6 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

Joh 1:7 The same came as a witness to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

Joh 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

Now, read again the first 3 verses of the book of Revelation, written by "John (the apostle)" regarding the revealing of Jesus, the Christ;

(Highlight emphasis of scriptures are mine)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John, who bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.

"This Prophecy" as quoted above could certainly be the prophecy given by "John (the Baptist)" in John 3:27-36 and especially verse 36;

Joh 3:36 He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John (the apostle) was instructed to write, in a book we now call "*Revelation*", of the things which he had seen; past, present and future. Therefore, it follows that he might very well begin this book by providing some description of the first revelation of

Jesus, i.e.; The witness of "John (the Baptist)" and also of Jesus' first revelation to "John" (the apostle) and Jesus' other first disciples?

Rev 1:11 saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia:

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.

Act 3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Mat 3:1-2 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

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