

The Revelation of Christ

By Paris Reidhead*

Mark, Chapter 16.

“And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mar. 16:1-16).

Will you turn, please, now to Galatians, Chapter 1. 1st Chapter of the little Epistle of Paul to the church of Galatia. I read with verse 11. Our theme this morning, The Revelation of Jesus Christ. “But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me” (Gal. 1:11-24). “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” wrote John, the beloved Apostle (Rev. 1:1). The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The word revelation, *apokalypson*, literally means, unveiling, uncovering, disclosing with a purpose. And thus we find that our Lord Jesus came unto His own to Israel, and His own received Him not. He was the long-awaited Messiah, the only one according to Jewish history that could have been the Messiah, combining the royal line of Solomon and the pure line of Nathan, the only one that could possibly have been the Messiah, and yet His own received Him not. This, we must understand, is not to be wondered at. It is not to be questioned. There is only one class of people to whom the Lord has ever been revealed, today as well as in the day in which He came, and this is the broken, the hopeless, the helpless, the lost; for He came to seek and to save that which was lost. And it is therefore only to this company that He is revealed.

You recall that there were 12 that He called to Himself as apostles. “He asked of them, Whom say men that I am? And they gave the reply, Some say, You are John the Baptist. Some say You are Elijah or Jeremiah. And then His word, But whom say ye that I am? Then they replied, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ He said, ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven. He hath revealed this unto you’ ” (Mat. 16:15-17).

This we are to understand is the only means by which our Lord Jesus Christ could ever be received as He was presented, as Lord and Christ. It must be by revelation. It must be by revelation. For you will remember that the claims that He made to His generation were explicit and demanding: Forsake all that you are, all that you have, all in which you would trust; come to Me; sell all that you have; give it to the poor; come follow Me. He reiterated this over and over again to individuals, to groups. He presented Himself, not by miracles to prove that He was the Christ. The miracles proved that He was. But He declared it. And He did that which only God could do, and demanded that which only God had a right to demand. There were those that broke before Him, and in their brokenness came to Him, and in their coming had revealed to them that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But there were others that heard Him, that questioned, that doubted, that argued, that refused, and to them He was nothing more than a root out of the dry ground, a stick if you please, another of Adam's family, a man like unto His fellows, no beauty that He should be desired, and no distinguishing characteristics by which He would be recognized to be God.

You must understand that the artist that pictured our Lord with a halo about His head, as though there were something peculiar and different that would have been seen by His fellows, have done great injustice to the Word of God. He came to His own as one of the number; outwardly He was just a member of the community. The distinguishing difference was the absence of sin. Now, had He been extremely sinful they would have noted that, but one who simply walked in obedience with the Law and the commandments to which all of them gave lip loyalty and adherence would certainly not be distinguished by His brethren. And so the consequence of this is, when He came back to Nazareth the very people that knew Him best, that had lived with Him, to which had come the word concerning the miraculous birth and His early life, the events that occurred at His birth, and the temple, undoubtedly these things were reported in the community. But they were just simply accepted as the things that could happen to anybody. They actually happened to Him, but what distinction would that make. He was a good carpenter, excellent in His trade, quiet in the community. If you had asked the journeyers, the business men from Nazareth, Do you know Him, Oh, certainly we know Him. We are well acquainted with Him. Well what do you think of Him? Well He is just a good fellow. He is nothing unusual about Him. He is a good carpenter. We find that the ox yokes that He makes do not gall the oxen's shoulder and neck, and we find that the pails that He puts together hold water. He is just a good carpenter. Nothing particular about the Son of God, for He was not seeking to please man, to win the approval of men. He was seeking to please the Father. He said, I do only those things that please the Father. He was observed by His Father. He had an eye single to the Father's glory. And after 30 years the people of the village would have said little about Him, but the Father broke the silence of Heaven and said of Him what He could say of no other, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him. Listen to Him" (Mat. 17:5). But the people would have thought nothing of Him, for when He came back from Cana where the water had been turned into wine and did declare there that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him and had anointed Him, this prophecy that was referred only the Messiah, the anointed. They were going to deal with Him properly. They were supposed to stone Him for blasphemy. They did not want to, because He was one of the community, to throw stones at Him, so they devised an ingenious way by which they could keep the Law and would not have to sully their own hands. They walked with the Lord out the edge of the precipice for Nazareth was situated on a cliff, and these the elders that were responsible to see that the execution was carried out simply got the Lord in the midst, sort of crowded around Him, and moved Him off to the edge where they could have jostled Him over. He would have been killed by being stoned, not by stones thrown at Him, but by His being thrown at the stones. And seeing their design, and understanding their purpose, He passed through them. No man hindered Him, and He left. He had been in Nazareth for 30 years. He had lived with them and walked with them. But, because He was to them as a root out of the dry ground and no particular distinguishing marks or characteristics by which they would know Him to be God, they turned their back upon Him, rejected Him, spurned Him, and He went through the village (the Spirit of God writing this mournful word about it later), He could do there no mighty works because of their unbelief. They had known Him, but they had never had the revelation of Him. They had lived with Him, but they had never had Him revealed to them. He had never been disclosed to them at all.

We discover that this characterized those three years of His ministry. Great company, seeing the work, eating the bread that He provided, the fish that He multiplied, would adhere to Him in some little way. And then when He gave the Father's Word, they would forsake Him. And there in John 6 we read where from that time many of His disciples followed no more with Him. They had found something of interest but they were not prepared to meet Him on His own terms. A small company in three

years of ministry, multitudes beholding His miracles, and being healed, other multitudes feeding upon the miraculous bread, great throngs testifying that He was the one that they had come to seek and follow, still the answer was this— that after three years of ministry there were only about 500 to whom He did reveal Himself after His resurrection.

Now the next point that I want you to see is this, that He was not known by those who knew Him best after His resurrection. For you recall that Mary who had come to see Him, the first one to whom He was revealed, said this: (Thinking Him to be the gardener) “Sir, tell me where you have taken Him and laden Him, and I will go bring Him.” Here is this woman so consumed with yearning and longing for the Lord that had delivered that she said, If you, a strong man, a gardener, have carried Him away, just tell me where you have taken Him, and I, a woman, frail and weak, will carry Him. I’ll take Him. And in this great desire and need, and yearning and longing for the Lord whom she loved, who had delivered her, she was prepared to perform this task, unhesitatingly saying, Just tell me where you have taken Him and I’ll carry Him away. And then He spoke one word. One word. And that one word was necessary. Or she would have gone away, thinking Him to be the gardener. Think of this now. It is probably that she is the one and I personally feel is undoubtedly the one that broke the bottle of alabaster and poured its contents, spikenard upon His head, a few brief hours before, and certainly she would have known who He was. But now in His resurrection she does not distinguish Him from the gardener. Sir, Tell me where you have taken Him.

What do you mean? Well it was this, that He looked just like anyone else might have looked, and there was sufficient. She was so utterly, so utterly oblivious to the truth of His resurrection, so indifferent to Him; she could not possibly believe that it was He standing there in life, and so she dealt with Him as she would have done with a stranger. It was not until He spoke, one word, one unveiling, unlocking, opening, discovering, uncovering word, Mary. And when He said that, the scales fell from her eyes. She could only know Him by revelation. He must reveal. And all the prophecies that He had made, and the predictions that He had made were not sufficient. The theology was not enough. The promises of the Old Testament was not enough. His own declaration destroyed this temple, and after three days I will raise it again, was not enough. There had to be a personal unveiling, a personal revelation.

We discover that there is reference in the marked portion I have read to two that were walking into the country. Personally I feel this was the Emmaus journey, and our Lord joined Himself to the two, and they had said to Him, Why stranger, didn’t you hear what took place? We thought that it had been He that would have restored the kingdom to Israel. All our hopes have been dashed to the ground. All our confidence is gone and dissipated, because we expected that the one we followed with whom we were associated was going to bring back the glory to Israel that she had had earlier under other kings. And then our Lord said, Oh, foolish and slow of heart to believe all things that are said by the prophets concerning Christ. Ought not Christ to have suffered. And He went back to the prophets. He went back to Moses, to the Old Testament, and expounded to them all the things concerning the Messiah. But even this exposition was not enough. Even this declaration was not enough. Even the unfolding of the promises was not enough. Do you understand? His presence with them, His talking to them, His explaining the Scripture as only He was able and competent to explain was not enough. It was when they had come to the home, and they persuaded Him to stay. They went in and the host had servants bring a meal. And as they were seated, undoubtedly in oriental fashion, having eaten the meal from the carpet or the matting on the floor, then one of them said, undoubtedly the host again, You know, just the other night before He left us, the last thing that He did is we ate together the Passover meal was to take bread and He broke it, and He said, Here, take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you. Stranger, would you share with us in doing this as He commanded? For He said, Do it in remembrance of Him.

And this is what the Scripture says, He was revealed unto them in the breaking of the bread. It was in obedience that He was revealed. He had walked with them. He had talked with them. He had explained the Scripture and the prophecies. But they did not know who He was until He was revealed unto them. There had to be a personal revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. There had to be. Now, you may think who you will was one of these, but my own feeling is that one of those two on the road to Emmaus was John, the beloved Apostle. The one who at the age of probably 95, at least 50 years after the resurrection of Christ and maybe as much as 60 or 65, for there is disagreement as to how old the book of Revelation is, some thinking it could not possibly have been written before 80 A.D. which would have been 50 years after our Lord’s resurrection. But others who have studied the matter, feeling that very possibly it was written at 90 A.D. or even 95 A.D., which would mean 65 years after the resurrection of Christ, that the beloved Apostle on the Island of Patmos wrote the Revelation, the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Only by revelation. Only by revelation can He be known.

There is the proper use of truth. There is the proper use of preaching, but the only way that the resurrected Christ will ever be known is by revelation. That He has risen from the dead is a historical fact. This men believe, and this devils believe. This is a fact upon which God bases His commandment, that all men everywhere repent. And so there is no question but that the historical fact, the birth, the life and the death, and the resurrection of Christ can be understood, can be comprehended, can be accepted as being historically correct. But I want you to know that when one has consented to that which the Scripture declares concerning Christ He has not believed on Christ. He may have believed that which has been said about Christ, but to believe on the person of Christ is far more than this.

I could correctly say this morning that you only know Jesus Christ by revelation, and this is true. But I would find then that someone would be asking, Well have I such a revelation? Has Christ been revealed to me? And this would be proper and appropriate. But I want you to understand those to whom He is revealed in the person of the one whose testimony you have very possibly before you. The Apostle was acquainted, Saul of Tarsus, for he was such then, was acquainted with the prophecies concerning the Messiah. He was certainly acquainted with the claims of Christ, that He was the Messiah. He was certainly acquainted with the testimony of the historical facts concerning Christ which had been declared by men who were prepared to die for the veracity of these facts. They did die at his inditement and the judgment, condemnation he secured. So he knew a great deal about Christ. All the prophecies, all the events of His life of significance, all of the historical facts that were attested by lives of individuals willing to die for the truth, all of the miracles done by the church which he could not help but see, but still he was an enemy. Still he was in blindness. Still he was in opposition to Christ. Facts, theology, doctrine, all as good and necessary as it was, was not enough. There had to be a revelation of Christ. And so we discover that He uses two words which are beautiful in their simplicity, and yet in a sense they are disturbing in their implications. When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me. And then the first is, I neither received it of man, neither was I taunted but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Salvation is revelation. Theology is necessary. Historical facts are a part. But there is a revelation of Christ. This of course is the reason why the Pharisees had to kill Christ. Because He said that no one was truly the Father's until they had had an interior, subjective experience with God, wherein He had been inwardly revealed. And they had an exterior theology, an external ceremony and ritual and ordinance, and they said, Adherence to this theology and obedience to this ritual and subscription to this ceremony and observance of these booths, and a commitment to this practice is enough to mark you as a child of God and an heir of Heaven. For they were men, seeking to bring people out of danger of eternal suffering, and wrath, and hell, into salvation, were the Pharisees. And yet the thing that Christ said was this, No. No. No, you make a mistake. What you have is not bad. It is not enough. It is good, but it is not good enough. There has to be something else. There has to be a revelation. You have to eat My flesh. You have to drink My blood. Something has to become personal, interior, and vital. And they said, This cannot be. If what He is saying is true, what we have is not enough. And if what we have is not enough then the whole structure that we have erected of the synagogues and the Pharisaical system with all of the adherents we have, why these people have been deceived, they have been misled, they are in errors, double heirs of death, because they have both fled from their sins, they do not receive any pleasure from this world, and they are being misguided as to the world to come. And so they said, Well now we cannot have that. And their approach to it was the only logical approach that anyone can make to such a message. They either had to seek the revelation of which He spoke, or they had to kill Him. And the reason that they conspired to destroy Christ was that He was striking at the very root of the system that supported them, the very root of the system which held them, and the very root of their whole relationship to Israel. And so the world was not big enough. Something had to happen. Something had to give. And so He was the One that was expendable. And so they turned upon Him simply because He said, There must be a revelation by My Father. There must be something interior. There must be something vital. There must be something experientially yours. God must come. And the Pharisees said, No, no, no. God is in Heaven. You are on the earth. This is His doctrine. Adhere to what we teach. Do what we say. Accept what we prescribe, and rest satisfied in that.

He said, No. That is not enough. There has to be something else. And it was because of that else. It was because of that other, because of that which they did not have, that they crucified Him. Remember this was engineered by religious leaders that found that Christ had something they did not have and had one or two alternatives, either to seek it and Him, and meet Him, and experience that of which He spoke, or to reject Him and what He said. And this they chose to do.

And so the church was to be built that were born, not of flesh, not of the will of man nor of blood, but those that were born of God by a personal encounter with God wherein God supernaturally gave a revelation of Christ. No form, no ceremony, no property, no ritual is prescribed. I defy anyone to go to this Word and to bring me the proper and perfect pattern for the church, as though it were to be this, and not this, or the other. It just does not come that way. Oh, there are principals that are there, but every principal that has to do with the church is built upon a personal revelation of Christ, an interior, subjective, experiential revelation of Christ. Everyone. They all presuppose this. They all demand it. They all are based upon it. And so when Paul says, when it pleased God to reveal His Son to me, oh, no, His Son had been revealed many months, many years hence previously — it was, revealed His Son in me. And it is this inward revelation that is necessary if anyone is to know Christ. Now to know about Him, to know Him as an historical person, know Him as a figure in the life of any culture, community whether it be church or political, this is quite possible. To adhere to a system of taboos, mores, and ritual, of course, anyone can do it with diligent effort. But the only ones that have any part with Him are those that have come to Him on a certain plain and certain level. You say, Well I don't know that I have that revelation. Now look, let's not get the cart before the horse. Let us go back and say, What is the level of our coming? What is the manner of our coming? What is the way of our coming? This is the thing we ought to be concerned about. Because this is clearly prescribed. What has He said?

Well, He has said, first of all, Anyone that comes to Me must receive Me as I am presented by the Father as both Lord and Christ, prince and savior. And so His terms were, Repentance. Complete change of mind as to the one that is to rule from yourself to Himself. A complete transfer of government from your hands to His hands. A complete abnegation of plans, your plans for His plans. A complete commitment of all you have, not only for today, but for all the tomorrows. A complete transfer from the center of your life being yourself, to the center of your life being Christ. From your... no longer governed by expediency, what seems wise, what seems good, what is going to be profitable, what is going to be the best other than Jesus Christ. Now this is the only rule. This is the rock. This is the foundation. This is the fortress. Thy will, Thy Word, Thy Way, Thy plan, Thy purpose, this is what is meant by believing on Christ. To see Him as He is, and thus because He is who He says He is, a total commitment of all that we have to Him. But now you understand where the problem lies. The problem is this. He asks you to make that commitment and make it in faith. You see, if a person could have a revelation that Jesus is the Christ to his heart, he would be willing to commit anything. Oh, there would be no hesitation. And so, many times a person says, Lord, you give me the feeling, You give me the emotion — and that is not what we are talking about at all — but this is what people often will mistake for what we are speaking - a revelation of Christ. Or, let me feel saved. You let me feel, know somehow, I will be willing to do anything you ask me to do. Oh, no. That is not it. He presents truth. He presents testimony. He presents claims. And then there is an inward revelation of your need, and with that inward revelation of your need, there is an inward revelation of His person, and because of this there is that leap of faith, that lunge out over the dark, that utter abandonment to Him in brokenness. Expecting nothing in return, making no propositions, no business deals, not saying, Lord, I'm going to serve you, if... Simply, I am going to serve you because...Because you are worthy, of who you are. I have seen you to be very God of very God, and very man of very man. I have seen you to be Lord. I have seen you to be the worthy one. And now, whether I go to Heaven or Hell, there is no consequence. The important thing is that I render to You what you deserve. And this leap is that which we call believing on Christ. This leap of abandonment. This leap of commitment.

You say, Must a person understand all of this? No, I am not concerned about how much you understand. I am concerned about what we do. God is not here to test our semantics. God is here to test our attitudes. And so consequently I am not interested whether you can parse the verbs the way I do. I am not at all concerned about that. This is not the... Decline the nouns makes no difference. The thing I am concerned about is, that you understand that Jesus Christ is everything that God has said He is, that He is very God of very God. He is both Lord and Christ. He is Prince and Savior. And because He is who He has said He is. God having sealed this by what He has done and by raising Him from the dead, then our response, the only fit, appropriate and a proper response to such a Person is this, is an utter, absolute abandonment to all that He is and all He wills. Now this is your part. You see to that. You see to that, and He will see to the other. He will see to the other.

But I cannot see that the Word of God teaches that Paul came in a way exceptional. I do not believe that he says, When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, he says now this happened to me but there is going to be a far lesser state and plain for the rest of you. I think he could quite have said, As He revealed His Son in Me, as He has revealed His Son in all you who know Him, for there has to be an inward revelation. And do not you see now why His church can only be made up of those who had

such a revelation of Him. Can you see why there has to be this? There has to be first, this utter abandonment to Him, this utter consent, that because He is who He says He is there can only be one proper response. It is not because it is preached. It is because of a revelation that is given by the Spirit of God to the heart and mind of men. And then a person makes that commitment, makes that abandonment, and in response to that there is an inward revelation that Jesus Christ is all that the Word of God says He is.

Now the question that comes to you is this, for it must be personal, Oh, I know Jesus Christ is alive from the dead. This is an historical fact. I know all the steps preceding it and following it, the historicity of the Gospel is clear to me. But the question that I must settle for myself this very morning is this, Have I met Jesus Christ on the only terms appropriate for one that has been exalted by the right hand of the Father to be a Prince and a Savior? That is the question. Is there in my heart toward Him that utter abandonment, that absolute relinquishing? The only concern of my life is His glory. I have no interest in my own plans; I have no interest in my own program. The only thing I must have is the will of God, because I have seen that Jesus Christ is God, God who became flesh, God who died, God who rose from the dead. And the only response of mortal to God is utter abandonment. This is your responsibility. His responsibility is to reveal. So if you become concerned about testing, taking your own pulse, and weighing your own -- testing your own spiritual blood pressure, do I have revelation, do I have what he is talking about? you miss the point entirely. This is becoming egocentric again. It is interested in yourself. The question on every heart is this, Not what has He done to me, but what is my attitude toward Him? When my attitude toward Him is as it ought to be, then I can fully trust God to do toward me anything that is right and appropriate and proper. And it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, meant that Paul, know that He was who He said He was, had to say, "Lord Jesus, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And that meant everything always, wholly the Lord's (Act. 9:6). This is the only way that we can meet the testimony of the resurrected Christ as He desires, as He deserves.

Shall we pray? We thank Thee, our Father, that our fellowship is not only in a doctrine, for it is in that. We find no fellowship outside of that doctrine, that Jesus Christ is God, come in the flesh, the virgin born, sinless, holy, spotlessly pure, Son or God who lived and died sacrificially on the Cross for sinners, and was gloriously, triumphantly raised from the dead, and is alive today. Now, Father, we find fellowship in the doctrine, but we do not find fellowship only in the doctrine. We do not find fellowship only in the Word. We find it there, but not only there. We find it in Thy Son, in the revelation of Thy Son, that because He has been revealed to us and we have abandoned to Him, and He has been revealed in us, our fellowship is in this revelation that Thou hast given of Thy Son. And we know that that fellowship of which John spoke, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. We know, Father, that this is that which follows in every heart that really meets Thee on Thy terms. And so we would ask today that there might be on the part of this people meeting Thee, a glad willingness to abandon everything to Thee, not morbid introspection, but a glad abandonment that whatever the level of commitment has been before this morning, today, and at this moment it becomes complete, and entire, permanent, all that Thou dost want it to be. We will have to give Thee a blank check, Lord. We will have to sign it, and say, Lord, we make it out in favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, but you fill it in. We will just give you a blank check. Now, You do anything You need to do, Father, to bring to Thy Son the glory that He deserves; the only reason for our being, henceforth, hereafter, is that He be glorified, at any cost to us personally. The only thing we want is that He be exalted. This is that which the risen Christ deserves, glorified God deserves. So grant, Lord, that this shall be our response, to give Him what He deserves, and then Thou wilt give us all what we need and deserve in Him. Seal thus Thy Word to our hearts, and might we realize that salvation is revelation. In Jesus Name. Let us stand for the Benediction.

And "now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be the glory, now and forever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Easter Sunday Morning, April 22, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.