

## Revelation 1:3- The Blessing

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*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near (Revelation 1:3).*

Blessings abound as we engage in a verse by verse Bible study of the book of Revelation. Before we begin our study of verse three, I want to pronounce a special blessing over you:

*The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace (Numbers 6:22-27).*

This ancient priestly blessing is still recited in Jewish synagogues today. Did you know that this blessing came from the Lord Himself? Who doesn't want the Lord to personally bless them? Jesus promises a special blessing to the one who reads, hears, and guards the words of Revelation. The blessing is waiting on you. Let's dig in deeper and experience all that God has for His children.

### *Word Study - "Blessing"*

Makarios (ma-ka-re-os) adjective

Blessed, happy, fortunate

In Greek, the word for "bless" is *makarios*. It is an adjective, and adjectives describe people, places, or things. It literally means: blessed, happy and fortunate. This trio of words describes you and me. The ones who take the time to attend to this special book of prophecy will receive a great blessing from the Lord. Let's take a look at a few blessings found in the New Testament:

### *Blessings Abound in the New Testament*

- Those who don't take offense at Jesus are blessed (Matthew 11:6);

- The eyes & ears of the disciples were blessed because they had the unique privilege of hearing & seeing Messiah (Matthew 13:16);
- Peter was blessed for his confession that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:17);
- The Lord's bondservants are blessed for the work they do when Jesus is away (Matthew 24:46);
- Mary, Jesus' mother, was blessed for her faith (Luke 1:45);
- Those who hear & observe God's words are blessed (Luke 11:28);
- Those who will eat bread in God's kingdom are blessed (Luke 14:15);
- The giver is more blessed than the receiver (Acts 20:35);
- The one whose sins are forgiven is blessed (Romans 4:7);
- The one who perseveres under trial is blessed (James 1:12);
- There is a special blessing for studying Revelation (Revelation 1:3; 22:7);
- The Tribulation Saints are blessed (Revelation 14:13);
- The ones invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb are blessed (Revelation 19:9);
- The one who has part in the first resurrection is blessed (Revelation 20:6);
- Blessed are the ones who have white washed robes (Revelation 22:14).

There is action required if we are to experience God's blessings. Some blessings demand confession of sins, others depend upon our faith, and even call for perseverance in trials. Abundant treasures await every active believer. We have access to immediate blessings when we read, hear, and heed the last recorded words of Jesus. Let's take a closer look at these three responses because I want you to receive the joy and blessing that comes from earnestly observing the words of Revelation.

### *The One Who Reads*

The Greek word for read is *anaginosko* and it means to read, to know accurately, to read with understanding or to know with certainty. It appears 41 times in the New Testament, and Jesus used this word often.

Anaginosko (ă-nă-gē-nō'-skō) verb  
 To read, distinguish between, to recognize, to know accurately, to acknowledge

As an elementary school teacher, I had the difficult task of equipping young readers with the tools they needed to comprehend a text. Many times these students could accurately read the words, but they had no understanding of

what they just read. They did not want to slow down and dissect the text because that was challenging work, and we all know that work is not fun.

As Bereans, our job is to slow down and dissect the Bible so that we can understand every passage. This is best accomplished with a verse by verse study. God blesses our disciplined approach to His word. When Jesus was on this earth, he frequently asked his listeners the question: “Have you not read?” If Israel would have read, with understanding, God’s word, they would have received the blessing of Messiah Jesus who lived, breathed, and walked among them. He expected Israel to not just quote laws and ordinances but to comprehend the heart of God’s word. There is a special blessing for the one who reads Revelation with a heart set on understanding every word. I know that you are not willing to forego a blessing just because the task is challenging. Press on so that you may receive the full blessing promised from the Lord.

### *The One who Hears*

The second group of people who are blessed receive the Revelation with spiritual ears. The Greek word *Akouo* is used for hear and it means: not deaf, to attend to, consider, understand, perceive, or learn by giving ear to a teaching. This word is used over 400 times in the New Testament.

Akouo (ä-kü'-ō) verb

To be endowed with the faculty of hearing, not deaf, to hear, to attend to, to consider what is or has been said, to understand, to perceive the sense of what is said, to give ear to a teaching or teacher, to comprehend.

Let’s look at some examples of Akouo in the New Testament:

- King Herod *heard* troubling things about a future Messianic king (Matthew 2:3);
- The ministry of Messiah resulted in the *deaf* receiving their *hearing* (Matthew 11:5);
- Jesus taught in parables because Israel’s spiritual *hearing* had become dull (Matthew 13:13-15);
- The prophets desired to see and *hear* the days of Messiah (Matthew 13:17);
- Some will *hear* God’s word and receive it with great joy, yet the seed does not take root because of the cares of this world (Matthew 13:20-23).

The first part of the threefold blessing puts the burden of becoming a disciplined reader on the student of Revelation. The second part of this blessing, however, is immaterial. Most people have literal ears that hear, but we lack spiritual ears

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that apprehend the heart of the message. This is accomplished with the help of the Holy Spirit. Every time you seek to understand the words of Revelation, you need to pray in the Holy Spirit and ask for spiritual ears to hear what He is saying. When you read and hear Revelation, the blessing is multiplied.

### *The One Who Heeds*

The third part of the blessing takes us past reading, hearing and onto the militant position of guarding God's word. The Greek word for heed is *tereo*, and it means to keep, attend to carefully or to guard. Tereo is used 80 times in the Greek New Testament.

Tereo (tā-re'-ō) verb

To attend to carefully, to guard, take care of, to observe, to keep

Let's look at some New Testament examples of *tereo*:

- Jesus told religious Jews that eternal life is found in *keeping* God's commandments (Matthew 19:17);
- The disciples are to teach others to *observe* the teachings of Christ (Matthew 28:20);
- The Jews disputed with Jesus over His *keeping* of the Sabbath (John 9:16);
- Roman centurions kept *guard* over the body of Jesus (Matthew 27:54);
- If you love Jesus, you *keep* His commandments (John 14:15);
- Jesus prayed that we would be *kept* from the evil one (John 17:15);
- Those who *keep* the words of Jesus will never taste death (John 8:51);
- Peter was *kept* in Prison (Acts 12:5);
- Jailers *guarded* the prisoners (Acts 16:23);
- Fallen angels did not *keep* their proper domain (Jude 1:6);
- *Keeping* the words of Revelation brings extra blessing (Revelation 1:3; 22:7).

The blessing for heeding the words of this book is repeated twice: in the very beginning, and at the very end of Revelation Jesus declared: *And behold I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of this prophecy of this book (Revelation 22:7)*. Obviously, Jesus knew there would be a tendency to become lethargic and overlook this difficult book of prophecy so He reminded John that a blessing would indeed come upon all who guarded these words.

We are blessed for being active readers, spirit-filled hearers and energetic keepers of Christ's Revelation. Not only do I want to read this word, I want to understand it, attend to its teaching, and guard the words especially in our time. Part of the reason I am attending to this study of Revelation is because we are living in the End Times. The events in our world are converging at such lightning speed that it would cause great worry if I didn't know the *Logos Theos* or Word of God. Like I said before, this study will take time. It is a discipline. But, if you are willing to take the time, God is willing to bless you.

### *The Time is Near*

Before we leave our study of verse three, let's examine the last four words: *the time is near*. You and I both know that almost 2,000 years have passed since the Revelation of John. That doesn't sound near to me. So what did Jesus mean by this? You may recall the scripture that states:

*But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day (2 Peter 3:8).*

Two thousand years may have passed since these words were written, but on God's calendar only two days have passed. Our Heavenly Father is timeless. He exists outside of time and space. God's idea of near, and our idea of near are vastly different.

Let's do a couple word studies to aid our understanding of this head-scratching phrase.

### *Word Study "Time"*

The word that Jesus used for time is unique. Time can be measured in chronological time (chronos) or seasons (kairos). Jesus used the Greek word kairos when He said, "The time is near."

Kairos (kī-ro's) noun

Due measure, measure of time, large or smaller portion of time, fixed and definite time, time when things are brought to crisis, the decisive epoch waited for, opportune or seasonable time, the right time

Kairos means: the time when things are brought to crisis, a fixed and definite time, opportune or seasonable time, or the right time. It is used 87 times in the New Testament. Jesus was talking about a season of time being near, but what did He really mean by near?

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## Word Study “Near”

The Greek word *eggys* means near of place and position, those who are near to God, and of times imminent and soon to come to pass. It is used 30 times in the Greek New Testament.

Eggys (en-gü's) adverb

Near of place and position, those who are near access to God,  
of times imminent and soon to come to pass

In order to understand what Jesus meant, let's examine the word near and how it is used in the New Testament.

- Jesus said that when the fig tree branch becomes tender and leaves appear that summer is *near* (Matthew 24:32);
- When we see the signs Jesus spoke about we will know that Jesus' coming is *near* (Matthew 24:33);
- The Passover of the Jews was *near* (John 6:4);
- Bethany was *near* Jerusalem (John 11:18);
- Salvation is *nearer* now than before (Romans 13:11);
- Gentiles have been brought *near* to God through Jesus' blood (Ephesians 2:13);
- The time is *near* (Revelation 1:3; 22:10)

Sometimes the word used for *near* is literal and means very close in proximity like when John wrote that the town of Bethany was near Jerusalem. Other times, it is figurative like when the writer of Ephesians says that Gentiles have been brought near to God through Christ Jesus. I like what the writer of Romans had to say about salvation being nearer now than it has ever been. This is also true of the time for the prophecies of Revelation to be fulfilled. We are nearer now than we have ever been. It has been almost 2,000 years on our calendars, but remember God keeps time differently. The Ancient of Days measures epochs while we measure mere centuries. He considers generations while we consider common decades. God counts infinity while we watch sheer moments. The Apostle Peter said the following words:

*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*

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Yes, the season for these prophecies to find their fulfillment is most definitely nearer than ever before, but thank God for His patience and willingness to wait for a full harvest of souls before raining justice on this earth.

### *Summary of Verse 1:3- The Blessing*

1. The book of Revelation contains a special, unique blessing that no other book of the Bible promises its reader;
2. The blessing of Revelation is threefold: You must actively read, hear, and guard these words;
3. The kairos time of Christ's return is drawing near.

A word like “near” can really baffle readers who live in a microwave generation. It is imperative that we understand God’s measure of time so that we don’t lose heart. I hope you will extend your study of the word near, and I am providing a table to help you do just that.

“Near”	Scripture	Summary
Abraham came near to the Lord in bold prayer.	Genesis 18:23	I can draw close to God in faith just like Abraham and petition the God of heaven to rescue the righteous.
The Lord is near to the brokenhearted.	Psalms 34:18	
The salvation of God is near to those who fear Him.	Psalms 85:9	
The day of the Lord is near with destruction from the Almighty.	Isaiah 13:6	
Jesus is near, right at the door.	Matthew 24:33	
Sinners drew near to hear the words of Jesus.	Luke 15:1	
The night is almost over and the day is near.	Romans 13:12	
Believers can draw near the throne of Grace.	Hebrews 4:16	

Time is something that many of us have become “masters” at measuring. What does God want you to understand about time? This table will help you to extend your understanding of God’s time.

Time	Scripture	Summary
Noah was blameless in his time.	Genesis 6:9	Noah lived in a time where evil flourished. Yet, God found a righteous man in an evil generation and saved his entire family.
At the appointed time, God’s promise to Sarah was fulfilled.	Genesis 18:14	
The time of Israel’s slavery was 430 years.	Exodus 12:40	
There is a great time of distress coming to Israel.	Daniel 12:1	
The words of Daniel were sealed for the Jews until the end time.	Daniel 12:9	
The words of Jesus are not to be sealed. The church is supposed to understand them because the time is near.	Revelation 22:10	