

Revelation
Series: The Bible
June 26, 2022

Thank you again for being part of worship today.

We are in our last week in our series “The Bible” as we have looked at the entirety of the Canon, recognizing the overarching themes and message of Scripture.

Here is our graphic representation of the Bible. Today, we are going to take a 30,000 foot look at the 9th and final section, Prophecy. We will ask three questions: What are the mega themes of the section? What is the key verse of that section? And how does it point to Jesus, the Son of God? I am so glad you have joined us on this spectacular journey!

As in the Old Testament, there is a single book of prophecy in the New, and that is, of course, the Book of Revelation. Revelation was written as a circular letter by the Apostle John during his political exile on the island of Patmos approximately 95 AD.

Now, before this message series, if I would have told you that we could cover the Book of Revelation in a single Sunday, you would have laughed. It took us 11 weeks to go through the book in 2019, and you have heard the story of how it took our Sunday School class 2 ½ years to do the same thing. But now, at the end of this series, you assume I can do it in 20 minutes; 25 tops. That’s the goal today.

Most Christians are weary of reading or studying Revelation. It is so weird, so confusing, so scary. And I get that. But the book tells us the importance of reading it:

*God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.*¹

Revelation is a type of literature that modern Christians struggle to read. It is a unique Jewish genre of writing called apocalyptic literature. Several Old Testament books contain apocalyptic literature, including the last half of the Book of Daniel.²

What makes it difficult for us to understand is that the rules for reading it are nothing like the rules of reading literature we are accustomed to. For example, you don’t read poetry like you read an instruction manual. You don’t read fiction as if it is describing real people and events. The problem is that when we read Revelation, we fall our old habits of reading it like we’re used to read the Bible and other forms of familiar literature, thus becoming confused, even mistaken in our comprehension.

What is simple to see is its outline.

First, it is a letter to churches.

Seven of them, in fact. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the book, then individual and specific messages to the seven churches. They are commended for their strengths and warned of their flaws. While each letter was directed to a church then in existence, many believe they represent the conditions in the church throughout history, as well as eras of Christendom.

Second, it is a book that worships God in heaven.

¹ Revelation 1:3 (NLT2)

² Isaiah 24–27; 33; 34–35; Jeremiah 33:14–26; Ezekiel 38–39; Joel 3:9–17; Zechariah 12–14; Daniel 7–12. In the New Testament, beyond Revelation, Matthew 24 (and Mark 13); 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Timothy 4; 2 Peter 3; Jude 14-15 might also be considered apocalyptic literature.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe a worship service in heaven, one which we get the words to our opening hymn:

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!*³

Most of chapter 7 is a worship service, as is a portion of chapter 11, 15, 19. In fact, 13% of the book is worship. Bet you never knew that! When John enters heaven, he sees worship of the Lord. If you ever wondered what we will be doing in heaven, we will be worshipping God, for we will see Him as He is, and our only response will be worship.

Third, the book records the opening the seven seals.

The seals are the first of the judgments upon the earth, which include the unleashing of the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse, or world domination, war, famine, death, and natural phenomenon. The seventh seal leads to the next group.

The fourth section is the sounding the seven trumpets.

Angels blow the seven trumpets that bring catastrophic calamity to the earth: a third of the trees on the planet, and all green grass dies, a third of the oceans become like blood. a third of the planet's freshwater sources become contaminated.

The fifth section is John observing the great conflict.

This is part of the ongoing war between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. I've just finished the first draft of a book about this unseen warfare.

The sixth section is the pouring out the seven bowls/plagues.

These final seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out on the wicked and the followers of the Antichrist.

The seventh section is the seizing the final victory

We know this is the Battle of Armageddon.

The eighth and final section is God making all things new.

Revelation 21:1:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone.*⁴

Each week, we have looked at the mega themes of each section. I have gotten these from the Life Application Bible. So, what are the mega themes of Revelation?

First, God's Sovereignty.

God is sovereign. He is greater than any power in the universe. God is not to be compared with any leader, government, or religion. He controls history for the purpose of uniting true believers in loving fellowship with Him. Though Satan's power may temporarily increase, we are not to be led astray. God is all-powerful. He is in control. He will bring His true family safely into eternal life. Because He cares for us, we can trust Him with our very life.⁵

Second, Christ's Return.

Revelation 22:7

*Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.*⁶

Then verse 12:

³ "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!" Text: Reginald Heber

⁴ Revelation 21:1 (NLT2)

⁵ Life Application Study Bible, Revelation

⁶ Revelation 22:7 (NLT2)

*Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.*⁷

Finally verse 20:

*He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!*⁸

Christ came to earth as a "Lamb," the symbol of his perfect sacrifice for our sin. He will return as the triumphant "Lion," the rightful ruler and conqueror. He will defeat Satan, settle accounts with all those who reject Him, and bring His faithful people into eternity. Assurance of Christ's return gives suffering Christians the strength to endure. We can look forward to His return as king and judge. Since no one knows the time when He will appear, we must be ready at all times by keeping our faith strong.⁹

Third, God's Faithful.

John wrote to encourage the church to resist the demands to worship the Roman emperor. He warns all God's faithful people to be devoted only to Christ. Revelation identifies who the faithful people are and what they should be doing until Christ returns. You can take your place in the ranks of God's faithful people by believing in Christ. Victory is sure for those who resist temptation and make loyalty to Christ their top priority.¹⁰

Fourth, Judgment.

One day, God's anger toward sin will be fully and completely unleashed. Satan will be defeated with all of his agents. False religion will be destroyed. God will reward the faithful with eternal life, but all who refuse to believe in Him will face eternal punishment. Evil and injustice will not prevail forever. God's final judgment will put an end to these. We need to be certain of our commitment to Jesus if we want to escape this great final judgment. No one who rejects Christ will escape God's punishment.¹¹

Finally, Hope.

One day, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. All believers will live with Him forever in perfect peace and security. Those who have already died will be raised to life. These promises for the future bring us hope. Our great hope is that what Christ promises will come true. When we have confidence in our final destination, we can follow Christ with unwavering dedication no matter what we must face. We can be encouraged by hoping in Christ's return.¹²

*And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children."*¹³

Believe it or not, there are several candidates for key verse in the book. I read Revelation 21:1-5 at nearly every funeral I conduct. But, for me, the key verse is Revelation 3:20"

⁷ Revelation 22:12 (NLT2)

⁸ Revelation 22:20 (NLT2)

⁹ Life Application Study Bible, Revelation

¹⁰ Life Application Study Bible, Revelation

¹¹ Life Application Study Bible, Revelation

¹² Life Application Study Bible, Revelation

¹³ Revelation 21:6-7 (NLT2)

*Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.*¹⁴

Jesus knocks at the door of our heart because He wants to save us and have fellowship with us. He is patient and persistent in trying to get through to us – not breaking and entering, but knocking. He allows us to decide whether or not to open our life to Him. Do you intentionally keep His life-changing presence and power on the other side of the door?¹⁵

How does Revelation point to Jesus? After the Gospels, Jesus speaks only twice more in the New Testament: to Paul on the road to Damascus:

*As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?” “Who are you, lord?” Saul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”*¹⁶

If you have a red letter Bible, you would see Christ’s words in red in this passage.

The only other book of the New Testament where Jesus speaks is here in Revelation. So, in Revelation:

First, we see Him in His glory.

*When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.”*¹⁷

This is Jesus in His glory.

In His clothing He is our priest (v. 13). He is dressed “in a long robe and with a gold sash wrapped around His chest.” This is the clothing of the priest in the Old Testament¹⁸. It signifies Jesus as our great high priest and points to His work of atonement and intercession on our behalf.¹⁹

In His wisdom He is profound (v. 14). “His head and hair were white like wool—white as snow.” The significance of these words and their Old Testament connections are powerful and must not be missed.

That His eyes are “like a fiery flame” speaks of penetrating insight and omniscient intelligence.

In His strength He is permanent (v. 15): “His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace.” He is strong, solid, and stable²⁰.

¹⁴ Revelation 3:20 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Life Application Study Bible, Revelation 3:20

¹⁶ Acts 9:3-6 (NLT2)

¹⁷ Revelation 1:12-18 (NLT2)

¹⁸ See Exodus 28:4

¹⁹ See Hebrews 7:25

²⁰ See Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:13

In His announcement He is powerful (v. 15): “His voice like the sound of cascading waters.” It is a voice of awesome power and pervasive authority.

For His servants He is protective (v. 16). The “right hand” is the hand of authority and honor.

In His judgments He is perfect (v. 16). “A sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth.” The sword is the Word of God, divine in judgment, power, and authority. It both cuts and cures, hurts and heals.

In His appearance He is praiseworthy (v. 16): “His face was shining like the sun at midday.” This speaks of His brilliance, holiness, majesty, and awesomeness. John saw Jesus as He, the Son of God, truly is.²¹

Second, we see Him in His sacrifice.

Amidst the first worship John witnesses, he writes this:

*Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth.*²²

Then:

*In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”*²³

John saw Jesus die on the cross, but now he sees Him as the slain Lamb of God. It must have been a strange experience.

Something we should note that it will be the Lamb who opens the Seven Seals.

Finally, we see Him in His victory.

Listen to what John wrote:

*Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.*²⁴

This rider is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the return of the King! The white horse symbolizes victory. He defeats Satan and throws him into the Lake of Fire.

My friends, the central theme of the Bible is the story of God calling us back into the relationship, the very good relationship for which we were created. It is the story of God coming into this world as one of us, in the man Jesus of Nazareth, and calling people to accept the relationship God offers them. It is the story of the holy triumphing over the unholy. It is the story of an eternal home with God, as it was in the Garden of Eden. We will walk with God. We will talk with God. We will be with God. If we believe.

²¹ Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in Revelation, Revelation 1:12-16

²² Revelation 5:6 (NLT2)

²³ Revelation 5:12 (NIV)

²⁴ Revelation 19:11-16 (NLT2)