

## THE BIG READ (24)

### Jesus in Revelation

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The New Testament contains a number of epistles or letters sent to individual Christians or churches.

These letters address specific situations in the lives of believers and through them we are taught how to live as God’s people today.

Thirteen of these letters were written by the apostle Paul. The remaining nine letters were written by other church leaders.

The final letter of the New Testament is Revelation.

*“There is a whole book of Revelation which I do not understand... only fools and madmen are positive in their interpretation of the Apocalypse.”* (Charles Spurgeon)

3. Revelation was written by the apostle John.

“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9)

John had been exiled to the Island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian, and this dates the letter as written some time around AD95, making it the last book to be written.

On the Lord’s Day, John is given the vision contained in Revelation and is told to write down what he saw and send it to seven churches in Asia Minor.

“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches.’” (Revelation 1:10)

#### B. What type of book is Revelation?

1. Revelation is a revelation.

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw – that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 1:1-2)

Revelation means to uncover, to unveil something that was hidden.

It reveals the truth about who Jesus is, about what He’s done, is doing, and will do in the future.

2. Revelation is a prophecy.

"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near." (Revelation 1:3)

A prophecy is not just a series of predictions about what is going to happen in the future.

A prophecy is also God's view on what is going on in the present and how His people are to respond.

### 3. Revelation is a letter.

"John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." (Revelation 1:4-5)

It is a letter written to particular people in particular locations at a particular time in history.

These seven churches are representative of all local churches throughout history because the pressures they faced were not unique to them.

## C. Why was John told to write this letter?

### 1. Revelation was written to encourage Christians who were under pressure.

They were facing the danger of persecution.

"You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary." (Revelation 2:3)

"I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days." (Revelation 2:9-10)

"I know where you live – where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city – where Satan lives." (Revelation 2:13)

"I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no-one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars – I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you." (Revelation 3:8-9)

They were facing the danger of false teaching.

"Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans." (Revelation 2:14-15)

"Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols." (Revelation 2:20)

They were facing the danger of complacency.

"I know your deeds, you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead." (Revelation 3:1)

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love." (Revelation 2:4)

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." (Revelation 3:15-17)

## 2. Revelation was written to encourage them that God rules.

"At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder." (Revelation 4:2-5)

God rules – He's got everything under control.

"The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:10-11)

## 3. Revelation was written to encourage them that Jesus wins.

"Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no-one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no-one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside." (Revelation 5:1-4)

The scroll is God's plan for the future – His plan to destroy His enemies and save His people – we see what this is in the remainder of the book (Revelation 6-22).

God's plan will not take place until the scroll is opened.

"Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain." (Revelation 5:5-6)

"I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals." (Revelation 6:1)

Jesus because of His victorious death on the cross is able to open the scroll and so God's plan to save His people and destroy His enemy will take place.

"They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." (Revelation 17:14)

## 4. Revelation was written to encourage them to keep going and not compromise their faith.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)

### **D. The Story of Revelation (or rather The Story of Jesus in Revelation)**

#### 1. Some things to have in mind as you read through Revelation.

The type of book Revelation is – a revelation, a prophecy, and a letter.

The big message of Revelation – God rules, Jesus wins, Keep going, Don't compromise.

Revelation is all about the big picture rather than wanting you to analyse and dissect every tiny detail.

Almost all the imagery is taken from the Old Testament.



2. Revelation is made up of seven parallel sections, with each section covering the same period of history leading up to Jesus' return.

Chapters 1-3 – the focus is on the experience of the church throughout human history until Jesus returns.

"I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no-one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God: and I will also write on him my new name." (Revelation 3:11-12)

Chapters 4-7 – the focus is on God's present judgment on this world (including war and bloodshed, famine and death) and the persecution of the church, which are birth pains to remind us that Jesus is coming.

"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17)

Chapters 8-11 – the focus is on the task of the church until Jesus returns, which is to proclaim the gospel because only this message can break through the false religion and false beliefs that Satan and his demons have spread throughout the world.

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Chapters 12-14 – the focus is on how Satan will continue to attack the church through persecution by the state and the deception of false teaching until Jesus returns.

"I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." (Revelation 14:14-15)

Chapters 15-16 – the focus is on how God's enemies will be destroyed when Jesus returns.

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." (Revelation 16:15)

Chapters 17-19 – the focus is on how Jesus' return will bring the end of Babylon (the world opposed to God), the beast and the false prophet.

"Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf... The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh." (Revelation 19:19-21)

Chapters 20-22 – the focus is on how God is going to remove everything and everyone that will spoil the new heavens and new earth He is going to create.

"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:7-10)

#### **D. Jesus in Revelation**

##### 1. Jesus is the Eternal One.

Jesus is the First and the Last.

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last." (Revelation 1:17)

"I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (Revelation 22:13)

##### 2. Jesus is the Promised One.

Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

"Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." (Revelation 5:5)

##### 3. Jesus is the Reigning One.

Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

"They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." (Revelation 17:14)

"On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16)