



REVELATION

FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE LAMB

WEEK 01
Following the Way of the Lamb
Rev 1:1-3

Dwelling in the Word

1. Prayerfully read through Revelation 1:1-3 and ask yourself: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? Why? 2) What does this passage say about what God desires to accomplish in us? 3) How would you like to respond to what God says in this passage?
2. Read through the book of Revelation (or at least the first three chapters) in one sitting. What were your first impressions of the book? How would you say it was organized? Were there some themes that stood out to you? Are some themes repeated? Which ones? Was there anything difficult to understand?
3. Consider starting a journal, noting your thoughts and impressions of your read through, as well as any questions you may have as we study this book together as a church.

Digging Deeper

1. The central idea of the sermon is that Revelation is at its core a book about “Jesus Christ, worship and discipleship, and final hope for the world.” How do you understand this from your own reading of the book?
2. John identifies his book as “a revelation (*apocalypse*) of Jesus Christ” (1:1). This phrase can be mean both that the revelation is *about* Jesus as well as *from* Jesus. What do you think is the significance of each possibility? How do the two options work together to provide pastoral encouragement?
3. Revelation is a type of ancient “apocalyptic” literature. This type of literature is full of symbols and imagery (numbers, colours, images). What were some of the significant images you came across in your first reading? (If you are a keener, do a google search and read a bit from 4Ezra).
4. In verse three, John also refers to his work as a “prophecy.” What does this automatically make you think of? According to the sermon, what tends to be the focus of most biblical prophecy?
5. The NLT Chronological Study Bible comments that “Revelation is a book about the future and about the present. It offers future hope to all believers” and “gives present guidance as it teaches us about Jesus Christ and how we should live for him now.” What themes of hope did you notice as you read through the first 3 chapters?

For Groups

1. If this is your first time together as a group, spend some time getting acquainted with one another. As an icebreaker, share with each other what have been your experiences, whether positive or negative, or neutral, with the book of Revelation?
2. As we enter into the study of Revelation, are there any questions you have that you’re hoping might be answered?
3. In the first three verses we’re told that this revelation was given to John to share with other Christ followers. This is a good reminder that God does speak to us, even today. Have you had experiences where you know (or think) God was speaking to you?
4. N.T. Wright notes that the style of writing in Revelation, “was designed to correspond to, and make available, the visions and ‘revelations’ seen by holy, prayerful people who were wrestling with the question of the divine purpose.” Are there some questions that you are looking for answers to right now? How can your group be praying for you in the midst of the searching and wrestling?

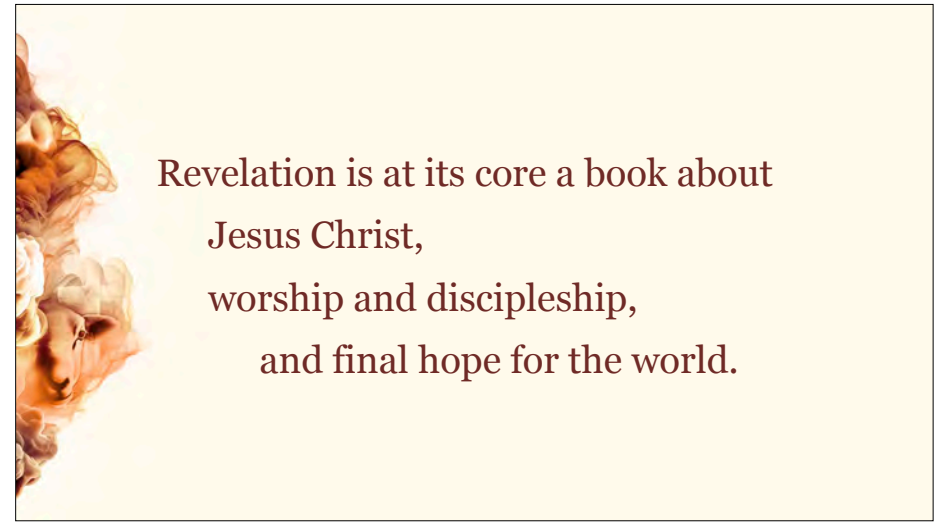
Living it Out

1. Revelation is “a report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:2). What is one way your life can be a witness to the word of God this week?
2. The third verse pronounces a blessing on “those who hear and who keep what is written in it” (1:3). What are some ways you can be responsive and faithful to the message of the book of Revelation as we study it together?

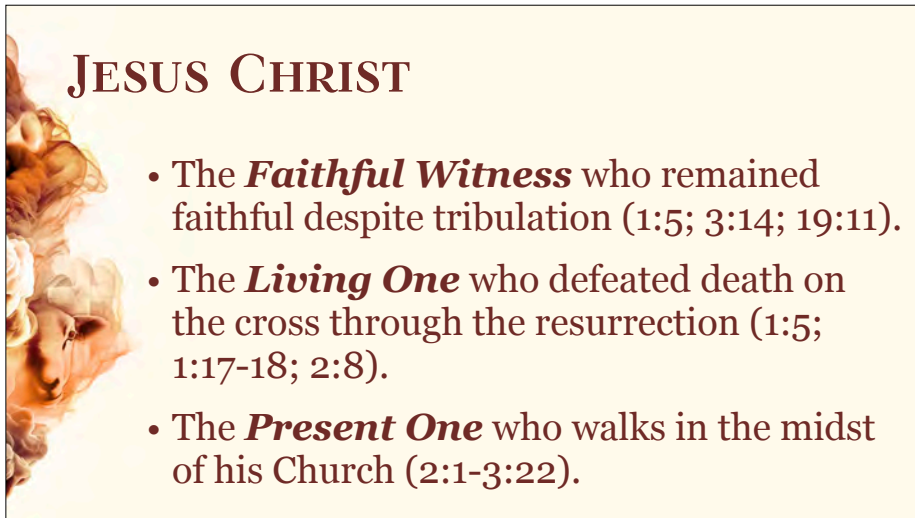


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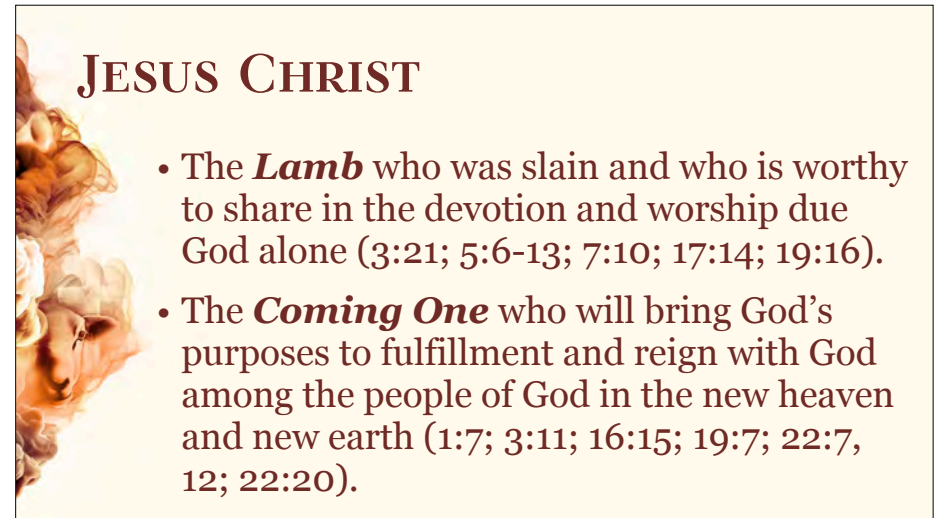


Revelation is at its core a book about
Jesus Christ,
worship and discipleship,
and final hope for the world.



JESUS CHRIST

- The **Faithful Witness** who remained faithful despite tribulation (1:5; 3:14; 19:11).
- The **Living One** who defeated death on the cross through the resurrection (1:5; 1:17-18; 2:8).
- The **Present One** who walks in the midst of his Church (2:1-3:22).



JESUS CHRIST

- The **Lamb** who was slain and who is worthy to share in the devotion and worship due God alone (3:21; 5:6-13; 7:10; 17:14; 19:16).
- The **Coming One** who will bring God's purposes to fulfillment and reign with God among the people of God in the new heaven and new earth (1:7; 3:11; 16:15; 19:7; 22:7, 12; 22:20).



WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP

- Followers of the **Way of the Lamb**.
- **Worship** and give allegiance to Christ alone, who is “Lord of lords and King of kings” (17:14; 19:16).
- Follow the Lamb in a life of **Discipleship**; they are faithful witnesses who “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (14:14).



HOPE FOR THE WORLD

- Hope despite all appearances.
- Based on the firm conviction that God will accomplish his purposes in and through his Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
- This hope is missional in that God invites us to enter the story and mission of God, the *missio Dei*.



FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE LAMB

Revelation 1:1-3
September 10, 2023 | Tyler Williams



REVELATION 1:1-3

“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, ²who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near” (1:1-3, NRSV).

AN APOCALYPSE...

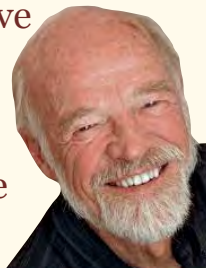
“The/A revelation of...” (1:1).

- Apocalypse (*apocalypsis* αποκαλυψις): A revelation, disclosure, or unveiling.
- Moves aside the veil and gives us a glimpse of the unseen realm: not just the future, but the past and present as well.

AN APOCALYPSE...

- A kind of writing that was common before and after the time of Jesus.
- Full of numerology (7s, 12s), coded colours (white, red, black), cryptic symbols (over 300!), cosmic dualism (good and evil, this age and the age to come), and much more.
- Revelation ignites the *imagination*.

“I read Revelation not to get more information but to revive my imagination. The imagination is our way into the divine Imagination, permitting us to see wholly—as whole and holy—what we perceive as scattered, as order what we perceive as random. St. John uses words the way poets do, recombining them in fresh ways so that old truth is freshly perceived” (Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, xii).



... OF JESUS CHRIST

- A revealing *of* Jesus Christ... discloses who Jesus truly is.
- Gives a cosmic perspective on the person of Jesus in imagery and symbolism understandable by its 1st century AD audience.



... OF JESUS CHRIST

- A revealing **by** Jesus Christ... e.g., the NIV, “A revelation from Jesus Christ.”
- Purpose is “to show his servants what must soon take place”(1:1).



... OF JESUS CHRIST

- Knowing the events **without** knowing the person of Jesus only brings fear as the events unfold in the course of human history.
- Knowing the person of Jesus, **without** knowing the nature of reality and the events surrounding his return renders the Christ follower ill-prepared to persevere in the face of suffering and tribulation.



... THIS PROPHECY

- “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the **words of this prophecy...**” (1:3 also 22:7, 10, 18, 19).
- Prophecy (*propheteia* προφητεια): a message from God that interprets his will or purpose.
 - Biblical prophecy is more *forthtelling* God’s message into the present than *foretelling* the future.



... THIS PROPHECY


- Reinterpretation and re-imagination of earlier prophecy.
- Saturated with allusions from the Old Testament (404 verses; over 600 references) and other Jewish writings.
- **Main purpose** to give words of comfort and challenge to God’s people then and now.



A BLESSING

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those **who hear and who keep** what is written in it; for the time is near” (1:3).

- The first of seven blessings or beatitudes (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14).
- A call to first commandment faithfulness.



“Scripture is read and heard in order to be practiced. It is not for entertainment. It is not for diversion. It is not for culture. It is not a key for unlocking secrets to the future. It is not a riddle to intrigue the pious dilettante.

The word keep (*tereo*) does not mean ‘keep safe’ by putting it in a strong box. It means to keep at it, to keep it in use, to keep it active in everyday life” (Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, 17).



A BLESSING

- This blessing is the **key** to reading Revelation as it highlights what our motivation should be for reading it: to “hear and keep” its words.
- We hear/read in order to be transformed, not merely informed.



CONCLUSIONS

*Are we willing to follow the way
of the Lamb?*

RESOURCES

- **YouVersion App** – Weekly events to follow along.
- **Weekly Study Guide** with questions for individual or group study (see website).
- **Adult Education Course** with Tyler Williams, Ralph Korner, Brian Irwin (Two sessions: Sunday October 15 and 22, 5:30-8:30 pm).



RESOURCES

- Michael Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly* (\$30 at Welcome Centre)
- Other scholars like Catherine Cory, Gordon Fee, Scot McKnight, Eugene Peterson, Ben Witherington, and N.T. Wright.

