

All Things New

Key Theme in Revelation: *Things are not as they seem*

What is the Context of Revelation?

- Jesus had gone into Heaven and hadn't returned
- The new church experienced a local persecution (Acts 8)
- The Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (70 AD).
- By 90 AD, the church was being persecuted by the Roman Emperor Domitian
- People were wondering what's going on

Jesus Gives John a Revelation

- An 'unveiling' - A behind-the-scenes look at Jesus, the church, politics, spiritual reality, and daily life
- Revelation 1:1 – Revelation is a 'revealing' *about* Jesus *from* Jesus *concerning* Jesus
- Jesus tells John to write it all down and send it to the churches
 - a. It is a message about Jesus from Jesus to the churches

4 Key Things

There are four things we'll do every week in the discussion.

#1 - Read it Out Loud (Revelation 1:3)

- Revelation 1:3 – "Blessed is the one *who reads aloud the words of this prophecy...*"
- Read the passage out loud every week
 - Different people doing verse by verse is possible, but can feel choppy and disjointed
 - One person reading it all, or two people reading half can work well
 - Use different translations, but not at the same time
 - Use YouTube, Spotify, or the Bible App to get different voices, accents, versions, or translations
- Consider reading the whole book start to finish in one sitting! (One life group did this – it took them about 90 minutes.)

#2 – Ask the Question: What Do We See?

- Jesus told John to "write what you see and send it to the churches" (1:11)
 - We can be tempted to get rid of the images, or explain them away

- Jesus could have given principles or ideas (e.g. “I am in control” or “You are loved”), but instead He *showed* John what was happening (e.g. “I hold the stars” or “I walk among the lampstands”)
- Jesus often taught with images, pictures, or stories rather than principles and ideas
- It is important we ‘see’ the pictures with John, not just listen to the descriptions
- Keep asking the question: What does John see next?
 - When does John “look” or “see” or “watch?” (e.g. Revelation 4:1, 5:1, 5:6, 5:11, 6:1, etc.)
 - Look for nouns (person/place/thing), adjectives (describing word), verbs (action words)
- Don’t just listen; *imagine*
 - For example, Jesus is described as having white hair. When you think of this, is His hair long or short? Is it curly? Is it shiny or matte?
- Understanding what we see is tricky!
 - Be careful of speculation
 - Be humble & cautious
- Allow Revelation to interpret Revelation
 - For example, Revelation 2:1 talks about stars and lampstands. Revelation 1:20 explains what those are.
 - Revelation 13:18 and 17:9 are complicated images, but both times it says “This calls for a mind with wisdom.”
 - Therefore, *wisdom* is the proper response!
- Revelation has a lot of connections to the Old Testament
 - If there’s something in Revelation you don’t understand, there’s a 90% chance it’s an Old Testament reference!
 - Listen to the sermons
 - Look at your Bible footnotes¹ for Old Testament references and then look them up
 - Check out other resources:
 - **Darrell Johnson**
 - Sermons: <https://darrelljohnson.ca/series/the-apocalypse-of-jesus-christ> (Includes links to YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify & Sermon Notes)
 - Book: *Discipleship on the Edge*
 - **NT Wright**
 - *Revelation for Everyone*
 - **The Bible Project**
 - <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-revelation/>

¹ Like this one

- Even with all the resources we have, there are some things we still won't understand
 - As Darrell Johnon says in *Discipleship on the Edge*, "I believe what John believes, but I'm not always sure what John believes."
 - Be OK to say, "I'm not sure what this means"

#3 - What Do We Hear?

- Revelation 1:3 - "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and *blessed are those who hear it...*"
- There are seven commands to "listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches"
 - Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22
- What is the Holy Spirit saying?
- Give space to listen to the Holy Spirit
 - We don't have to be afraid! The Holy Spirit will lead us into truth and reminds us what Jesus said²
 - Jesus says "My sheep know my voice"³
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to us through the Bible?
 - Look for
 - Quotation marks
 - Commands
 - Warnings
 - Promises
 - Encouragement
- BUT sometimes we confuse our opinion with the voice of the Holy Spirit
 - Look at the text – what does it say?
 - Look at your life, not someone else's
 - Remember: this is the Revelation *of Jesus* – focus on Him!

A Warning

If you're using words like "Carney, Canada, Liberal, Conservative, Democrat, Republican, Trump, America, Putin, Russia, Xi Jinping, or China" you're likely off track.

² John 14:26

³ John 10:4

#4 –What will be different?

- Revelation 1:3 – “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it *and take to heart what is written in it...*”
- “Take to heart” means to let your life be changed as a result.
 - “Blessed are those who hear-and-do”
- Revelation 21:7 – “Blessed are those who keep the words of this prophecy”
- How does Revelation change me?
 - How does it encourage, challenge, convict, remind, show, etc.
 - Look at your whole life (e.g. thoughts, beliefs, actions, words, and relationships, hobbies, hopes, dreams, fears, work, school, prayers, spending, scheduling, commitments, etc.)
- Our takeaway should focus on *me* (not you), *us* (not them), *changed life* (not ideas or opinions), and *now* (not later)
- Look for application in your life
 - E.g. Revelation 13:10 talks about the mark of the beast & 14:12 talks about the torment of those who worship the beast, and the application is ““This calls for patient endurance on the part of God’s people” (Revelation 13:10, 18 & 14:12).
 - Are you patiently enduring?
 - What do you need to patiently endure?
 - What might challenge or interrupt your patient endurance?
 - Avoid you/them, over there, and ideas
 - Focus on me/us, here/now, and action/response
- Consider meeting in smaller groups (e.g. Apprentice Groups, Freedom Series, guys & girls, etc.) for this last section
- How does the revelation of Jesus change how I see Jesus, my life, and the world?
- What is different as a result?