**Book of Revelation**

**Sermon I**

Revelation = unveiling. *apokalupsis* αποκαλυψισ vision as a literary device. The word is found in Rev 1:1

Purpose:

1. To show in dramatic fashion that God is in control.

“The purpose of these writings was to stress the virtue of loyalty and of stimulate faith by showing in vivid fashion the certain overthrow of evil and final victory for God’s righteous cause.” (Summers: Worthy is the Lamb)

Revelation is apocalyptic literature. Revelation = apokalupsis = apocalylptic

Characteristics of apocalyptic writing:

1. Generally produced in troubled times.

Isaiah: Destruction of Samaria

Ezekiel and Daniel: Captivity

Revelation: Roman persecution

2. Cryptic (coded) in style (ie. the message is not obvious to the uninitiated)

Why? These books have bad news for God’s enemies. To protect the recipients of the message from their enemies.

3. Prophecy vs Apocalyptic

Prophecy: Mainly preaching and secondarily prediction.

Apocalyptic: Mainly prediction and secondarily preaching.

4. Apocalyptic literature always has a historical setting and significance. Knowledge of the historical situation is very important to understanding the vision.

Daniel: Persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes 167-164 BC

Revelation: Domitian’s persecution 96/97 AD

Purpose: to give comfort, assurance and courage in difficult times.

7. Symbolic.

Most of scripture: Take literally unless the context demands a figurative interpretation. Ex: Jesus says, “Go tell that fox…”

Apocalyptic: Take figuratively unless the context demands otherwise.

Ex: The seven churches are seven literal churches.

There was a more or less accepted use of certain symbols.

Numbers used symbolically extensively.

1 = unity, unique, alone.

2 = strength, courage, energy (two are better than one) (two witnesses in Revelation) (two beasts war against the saints = a strong enemy)

3 = divine number. Number of God.

4 = the world (four winds, four cardinal directions, four angels, four creatures in Revelation = the four divisions of the wild animals. Four horsemen = powers of mankind, destructive powers of the world.

6 = sinister, Satan 6 falls one short of seven. Doom. 666 in Revelation.

7 = perfection, completeness 4 + 3 = 7 world + God = perfection. 7 spirits, 7 churches, 7 golden lampstands, 7 stars, 7 sections of Revelation, each in seven parts (7 signs and 7 I Am statements in John)

3-1/2 = incomplete, imperfect. Restless longings unfulfilled, waiting. (time, times and half a time Daniel 7) 3-1/2 used a lot in Revelation 1260 days the church was in the wilderness. Daniel 7:25 12:7 Rev 11:2,3 12:6,14 Rev 13:5

10 = completeness (all your fingers or all your toes) 10 commandments are the whole duty of men. The dragon, the first beast and the scarlet beast all have 10 horns.

Multiples of 10 1000 = ultimate completeness

12 Number of religion. God’s people. 12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 gates in New Jerusalem.

Ex. 144,000 is the full number of God’s people (12x12x10x10x10) and is certainly NOT literal! The ultimate complete number of God’s people.

Many other uses of stock symbols in apocalyptic literature.

The seas represent the peoples of the earth.

Horns = kings or powers

8. Dramatic. Apocalyptic literature is very dramatic, vivid, forceful. Uses the grotesque and the terrifying to catch our attention. Rivers of blood, hail, locusts, dragons, death riding a horse with the grave following behind. Animals with many heads and heads with many horns.

How to approach Revelation?

About the visions and imagery: get the big point and do not get caught up in the details.

9. Involves end-times End-time theories (Eschatology):

Preterist a theologian who believes that the Scripture prophecies of the Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation) have already been fulfilled

Amillenialist Amillennialism (Latin: a- "no" + millennialism) is a view in Christian end-times theology named for its rejection of the theory that Jesus Christ will have a thousand-year long, [physical] reign on the earth. ...

Premillenialist The doctrine that the prophesied millennium of blessedness will begin with the imminent Second Coming of Christ.

Postmillenialist The doctrine that the Second Coming of Christ will be the culmination of the prophesied millennium of blessedness.

Historical background:

What is the setting of the book?

Revelation 1:9 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.

96/97 AD Domitian is emperor and he is about to begin an empire-wide persecution of the church for the first time. Trouble and new persecutions are coming on the church.

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

Message of Revelation: **Be encouraged and faithful to Jesus Christ. Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord.**

Objective: to comfort persecuted Christians.

Description of Revelation: A “divine picture-book”. “Spiritual cartoons,” representing the historical development of the early Christian church.

Romans appeals to the intellect/mind

Psalms appeals to the emotions

Revelation appeals to the imagination.

Outline of Revelation

Ch 1 Prologue

Ch 2-3 Letters to the Seven Churches

Ch 4-7 The Seven Seals

Ch 8-11 The Seven Trumpets

Ch 12-16 Seven Mystical Figures

Ch 15-16 The Seven Vials

Ch 17-20 Enemies of the Church Overthrown

Ch 21-22 The Kingdom of God Revealed

**Revelation Ch 1**

John 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show to his servants what must soon come to pass (things it is necessary to come to pass shortly).

What is the book about? Things that will soon take place.

*Dei*  δει morally necessary. In other words, God’s justice requires that these prophecies must be fulfilled soon. Jesus: It is necessary that I go to Jerusalem to die Matt 16:21

En taxeos εν ταχέως quickly Paul: come to me quickly 2 Tim 4:9 taxeos

Rev 1:1, 22:6 must soon take place

Rev 1:3, 22:10 is at hand (right near by)

Compare to Daniel 9:26 which concerns “the distant future.” (written 550 BC about 167 BC)

Could this be some time two thousand or more years in the future?

1:3 First of seven “beatitudes.”

1. Blessed is he who reads this prophecy and takes it to heart. 1:3

2. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. 14:13

3. Blessed is he who watches and is prepared for the Lord’s coming 16:15

4. Blessed are those who are invited to the Lamb’s wedding supper 19:9

5. Blessed are those who have part in the first resurrection 20:6

6. Blessed is he who keeps the words of this book. 22:7

7. Blessed are those who wash their robes. 22:14

Guess what: You are blessed.

Rev 1:4-5,11 Who is it from? God, the Holy Spirit (the seven spirits) and Jesus Christ

Who was the letter to? “to the seven churches…” Rev. 1:4

Rev 1:11 Specifically, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Why them? Because these were the churches, more or less, that John himself was shepherd of.

Although it is addressed to the seven churches, it is addressed to all the churches.

Rev 1:9 John can totally relate to the terrible persecutions that the church is about to undergo.

Why was he on Patmos? Because of the Word of God. (blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake)

We are about to get a look at Jesus. Before you do, form a mental image of Jesus. what do you see?

We will look at three different Jesuses in Revelation. One of them will probably be like the mental image you formed.

Rev 1:12-16 Q: Is this the picture one gets of Jesus in the gospels? Definitely not!!!

The principle picture of Jesus in Revelation (although there are other pictures) is of mind-blowing power. (rod of iron 19:15, winepress of his wrath 19:15, terrible in anger 6:16f, etc.)

A voice “like a trumpet” v 10 (a loud and clear message)

Description of Jesus here similar to Daniel 7:9-10 The “Ancient of Days.” And Daniel 10:4-9.

Blazing eyes see everything very clearly. Nothing escapes his notice!

White hair, etc. purity

Bronze feet = strength

Double-edged sword coming from his mouth Literal? NO! = his absolute authority and power to judge by what he speaks (John 12:48 the very words I spoke will judge at the last day)

To sum up the image: Jesus is authoritative, holy, majestic, omniscient, powerful. He stands among the churches, he holds their fate in his hands. This should have been very reassuring.

Why? Because God’s purpose is to reassure the saints that God is in control.

Q: (in view of our typical picture of Jesus) How does this picture make you feel?

Rev 5:4-6 Another picture of Jesus

Jesus confidently takes the scroll, which is the message of Revelation to the saints.

Jesus is a lion (a powerful ruler) Gen 49:8-12 the lion of Judah-of God’s people

Jesus is the Root of David (Messiah) Isaiah 11:1-10

Jesus is a majestic, powerful, triumphant ruler.

Jesus is a Lamb who looks as if he had been slain.

Q: In what sense is Jesus a lion? A lion to his enemies

Q: In what sense is Jesus a lamb? A lamb to those who follow him

Q: what would a lamb “as it were slain” look like?

A lamb with seven horns (power) and seven eyes (omniscient). Bizarre. Not literal.

Any specific examples? (Matthew 16:23 Get behind me, Satan, Matthew 23, esp. v. 29-37 whitewashed tombs,

but notice right after he is a lamb again Mat 23:37-39 Jerusalem, Jerusalem)

Specific examples (John 8:11 then neither do I condemn you. Luke 9:51-56 did not call down fire , Matthew 9:35-38 compassion

Is 42:1-4 is Jesus as a lamb. Is 42:4 Q: How will he bring about justice if he is not breaking bruised reeds or snuffing out smoldering wicks?

Which is the real Jesus?

Is it the powerful image of Rev 1, the lion of Rev 5 or the lamb of Rev 5?

Rev 1:17-20

Note that in Revelation 1:17 (and Rev 22:13) Jesus calls himself the Alpha and Omega, whereas in Rev 1:8 and Isaiah 44:6 God uses this of himself. This is further proof (if we needed any) of the deity of Christ.

Rev 1:18 Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades (the place we go when we die).

1:19-20 seven stars is the seven messengers symbolically is the perfect messengers

Seven golden lampstands is the seven churches. Symbolically, is the church in its perfection.

**Rev Chapters 2 & 3 The Seven Letters**

Who was the Revelation to? “to the seven churches…” Rev. 1:4

Rev 1:11 Specifically, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Why them? Because these were the churches, more or less, that John himself was shepherd of.

Jesus is about to go on an inspection tour of OUR church. What will he find?

What is the current state of the Church of Christ in Bakersfield?

Uhhh… Are you feeling a bit uncomfortable—like waiting in the office for an interview? Hoping he does not notice? Are you expecting a rebuke? Are you feeling proud? Are you expecting a commendation?

Pattern for letters to the churches

1. Greeting

2. A description of Jesus (taken, in part, from Rev 1:12-16)

3. A commendation (except Sardis and Laodicea)

4. A criticism (except Smyrna and Philadelphia)

5. An appeal and a warning

6. Exhortation and promise

Rev 2:1-7

v. 1 Jesus has the seven stars (angels/messengers of the churches Rev 1:20) in his hand. And he is walking among the seven golden lampstands/churches.

What picture does this give you of Jesus and his church—especially ours?

He is aware of what is going on in our church. Nothing misses his eye.

He knows how the Newfield’s Bible talk is doing. He is aware what the dating situation is like in the campus group.

The churches are definitely not left as orphans. Despite all appearances, Jesus is caring for the churches. He is watching.

If you understand both that:

Jesus is watching and aware what we are doing and

Jesus is taking care of/protecting us

How might you behave if you understood this?

Remember in the following that this is the church John was the chief elder of!!!

Rev 2:2-7 What are they praised for?

* hard work
* perseverance
* staunch opposition to sin (unlike Pergamum and Thyatira)

Aside: v. 6 Nicolaitins = Nicholas of Antioch? Acts 6:5 a proselyte. Some scholars suggest these people were open to including pagan practices in the church.

The Ephesians were keeping worldliness out of the church!

* opposed false doctrine they tested the false apostles.

 These Christians were not slackers!!! They were fully convinced that they were doing awesome. How are you doing? Great!!!

They were the right church, teaching the right doctrine, opposing what God opposes.

They are doing great, right?????

Below we will learn that these people had lost their first love. Question: Can we “not grow weary”(v. 3) if we have lost our first love? Apparently, yes.

Q: How would you describe these Christians? They were in the habit of Christianity after many years of doing the right thing. They were good at it.

2:4 What had they lost? How might you be like this?

Are you good at Christianity—at doing the good Christian things?

But their hearts were not in it, and to the extent it was, that “heart” was not focused on Jesus. “For Christ’s love compels us” was not for them. They needed to do the cross study again!

Is that you? Well…

2:5 The solution:

* Consider/Remember Q: What?
* Repent Q: How? I am doing the right things!

 Can you repent of not having a particular feeling?

How? “Do what you did at first.” This is confusing, because they were doing all the right things.

Conclusion: Do it the WAY you did it at first. (what you did vs how you did it)

They shared their faith zealously. They prayed eagerly, they gave money excitedly, they fellowshipped joyously, etc. Become like a child.

I do not want Jan and I to act like young (immature) lovers.

You do not want to start acting like a baby Christian.

But there is a mature way of being like a young Christian.

There is a mature “first love.”

Again—sharing zealously, praying eagerly, give money excitedly, open yourself to going on a mission team, fellowship joyously…

Child-like, not childish.

Be like Vanessa Morris. Be like Mary Sheffield.

What is at stake? v. 5 I… will remove your lampstand. They will not all fall away, but their church will languish and eventually die.

2:7 Who has an ear? If you listen, Rev 21,22 will be for you.

Rev 2:8-11 Smyrna Q: Why does Jesus only have good things to say about Smyrna? Is it because they have no problems?

v. 9 The church was relatively poor. v. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty. Jesus is walking among the lampstands and he knows.

In what sense are they “rich” Poor in money but rich in spiritual wealth.

Q: Do you feel rich? Do you feel poor? 1 Tim 6:8 “If we have food and clothing we will be content with that.”

The “Synagogue of Satan” is the Jews who are persecuting the church

Above the Synagogue, typically, was a sign: “Synagogue of the Lord” above a Jewish place of worship.

v. 10 They will be persecuted (by the Jews in their city) for 10 days. Perhaps not a literal ten days. Represents a definite period of time.

How faithful does Jesus want them to be? ‘”Be faithful even to the point of death.” And you will get a crown….. v. 12 you will be untouched by the second death (Rev. 20)/hell.

 Q: Would you be faithful to the point of death if asked to make a sacrifice to the Roman god?

Rev 2:12-17 Pergamum. Pergamum was the former Roman capital and largest city in Asia, known for its out-of-control paganism.

“Throne of Satan” was a huge altar to Zeus on a hill 800 feet above Pergamum

Altars to Zeus, Augustus, Tiberius, Roma and many more.

Library in Pergamum was the second largest in the world. 200,000 volumes. When they tried to get the librarian of Alexandria to come to Pergamum, The Ptolemies cut off the supply of papyrus, and thus parchment (pergamena) was invented.

2:12 the one with the sharp, double-edged sword. Watch out! I know where you live….

Faithful in the days of Antipas “my faithful witness” (*martus*, martyr)

Their problem: **Some** hold to Balaam’s teaching. Many—probably most were faithful and did not hold to this teaching.

Balaam (Book of Numbers): Idol-worship (read this as offering incense to Roma/the emperor)

**Some** hold to the teachings of the teaching of the Nicolaitins.

Their problem: lack of church discipline. They were too tolerant of sin.

Q: Is tolerance a Christian virtue? It is the ultimate virtue in a postmodern culture.

We tolerate differences, opinions, food, culture, age, teems root for, political parties,… But not sin.

v. 16 Does Jesus get angry?

Rev 2:17 Assurance: Hidden manna: I will meet your (spiritual) needs. White stone was used as a symbol of acquittal at a trial. It was also given to freed slaves as a token of their having been freed.

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Revelation 2:18-29 Thyatira. Like Pergamum, only worse!

A city with many trades, including dying of purple cloth (Lydia) and working in bronze. Trade-unions/guilds very important here. There was tremendous pressure for Christians to offer worship to idols as required to be part of a guild.

Description of Jesus: “feet of burnished bronze” (bronze a major industry in Thyatira)

Commendation (pretty short): giving and serving and even growing…more than you did at first. This is a growing church. They are doing fairly well—better than Ephesus!

But… the seeds of total disaster have already been planted.

They tolerated Jezebel. Same general problem as Pergamum, but considerably worse.

Jezebel almost certainly not the actual name of the woman. A prominent and charismatic woman.

Her sin: She encouraged taking part in idol-worship as part of trade guilds. It’s not that bad. Drinking is not that bad… Missing church for cultural events or sports events not that serious. You have to make compromises to get along in this world. Work tells you to come in on Sunday? No big deal!

Those who “committed adultery” with her (v. 22) and “her children” are the ones who have fallen under her influence. Theirs is a spiritual adultery.

Divisive spirit and undermining the leadership in the church is a very big issue.

God is going to come down on this woman big time. “I will deal with her.” He will not wait for the church to discipline her.

v. 24 “deep teaching” a probably reference to Gnosticism.

Assurance: Hang on to the end, and I will give you authority over nations! (1 Cor 6:2-4 We will judge angels)

Summary so far:

**Remember, repent and rediscover that first love**

**God knows our trials and suffering and will rescue us from them.**

**Tolerance of sin is NOT a virtue. We need church discipline and unity in the face of sin**

**If we do this God will give us a white stone!**

**Book of Revelation Sermon III**

**Letters to the Churches Part 2**

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

Rev. 3:1-6 Sardis.

Capital of King Croesus: the fabled richest man in the world.

Croesus went to the Oracles of Delphi. Shall I attack King Cyrus. The answer: If you do, the result will be the destruction of a king.

The result: Cyrus conquered Sardis 549 BC.

Sardis on the side of an extremely steep hill. So steep it was thought impregnable.

Yet, it was conquered by Cyrus and by Antiochus III The Great (218 BC). It was a city that had a reputation for being great, but twice, it had been overconfident and was conquered easily.

Also, known for robbers, as they could easily escape to the city.

Sardis was living on past glory.

Rev 3:1 So did the church in Sardis! For Sardis, the reprimand comes first. Jesus is losing his patience with these pretenders.

They were living on reputation. They looked good, but they were dead, spiritually.

Q: What was this church like? Remembering the glory days. Not doing very much.

Jesus: Wake UP!!! (Hebrews 2:1) (Note: Cyrus conquered Sardis, literally, because the soldiers of Croesus went to sleep)

Imagine the scene when this letter was read to the church in Sardis! Do you think they repented?

Their problem was not sin, per se, but lack of action and growth.

Maybe they were in shock because of a crisis like Covid-19 and were “stuck.”

Solution: Rev 3:3 Remember, obey and repent.

Jesus: I will come like a thief (kind of like the thieves in Sardis).

v. 4-5 “Yet, you have a few people…” We should remember that even if God judges the church and if the church is dead, some will be faithful. Judging a church and judging an individual are two different things.

v. 5 He who overcomes (any individual Christian) will, like the faithful Sardinian, be dressed in white.

The faithful will not be “blotted out” of the book of life. So much for “once saved, always saved.”

Rev 3:7-13 Philadelphia

Description of Jesus: Holds the Key of David. The Messiah. The true Jewish king.

A clear reference to Isaiah 22:21-22.

Context: They had been heavily persecuted by Jews in the city.

The church in Philadelphia was small and weak, but they were doing really great, especially considering the persecution. In fact, that is why they were being persecuted! Result: Jesus has only good to say to them.

Synagogue of Satan. The true Jews/Israelites were the Christians. (Gal 3:29, Gal 6:16, Romans 9:6-9 not all Israel are Israel).

I will make them come and worship at your feet. Wow!!! (Isaiah 60:14, v. 12 you will be the city of God)

Encouragement:

v. 10 You will not experience the worst of the coming persecution. I am coming soon.

I will make him a pillar (Philadephia was famous for erecting pillars for famous people). Never will he have to leave the city (they had a massive earthquake in AD 17 and people still lived outside the city. There is more encouragement for this church than any other. I will give you a new name (Philadelphia had recently been given a new name: Neocaesarea when Tiberius helped to rebuild the city.)

Rev 3:14-22 Laodicea

A center of banking, black wool and school of medicine (famous for its eye salve)

Laodicea: No commendation. Their sin? Spiritual lukewarmness. Hypocrisy

Wouldn’t it be better to be lukewarm (a little Christian) than ice cold (an enemy of Christianity or a blatant pagan)? NO!!!!

They made Jesus sick to his “stomach.”

3:17 How had they become lukewarm? By relying on self rather than God. By relying on the things the world has to offer for fulfillment. Self-sufficient. They believed in the prosperity gospel.

You say you are rich. (Deut 8: God gives us the ability to create wealth)

You say you do not need a thing. (1 Cor 4:7 What do you have that you did not receive?)

Reality check: You are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Q: Who is wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked? All of us!!!!

3:18 Fortunately, it is not too late from them. They can “buy from me gold, refined by fire.” They can begin to put their treasures in heaven again. …and white clothes to wear. They can return to relying on Jesus, not on the world for salvation. They will still be wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked, but the white clothes will “cover” the nakedness.

I will put on the true salve for your eyes so that you can see spiritually (a reference to the famous Laodicean eye salve) John 9:41 those who claim to see are blind.

Q: Do you need some of this eye-salve? Where is your spiritual discernment, especially when it comes to finding fulfillment in the things of the world?

How will you get this “salve”? by rebuke and discipline (v. 19)

v. 20-21 If we are lukewarm, we keep Jesus at a distance. But, we can repent and re-establish that close relationship.

**Book of Revelation Sermon IV**

**Trust in God. Trust Also In Me**

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

**Revelation Ch 4** Now, the revelation/visions begin. Let’s let our imagination engage what we are about to read. Let us look at the big picture and not get caught up in the meaning of small details. Remember the message: The Father is on the throne and Jesus at the center of the heavenly tabernacle.

Stay faithful to the end and, no matter the trial, no matter the persecution, you will wear a crown and you will enter into the New Jerusalem.

Rev 4:1-8a

4:1 Now, John looks into heaven and the movie begins. “a door standing open in heaven.” A literal door?

4:1b “what must take place after this” ie what will happen soon (not in 2050 AD)

How does the movie open? With God on the throne, naturally.

Ch 4 Believe in God

Ch 5 Believe also in me (Jn 14:1)

Ch 4-5 (especially Ch 4) set up the rest of the book. It is the scene we are to remember as we look in horror at the judgments to be poured out.

Message: When we are persecuted, when we lose a job, undergo hardships, when we are admonished and rebuked as the churches were, when we undergo difficulties such as Covid-19, we need to look to God on the throne!!!!

4:2 A throne in heaven. Throne 38 times in the book. 17 times in Ch. 4-5 Do you get the idea?

Someone sitting on it. Who do you think?

Jasper (white) holiness of God

Carnelian (red) justice, righteousness

Rainbow. God’s promise/covenant (Genesis 9:12-17) “like an emerald” Green the dominant color in this rainbow (life, living hope?)

Rev 4:4 24 elders on 24 thrones = 12 apostles + 12 patriarchs of Israel? (= the priesthood of all God’s people?)

12 x 2 2 = power.

Jesus said this would happen to the twelve (Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30)

Dressed in white with golden crowns. (purity, ruling with God)

These 24 elders represent, in a sense, us!

We are dressed in white and wearing golden crowns. (but watch what we do with our crowns)

This is a picture of the heavenly tabernacle, with close resemblance to the Jewish tabernacle. The 24 elders represent the 24 courses of the priests who served in the temple/tabernacle. (1 Chron 24:3-19)

The picture is of power and authority and suggests security for those loved by God.

4:5 Now the judging power of God is presented as well. “lightning, and rumblings of thunder” The Jews would be made to think of Exodus 19:16. Notice that they trembled.

4:5b seven lamps/seven spirits The Holy Spirit shedding light and revelation.

4:6 Around the throne a sea of crystal. Representing the perfection of God because of which we cannot approach the throne. It represents separation from God. Note that this sea has been removed in heaven Revelation 21:1 “there was no longer any [crystal] sea. (note: even John was separated from the church he oversaw by the sea while on Patmos)

Four living creatures = four cherubim in the Holy of Holies over which God rested.

These are the four who defend God’s holiness.

Lion, ox, man, eagle.

Might they be the four seraphim of Isaiah 6:2? Similar to the four creatures in Ezek 1:5-14 which includes the man, lion, ox, and eagle. Four Cherubim. (four instead of six wings) Also Ezekiel 10

These are the four who kept Adam and Eve from the garden. They were stitched into the curtain in the temple to keep people out of the Holy of Holy.

Their beastliness represents their fierceness in defending the honor of God. King of predators: lion, powerful bull and cunning human and eagle.

4:8a Four living creatures around the throne, covered with eyes on every side. Ever watchful to protect God’s holiness.

Q: Would you like to approach God on his throne now?

Q: What impression are you given of God in Rev 4:1-8?

Rev 4:8b-11 Worship #1 (of seven in Revelation)

Holy, Holy, Holy!!! (Like Isaiah 6:3)

Let’s say it together: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty!!!!

Let’s never forget this.

What are we saying? You are worthy, O God, to receive glory and honor and power!

Let’s say it together!

v. 10 What are we doing? Falling down and casting down our crowns.

Q: Do you cast your crown down before our God?

**Revelation Chapter 5**

Ch 4 we saw the Father and the Spirit. What is missing?

Revelation 5:1-7 Enter: Jesus Christ, the lion and the lamb!

A scroll (the book of Revelation?) (written on both sides… a complete message Ezek 2:9) with seven (perfect) seals. These perfect seals require someone perfect to open them.

5:2-3 No one was worthy (Rom 3:10 No one is righteous, not even one, Mark 10:18 no one is good but God alone)

Joke: If someone asks you how you are doing, say, “I am well” Not I am good.

No one can open up the scroll.

5:5-6 God to us: Do not weep!!! Enter Jesus

Jesus is a lion (a powerful ruler) Gen 49:8-11 the lion of Judah-of God’s people

Jesus is the Root of David (Messiah) Isaiah 11:1-5

Jesus is triumphant

Jesus is a Lamb

Q: In what sense is Jesus a lion? A lion to his enemies

Q: In what sense is Jesus a lamb? A lamb to those who follow him

Q: what would a lamb “as it were slain” look like?

Note: The view of Jesus is quite different from Rev 1:12-17 because his sacrifice is in view.

A lamb with seven horns (power) and seven eyes (omniscient). Bizarre. Not literal.

v. 6 7 horns = perfect in his power

7 eyes = perfect in his knowledge (by the Holy Spirit)

Where is Jesus? Right in the center of the throne (v. 6). That is where our high priest is!

Jesus confidently takes the scroll, which is the message of Revelation to the saints.

Rev 5:8-14 Then the most amazing worship service in history breaks out!!!

Jesus is God! He is a lamb, a lion, the triumphant one. Jesus is worshipped

Rev 5:8 The four creatures (cherubim) and the 24 elders (the saved) begin to worship. Harp = singing bowl of incense = prayer

(Note: Angels never have harps in the Bible, but the elder (representing us) do.

We are praying and singing glory to the Lamb!!!

Rev 5:9-14 A New Song. A reference to the song of Moses Exodus 15

What are we singing? You are worthy. Jesus, you are worthy.

Let’s say it together: Jesus, you are worthy!!!!!

Why is Jesus worthy?

v. 9 Because he gave his life to purchase (redeem) every tribe, language, people and nation

v. 10 to make them a kingdom of priests. Finally, Exodus 19:6 is being fulfilled. Finally there is a kingdom of people with an intimate relationship with God.

I am a priest, and the ones I minister to are the lost. Romans 15:15-16.

We disciples do not need a priest. Jesus is our high priest. But he made us priests.

Q: How are you doing in your priestly duty?

v. 11 Not only us, but hundreds of millions of angels.

Worthy is the lamb who was slain!!!!

v. 13 In fact, all creation is worshipping God, as it should be.

Along with cherubim. What a glorious picture!!!!

Remember: This is intended to set the stage for the rest of Revelation.

Summary so far:

Trust in God who sits on the throne

Trust also in me who is a worthy lamb who was slain so that you can worship God.

**Book of Revelation Sermon V**

**Salvation Belongs to Our God**

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

**Revelation 6: Opening of the seals.** Seal = something not yet revealed.

Rev 6:1-8

Rev 6:1 Come! Come see the vision. Imagine the scene!!! The sound of hoof-beats and enter a White Horse! The main action begins.

For us: A bunch of tanks….

6:2 First seal opened. What is revealed first?

The picture of a warrior on a white horse with a golden crown and a bow = Parthian warrior/king. They are the only ones in memory who defeated Rome (Carrhae 53 BC)

6:3-4 Next: A red horse. This horse represents war which will come to the earth. …given the power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay one another. A large sword. It probably symbolizes persecution which accompanies those who preach the gospel.

Will this impact God’s people? Yes!

6:5-6 The third seal. A black horse. Famine. Scale for measuring food. Whole day’s wage just to buy sufficient wheat to stay alive. Note, oil and wine are still flowing, so the wealthy are not hurt by this famine. It probably represents the financial hardship to come on the Church because of persecution.

6:7-8 The fourth seal. A pale (yellow-green) horse. Death (with Hades right behind) The power to kill ¼ of humanity by the four (partial) judgments: war, famine, disease and wild beasts. (parallel Ezek 14:12-20).

Message: Judgment is coming on Rome. It may represent martyrdoms which are coming on the Church as well.

Message to us: God will come against his enemies—those who oppose the gospel.

Q: How do you feel about the prospect of persecution which might include financial hardship and even death?

Rev 6:9-17

6:9-11 The fifth seal. Reveals the souls of those killed because of the word of God and their testimony (original witnesses of Jesus?). Martyrs.

Our sister in Yemen.

v. 9 Martyrs are “under the altar” This represents the blood of a life which is shed on an altar which pours down “under the altar.” The martyrs are a sacrifice for God.

v. 10 How long…. Before God judges the wicked. Retribution, not vindictiveness, is a good thing. Right now, I cannot relate to this sentiment, but I believe we will when we reach heaven. We will agree with these martyrs that God’s judgment on those who oppose Jesus is a good thing. This sentiment—asking God to come in judgment on God’s enemies—is a common theme in Psalms (Psalm 94:1-7) and is in common in Revelation (Rev 16:5-7)

Application: Romans 12:17-21 Do not repay evil for evil. Do not cut off that aggressive driver. Do not get your enemy fired. Live at peace with everyone

Do not take revenge.

Brothers and sisters, do not take revenge, but leave room for God to take care of these people.

No, love your enemy, protect her, provide for him.

God: I will avenge; I will repay.

v. 11 Answer: not yet (“until the full number…). Wait a little longer until the ones to be killed in the persecution prophesied by Revelation is complete. God will judge Rome but Rome has some more persecuting to do first.

God: When will you bring the Covid-19 pandemic to an end?

God: Trust in my timing.

God: When will you judge my tormentor at work?

God: When will you come to rescue me from the one who abuses me?

God is true and just in his judgments.

6:12-17 The sixth seal. Earthquake, sun turns black, moon turns red, stars fall from the sky, the sky recedes like a scroll and the mountains removed. Everyone hides in caves and among the rocks. This is classic apocalyptic.

Judgment is coming.

The Day of the Lord is here. (Isaiah 2:10-21 for example. Also Joel 2:10, 31 Isaiah 34:4 Nahum 1:5 for sun, stars, etc. ). This is not literal, of course, but it is real. From the OT examples, we know that this is about the fall of a nation (Rome), not the end of the world.

An ironic description: v. 16 the wrath of the lamb.

The wrath of Jesus is coming on the Roman persecutor.

On the Day of the Lord, God’s enemies—the atheists and unbelievers will say

“Fall on us, Hide us” Utter terror. The economy is falling apart. We are falling into war….

Rev 6:17 Rhetorical Question: Who can stand under this terrible tribulation?

Maybe you have felt this lately! You have felt overwhelmed.

We need another look in God’s throne room.

We need Revelation Chapter 7.

The picture so far: Despite what we see in the news, God is in control and he will judge those who oppose us.

**Rev Chapter 7** An encouraging interlude (because we need one)

Read Rev 7:1-9

v. 2 An angel comes “from the East” (where the sun rises, where God always comes from, the temple faces East).

Four angels hold back the coming winds = God’s activity. Holding back judgment.

v. 3 Another angel. Do not harm the land, sea or trees.

God’s people are sealed (sealed = protected from the coming wrath. sealed = ownership.)

Ezek 9:1-4 those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in Jerusalem.

Who is sealed?

144,000 or them (all of all of all of God’s people God’s people)

Why 12,000 from Judah, 12,000 from Reuben, etc.? To emphasize that ALL Christians are sealed and under this protection.

Note: The list is not that given in Genesis. It includes Levi and Joseph but not Dan, Ephraim (centers of calf-worship).

What is this seal? Ephesians 1:13-14. It is the Holy Spirit, “who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

When you were baptized into Christ you received this seal.

Q: Does this sealing mean that the Christians will escape physical suffering in the coming tribulation? Answer: No! In Ezekiel 9:1-6, the righteous are sealed from judgment, but definitely not from the destruction about to come on Jerusalem (Ezek 21:3,4).

Q: Who are these 144,000?

A: They are the “Great multitude that no one could count.”—all the redeemed, but more particularly, the early Christians who were to be protected when God judges Rome.

This is us. What are we doing?

v. 9 White robes purity

palm branches A symbol of joy (Jesus entering Jerusalem).

A symbol of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews built booths of palm branches to celebrate having a relationship with God. A celebration of salvation.

The point for the Christians: No matter what is coming up, no one and no thing will be able to steal your joy or your salvation.

Read Rev 7:10-17

A third worship service, like Rev 5.

What are we loudly proclaiming? Salvation belongs to our God and to the lamb.

That is what God wants you to remember. Whatever happens, who is on the throne and who is in the throne-room?

Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks and honor.

(v. 13) An elder: Who are these people a (symbol of)? Are you getting this, John?

Apparently, a rhetorical question (v. 14) Sir, you know.

These are those who survive the coming tribulation/persecution and overcome by the blood of the Lamb. What a great assurance.

v. 15 God spreads his tabernacle over them. They are in his tent. He will dwell with them.

v. 16 We will never hunger or thirst.

v. 17 Why? Because the lamb is at the center of the throne, and he is our shepherd. He will lead us to springs of living water (which is the Holy Spirit).

What have we learned:

It will get bad sometimes. God will not let sin go. He will judge, and even we may get caught up in it. God will deal with his/our enemies.

But, behind the scenes, Jesus is still on the throne. God is protecting us. We have a seal that guarantees the final outcome. This calls for patient endurance of the saints.

**Book of Revelation Sermon VI**

**They Overcame By the Blood of the Lamb**

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

Structure of Rev 6-20:

Seven seals Ch 6-7

Seven trumpets Ch 8-9

Seven symbolic creatures Ch 10-15

Seven bowls Ch 16-17

All God’s enemies destroyed. Ch 18-20

Rev 8-9 The seven trumpets. More judgment on Rome. 1/3 (rather than ¼) destroyed. The imagery of these judgments directly from the 10 plagues in Egypt.

Crazy locust-soldiers

Unfortunately (Rev 9:20-21) the people still did not repent.

**Revelation 11** Rome is persecuting the church and judgement is coming on God’s enemies.

Rev 11:1-6

v. 1 God measures the Temple. God will protect his people (who are the temple, by the way. 1 Cor 3:16-17, Eph 2:21) Measured = protected. Zech 2:1-5 very similar. “I myself will be a wall of fire around [Jerusalem], declares the Lord.

So, hard times are coming on the church, but God will protect the church.

v. 2 But the outer court—the court of the Gentiles (Herod’s temple) will not be measured (ie the Gentiles will persecute the church—will trample on her v. 2--but God will protect the heart of the church, which will be protected from the coming wrath).

There will be casualties in the church. This has been the case with Covid.

v. 2-3 The outer courts will be trampled for 42 months (3-1/2 years, 1260 days). There will be a limited period of judgment (as described in the rest of Revelation) but the Church will be protected from that judgment and will not be destroyed.

42 months = 1260 days = time, times and half a time

1. The period the church will be persecuted Rev 11:2

2. The period during which the two witnesses testify Rev 11:3

3. The period over which the Woman is nourished in the wilderness Rev 12:6,14

4. The period of the Beast’s authority Rev 13:5

5. The period the little horn persecutes the saints Daniel 7:25

6. The period of the abomination of desolation by Antiochus Ephiphanes Dan 12:11 (1290 days for some reason)

11:3-6 The two witnesses. These represent the Christian witness which will still shine during the time of great trial. (“The witnesses represent the militant spirit of true Christians and their testimony” Summers) Two Olive trees = the priestly and the kingly power (Zech 4:12-14 These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth ie Zerubbabel (civil, royal) and Joshua (priestly) Two lampstands = Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:4-6), disciples—priests of the living God—will testify about God in troubled times.

Why two witnesses? To represent their power.

v. 5-6 And they (we!) are powerful!! Fire from mouth (not bad breath), shut up heavens (like Elijah James 5 3-1/2 yrs), Turn water to blood (Moses). We have a powerful testimony!!!

11:7-12 The Roman persecutor (the beast… the first of the seven mystical creatures) will attack the witnesses—the Church.

Some will even die (their bodies will lie in the street of the Great City = Babylon = Sodom = Egypt = Rome—a city ruled by Satan Rev 13:7).

v. 9 The world will gloat over the persecuted church. This tiny little Bakersfield Church of Christ. What can they do? Revive campus ministry in the middle of Covid? Psssst!

v. 11 But God will raise them up (both *temporally*, as the Church will survive the persecution and grow even more and *spiritually*, as the martyrs will be raised from the dead). The intense persecution will only last 3-1/2 DAYS (not years).

The difficult times of Covid will be temporary. The defeat of the church will be temporary.

Q: Do you feel like you “torment” non-Christians some times? (11:10).

v. 11 They will come back (breath will enter them, Cross-reference Ezekiel 37. The Valley of Dry Bones.

Rev 11:15-19 The seventh trumpet. Another worship—a fourth one—breaks out in heaven. (4:8-11, 5:9-14, 7:10-17 and 11:15-18).

This is the end of Act 1 Act 2 is about to start.

**Revelation Part II Ch 12-22**

Rev 1-11 What is going on up front—on the earth.

Rev 12-22 What is going on behind the scenes. The heavenly battle which underlies the outward battle.

Rev 11:19 Then God’s temple in heaven was opened. Rev 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven.

**Revelation 12 The Woman and the Beast.**

Rev 12:1-6

Rev 12:1 A great and wondrous sign ***in heaven***: The woman is Israel, who is about to give birth to a son (Jesus). This part is a flashback.

The woman in Rev 12:

She has twelve stars, so she represents God’s people.

She is Israel

She is Mary

She is the Church

She is God’s kingdom in any of its aspects.

12:3 Another great and wondrous sign: an enormous red dragon. Satan

7 heads (great wisdom)

10 horns (very powerful)

7 crowns (great authority (on the earth at least))

A seven-headed beast [not dragon] will, in another context (Rev 17, Rev 13), be Rome.

12:4 apocalyptic imagery. Satan tries to prevent the birth.

…or kill the baby when he is born (Herod tries to kill Jesus, but fails)

1/3 of stars cast down.

12:5 The woman gives birth to a Son.

But Jesus (who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter) is born, despite his efforts. God takes him to his side (Jesus ascends) where Satan cannot get him.

12:6 The imagery changes. After Jesus’ ministry the true Israel is the church, so now the woman who goes out into the desert is the church. Either way, whether Israel or the church, the true Israel is the Kingdom.

Goes out into the desert. Israel/The church is being persecuted, but protected by God for an unspecified limited time of persecution. Imagery being taken from Elijah and the 3-1/2 year drought during which he was taken care of (1 Kings 17:2-6, James 5:17)

Rev 12:7-12 The scene shifts to heaven. War in heaven.

v. 7-9 Try to imagine what this “war” is like.

v. 9 Satan is defeated and cast down. What, exactly, does this mean? Is he now less powerful? Probably not.

Satan is a 3-time loser. He lost his battle to kill the child. He pursued the “child” to heaven and was soundly defeated. He then went after the children of the woman (the Church) and was defeated in that as well.

Implication for the church: You will undergo some vicious persecutions for a time! But the final result is assured.

Satan the deceiver (12:9) and Satan the accuser (12:10)

Which means is Satan most likely to use on you? Are you the accused or the deceived type?

How do we defeat the Dragon: his lies and accusations? 12:11

1. By the blood of Jesus

2. By our testimony (remember the two witnesses in Rev 11). Sharing our faith is essential to overcoming the lies and the accusations.

3. By our willingness to sacrifice our lives rather than do the bidding of the dragon. Can you say this to God? They “loved not their lives” What about you? Galatians 2:20

12:12 Bad news for us. Satan is ticked of and he is coming after us!

Rev 12:13-17

12:14-15 The woman taken care of for a time, times and half a time.

12:15 Satan thinks he can use water to keep God’s people in his possession. He fails again, like he did with the Red Sea. Like Israel and Egypt. The earth swallow up the water and God’s people go free.

12:16-17 Satan goes after the Christians “her offspring.” Who are her offspring?
“Those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus (in the face of the upcoming persecution)”

Satan is thrice defeated! This is the message of Revelation. But…. Tribulation still awaits.

Summary:

The life of God’s people is not one long series of triumphs. Life in the Kingdom of God is a battle.

But God will protect his people (measure the temple courts)

And we have a powerful testimony (the two witnesses)

There is a spiritual battle going on, because Satan has been defeated in heaven.

But we will overcome by the blood of Jesus and by the word of our testimony.

Conclusion: Do not love your lives so much as to shrink from death.

We will triumph of the Devil.

**Book of Revelation Sermon VII**

**666, Armageddon, the Millennium, Oh My!**

Theme of Revelation: Peel back the layers of history and even the terrible persecutions and what do we find? **The lamb is on the throne and God is in control.**

Structure of Rev 6-20:

Seven seals Ch 6-7

Seven trumpets Ch 8-9

Seven symbolic creatures Ch 10-15

Seven bowls Ch 16-17

All God’s enemies destroyed. Ch 18-20

This week’s sermon: 666, Armageddon and the Millennium, Oh My!

Revelation 13 The Beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth.

Rev 13:1-8

The Beast out of the Sea is the wealth and mercantile power of Rome.

10 horns, 7 heads and ten crowns.

v. 3 One of the heads seemed to have a fatal wound. That is Nero.

But the wound had been healed. Domitian is Nero reborn—persecution reborn.

I did not make this up. Revelation 17:6-11

v. 8 The Beast once was (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius Nero)

Now is not (Vespasian, Titus and early Domitian)

And yet will come out of the Abyss (Domitian’s persecution).

v. 10 The seven heads are the seven hills (of Rome)

They are also seven kings (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus)

The Beast is the eighth king. He is Domitian!

He is going to his destruction.

Rev 13:5 The Beast out of the Sea utters blasphemies and exercises authority for 42 months.

v. 6-7 God gave Rome power to wage war against the saints and to conquer them for 42 months. It will only be temporary.

Message: God allows people who rebel against him to do bad things. God allows this because he has given us free will and we abuse that freedom to serve Satan.

Let’s not minimize this: The world is in service to Satan.

v. 8 The world will worship the Beast—those not written in the lamb’s book of life.

This world is pretty messed up.

Q: Is your name written in that book? When did that happen? Have you truly repented and been baptized into Christ?

v. 8 Who is Jesus? He is “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”

Rev 13:9-11 But it will get tough in the meantime. The Christian life may not always be a picnic, especially if we are Witnesses. This calls for patient endurance.

Rev 13:11-18 The Beast of the Sea represents the religious power of Rome.

v. 11 Two horns. It is powerful in its influence.

v. 12 The Roman religion supported the political and military power of Rome.

False miracles, religious deception. Made people worship Domitian.

13:17 There may not have been a literal “mark” on people’s forehead, but there was an official document declaring that the holder had made obeisance to Domitian.

They had to burn incense, make a sacrifice, offer a prayer to Roma/Domitian.

The “mark” of the beast might be coins with the head of Domitian, declaring him to be Lord and God. There is some evidence that the early church refused to use these coins in commerce, as did the Jews, who refused to use them in the temple.

Domitian’s number is 666 He is totally Satan’s man (as will be Galerian, Diocletian and Decius).

The mark of the beast is not a computer chip or a tatoo. It is held by those who worship the world, or follow false religion, not Christ.

Revelation 14. Another encouraging interlude and a very last call to repent.

Revelation 15-16 The seven bowls—the wine of God’s wrath. Complete destruction, not ¼ or 1/3 as with the seals and the trumpets.

Revelation 16:15-21

16:15 Behold: I come like a thief. (Matt 24:43) Keep your spiritual clothes on.

Matthew 22:11-13. We need to have spiritual clothes on to eat at the banquet. Gal 3:26-27 We are clothed with Christ. Let’s keep these clothes on!!!

Message to Christians: Be ready at any time for the spiritual battle. Keep up your guard. Keep in the spiritual fight. Keep praying. Keep testifying.

16:16-19 The seventh (and last) bowl. The final judgment on Rome.

16:16 A (spiritual) war is about to be fought at Har Megiddo Armageddon. The Mountain or the city of Megiddo Five wars, at least happened there.

1. Israel defeated Jabin Judges Ch 4,5

2. Gideon defeated the Midianites. 300 soldiers versus a vast army. Judges 7-8

3. Saul defeated by the Philistines. 1 Sam 28-29

4. Ahaziah defeated by Hazael and killed by Jehu. 2 Kings 9

5. Necho slew Josiah (as ordained by God) (2 Chron 35:20-25) Necho warned Josiah that he was on a mission for Jehovah.

Armageddon is a symbol of the great spiritual battle between Jesus and Rome.

Premillenialists have a literal battle with 200,000,000 troops from the East (China? Russia?) battling against a Roman confederation in the Valley of Jezreel.

v. 19 The great city (Rome) split into three by a great earthquake. This is not literal! All this eventually did in fact happen to Rome. The entire system of cities collapsed and Babylon the Great (Rome) was judged.

**Revelation 17-20 The Victory of the Lion/Lamb**

(This is the working out of the seventh bowl.

Rev 18: The Great Prostitute—The commercial power of Rome is judged and destroyed.

Rev 18:2 Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! This is Rome and Domitian.

The world is going to its destruction in the lake of fire.

Rev 19 The Beast (the political power of Rome) and the False Prophet (the religious power of Rome) are judged and destroyed.

Rev 20 The Serpent/Satan judged and destroyed.

Rev 18:2 Fallen is Babylon the Great.

Rev 19: 9 Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!

**Revelation 20:1-10. Satan/The Serpent in judged.**

Rev 20:1-6 What is the thousand year reign?

Well, what is it not?

1. No mention of the second coming of Christ.

2. No mention of Jesus being on the earth.

3. No mention of a bodily resurrection.

4. No mention of a rapture.

It mentions the martyrs of the early church (“beheaded because of their testimony”) being resurrected.

It is not a literal 1000 year physical reign of Jesus on the earth from Jerusalem, with the resumption of Jewish sacrifice. Dispensational Premillennialism is wrong.

Q: Are the thousand years a literal 1000 years? Obviously not!

What the 1000 year reign is:

v. 2 It is a period during which the power of Satan to attack God’s people is significantly reduced (bound) which will last for an unknown but relatively long period of time, which began at a time near when John wrote Revelation.

How is Satan bound? In the sense that he no longer had the Beast, the Prostitute and the False Prophet working on his side. This is, in fact, historically, exactly what happened after AD 325 (Constantine).

Was he entirely bound? Obviously not! Like a chained dog.

v. 3 After that he will be set free for a short time. What does that mean? See v. 7-10.

v. 4 Martyrs killed by Domitian (and others?)

Martyred because they did not make sacrifice to the beast.

They come to life in the “first resurrection” and are alive during the 1000 years (v. 4). Is this literal? Maybe.

If so, the rest of us will be resurrected (soon) after the end of the 1000 years. And the second death has no power over us.

Amen????

The point: Satan is bound and the martyrs are free!

Rev 20:7-10 The prophetic clock fast-forwards to the end of time.

At the end of time a second major persecution will break out against the Church. He will gather Gog and Magog (the people (Gog) and nations (Magog) in the world committed to Satan) and fight against the church. (v. 9). See Ezekiel 38-39.

But God will protect the church and destroy Gog and Magog (again, Ezekiel 38-39)

v. 10 In the end, Satan, like the Beast, the Great Prostitute, and the False Prophet, will be defeated, judged and sent to hell. A final judgment (day and night forever and ever).

Summary:

There is a spiritual battle going on which we do not see.

Satan is not our friend.

The world is not our friend—it is Satan’s friend.

But God has put his mark on us—the Holy Spirit. We must never bow to the ‘gods’ of this world. God will defend us.

The second death has no power over us. We will reign with Christ.

**Book of Revelation Sermon VIII**

**The New Heaven and the New Earth**

Today’s sermon is actually in two parts.

I. Judgment Day

II. The New Heaven and the New Earth

Rev 20:11-15 Judgment Day (parallel: Daniel 12:2-4 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.)

This is kind of a big deal!!!! This is VERY DRAMATIC

The earth and the heavens fled from his presence. All eyes are on the throne!!!!

This is literally the moment of truth.

What do we have here:

The dead, both great and small.

God on a great white throne.

That’s it!!! This is the moment of truth.

Q: Are you ready???

There will be no favoritism on Judgment Day. 1 Pet1:17 “Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”

The “big wigs” get equal treatment.

The rich man and Lazarus are treated the same. Luke 16:19-31

The ground is level on Judgment Day.

The beautiful girl and the homely girl—no difference. No one cares about that.

The PhD and the guy who struggled through life—equal.

The Lord of the manor and the peasant. God is impartial.

Two books:

A “works” book

A grace book.

The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.

It is all recorded!!!! Would you like us to play your life—the good the bad and the ugly? There are some things I am ashamed of in there…

For those in the lamb’s book, are their works even shown? Not sure.

Death and Hades (the good and bad side of Hades?) were destroyed.

Rev 20:15 Those not found written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire—the second death. Q: What happens to them there? Rev 20:10 Will they, like the Serpent, be tormented forever and ever?

I do not know. I do not need to know. I do not want to be there, I do not want you to be there. I do not want anyone to be there.

Q:What will you and I do about that? We are in a house on fire. What will you do?

Who will suffer the second death? Rev 20:15 Anyone whose name is not written in the lamb’s book of life.

 Rev 21:8 gives us a partial list (note the interesting insertion of cowardice in the list, and its appropriateness to the Roman persecution), as does 21:27 (and 22:15)

**Revelation 21-22 The New Heaven and the New Earth**

**The New Jerusalem. Jerusalem being the place where people come to meet with God.**

Rev 21:1-8 Perfect fellowship with God.

Rev 21:9-26 Perfect protection by God.

Rev 22:1-5 Perfect provision with God.

Rev 21:1-8 Perfect Fellowship. The imagery here is principally from the Tabernacle. Heaven is the redeemed living in the Holy of Holies with God.

The Holy of Holies has come to the earth.

We do not “go to heaven,” Heaven comes to us.

21:1 No more sea. No more separation. We are totally in! For John on Patmos the sea was what separated him from all he loved. This must have been particularly poignant for him.

21:3 The dwelling (Tabernacle) of God is with men, and he will live with them.

21:4 Tears wiped away. No more death or crying.

Q: How can this be? Can there be joy without suffering? Apparently so.

21:5 All new. New bodies. New relationships. Clean slate.

Will I be hanging out with my buddies? My husband? My parents?

1 Cor 2:9 What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him.

Isaiah 65:17 Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. Maybe that is why there are no more tears in heaven.

21:6 I am the alpha and the omega. You can count on it!

21:7 He who overcomes/are victorious (who does not worship the beast, who say no to the world, who stay faithful to the end) will inherit all this. This is true for all of us, but it is particularly addressed to the Christians in the early church.

Rev 21:9-26 Perfect Protection.

21:12 Twelve gates. (21:15 the gates never shut) Lots of access. Gates are used to keep bad out. No more.

21:15 Measuring = protecting. High and thick walls. Symbols, obviously.

12,000 stadia. Very big…. God’s people. Walls 12x12 (200 feet) cubits thick!!! Perfect protection.

21:21 Pearly gates. Literal? Pearl the only jewel produced by suffering.

v. 22 No temple, no sun. Not needed.

v. 25 Gate never shut. Again…. Safety.

22:1-6 Perfect Provision. My favorite part. Garden metaphor. The Bible begins and ends with a garden. How fitting.

Parallel to Ezekiel 47:3-12 and Zechariah 14:8-11.

What do we need? Water, food and health. All are given in this garden.

Rev 22:1 water: Crystal clear water flowing from the throne (Ezek 47:3-12)

Food: v. 2 On each side of the river, the tree of life, yielding fruit every month.

Health: v. 2 leaves for healing

We will have everything we could ever want or need. We will have fellowship, protection, provision, and an opportunity to serve our God.

What will we “do” in heaven? 22:3 We will serve God. 22:4 We will see God.

Rev 22:5 We will reign with God for ever and ever.

22:7-21 Epilogue.

Rev 22:17 Come!

Rev 22:20-21 Amen, come, Lord Jesus

[v. 7 I am coming soon (in judgment on Rome)

John testifies to the reality of what he is writing down. V. 10 do not seal it up. In other words, publish this book for the disciples.

22:11 a bit odd. Parallel Daniel 12:10.

22:12 I am coming soon—the things written in this book will happen soon.

22:13 You can count on it.

22:17 Come!!! This is your evangelism passage. Like Daniel 12:3. If you come, you will receive the water of life (the Holy Spirit).

22:18-19 Relevant for the immediate recipients. Do not dare to add to or subtract from this book! (This was commonplace in apocalyptic literature).

Amen, come Lord Jesus.

End of class:

At the end of Revelation, what do we know? Summers: “Come what may, Christ is supreme and no power can take from him the victory that is rightfully his.”]

Sermunion:

Rev 5:6 Jesus is “a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain.”

Where is he? “at the center of the throne.”

I have heard it said that Jesus will be the only one in heaven with scars.

Jesus is at the center of the throne, in the real, heavenly Tabernacle, right now, pleading for mercy for you.

Why? How?

Rev 12:11 Because we have triumphed over Satan by the blood of the lamb.

And this is no ordinary sacrificial lamb. He was led knowingly and willingly to the slaughter. Not so, the lambs!!!

Revelation 13:8 Jesus is “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”

As far as God is concerned, it is as if Jesus was killed before the world was created. That is why Abraham, David, Moses, Deborah, Esther will be with us in the New Jerusalem.

Jesus was slain for us. Let us celebrate this.