



THE
REVELATION
OF
JESUS CHRIST†

⚔ PART II ~ CHAPTERS 6-14 ⚔

Red Door

WELCOME BACK

Here's a recap of where we've been...

Week 1 ~ Revelation is written to real Christians about real life to encourage them to persevere and reassure them that, in the end, God wins.

Week 2 ~ In a world of uncertainty, populated by dark forces with dangerous agendas, Jesus Christ is the supreme Lord who loves and leads us.

Week 3 ~ Jesus is both the Saviour who dies for our sins, and the Lord who commands obedience. We must, likewise, be a church of both mercy and purity.

Week 4 ~ John's vision of the heavenly throne room leaves us in no doubt: God is King, and is worthy of all our worship: every prayer, every song, every breath.

Week 5 ~ God and the Lamb are glorified because they have begun to execute their sovereign plan for the redemption and restoration of all creation.

The cast of characters...

NARRATOR

John: named as the author of the book, tradition identifies him as the same John who authored the

gospel and epistles of John. For various reasons, the majority of modern scholars doubt this.

The exact identity of the author shouldn't concern us too much.

DRAGON SQUAD

Babylon: the city that embodies injustice and tyranny. Throughout history, many regimes have lived-out the spirit of Babylon, but in Revelation it refers specifically to Rome and the Roman Empire.

The Dragon: the cosmic creature that energises the evil schemes of Babylon. In short, Satan himself.

666: represents Roman Emperor Nero who persecuted Christians violently during his reign from 54-68 AD. As with Babylon, subsequent rulers have embodied the spirit of Nero in their conduct.

The Two Beasts (of Sea & Land): political leaders who use power for the cause of Babylon & the Dragon.

Jezebel, Nicolaitans, Balaam: all represent stereotypes of idolatry, sexual immorality, & false teaching.

TEAM LAMB

The Twenty-Four Elders: Most likely the 12 Tribes of Israel + the 12 Apostles. Representing all redeemed people for all of time.

The Four Beasts: surround the throne of God and worship him, as well as guiding John through segments of his visions.

They seem to be a blending of the cherubim and seraphim glimpsed by previous prophets (Isa. 6:2-3; Ezek. 1:10, 18). Ultimately, they represent all created things.

The Woman: appears to morph from Eve to Israel to Mary to the Church. She is hunted by the Dragon who tries to kill her and her baby (Jesus), but she is protected by God.

The Seven Spirits: there is debate about this, but I agree with those who see it as symbolising the Holy Spirit. Seven doesn't refer to separate spirits, it's the number that symbolises fullness and completion.

The Lamb: no debate! It's Jesus.

The One on the Throne: God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The supreme power without rival who will accomplish all of his plans.

The New Jerusalem: the world as God intended it to be. The future home of all who trust in the Lamb and stay faithful to him through thick and thin. It's the New Creation, heaven on earth!

And here's three big truths I'm hoping we'll absorb along the way...

1. Our willingness to radically live like Christ and suffer for Christ is the path to ultimate victory over evil and injustice.

The way of the world (Babylon) is the way of power and dominion. The way of Christ is life, death and resurrection. Rather than the roaring lion of Judah, God's victory is secured by the Lamb that was slain.

2. God is absolutely sovereign over human history, even when darkness seems to reign.

The schemes of Babylon and The Dragon are powerful and pernicious, but God's plan for the redemption and final restoration of his people, and his creation, cannot fail.

3. The new creation is the climax of the entire witness of Scripture, and the destiny of everyone who remains faithful to the Lamb.

Revelation is a book very much rooted in this world, with much to teach us about this life, but the final vision is our ultimate goal: new creation life!

If you're ready, let's dive into Part II ~ Revelation 6-14!

Jonathan

WEEK SIX REVELATION 6-8:5

Intro note: This section contains a series of seven visions as chapter five's seals are broken. These visions reveal the means used by the Lamb: to bring his enemies to justice (seals 1-4), the reason for his righteous wrath (seals 5+7), and the climax of judgement at history's end (seal 6).
- Adapted from ESV Study Bible. Crossway, 2008.

6:1-8 (seals one to four)

In popular culture (and some Christian traditions) 'the four horsemen of the apocalypse' are seen as enemies of God and his people. However, it's clear from both Zechariah 1:8-13 and 6:1-8, that they are God's agents of judgement sent out to do his will - in this case, in bringing judgement against God's enemies.

6:9-11 (seal five)

This seal reveals those who had been killed for following Jesus. These 'souls' (not yet given resurrection bodies) cry out to God for retribution against those had killed them. We hear in their voices an eagerness to see God's justice come on the earth, however, they are told to wait a little longer because the number of those killed for the faith would increase. It is reported that in 2022, 5,898 Christians were added to their number.

6:12-17 (seal six)

The seals shouldn't be read as revealing a chronology of the future, because here we find a vision of the end of the world. In effect, we see the implosion of both creation itself, and the people who occupy it.

The question that lingers on the lips of those being judged is *Who can stand?* in the face of God's wrath and judgement.

7:1-17 (interlude)

The answer to that question is given immediately in chapter 7. Both the angels, and those people redeemed by God can stand in the judgement.

Jehovah's Witnesses mistake the 144,000 to be the literal number of people who will be resurrected to 'heavenly life'.

In actual fact, similar to the situation where John *heard* about the Lion of Judah, and then *saw* a Lamb that was slain, *he hears* 144,000, but *actually sees* the redeemed as "...a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number."

These are the beloved people of God who will have Jesus as their shepherd, and every tear wiped from their eyes.

8:1-5 (seal seven)

The final seal reveals God's response to the prayers of his people. With symbolism reminiscent of the Old Testament tabernacle, prayer is portrayed as the smoke of incense, rising to God. Following this, fire from the altar will be flung to earth in judgement, revealing God's response to the prayers of the saints who seek justice.

SERMON SIX WHO CAN STAND?

THE BIG IDEA

When God's righteous judgement is unleashed on the earth, those who have found refuge and redemption in the Lamb will be kept safe for eternity.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What is it about God's nature that demands he bring judgement on the earth?

What do you make of the idea that God uses violent means to bring justice?

Imagine you have a friend who has suffered abuse at the hands of someone who wasn't held accountable for their actions. How would you reassure the victim of God's justice and coming judgement?

NOTES

Intro note: This section features six of the seven trumpets which reveal a retelling of the 'seals' judgements from a different perspective. Trumpet seven will be revealed in next week's passage.

8:7-13 (trumpets one to four)

The first five trumpets echo the plagues of judgement sent by God in Exodus 7-11: *hail, blood, poison water, darkness, and locusts.*

As with Pharaoh, these judgements are designed to bring humanity to repentance and faith.

The eagle's voice announces that the next three trumpet blasts will bring escalating judgements as the end of the world approaches.

9:1-12 (trumpet five)

The star that falls to earth is likely an angel who is then given the keys to 'the abyss'. Some believe this is Satan himself, however, others believe this is a good angel, pointing to the similarity between these verses and Rev. 20:1-2 ~

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

In either case, the angel opens the abyss and - again with echoes of the Exodus - a plague of locusts is released. Rather than the usual work of destroying crops, these beasts go about tormenting those who were not sealed by God.

For believers, images like these should call to mind Jesus' words

when he is first revealed to John, "Don't be afraid" (1:17). The picture of demonic scorpion-locusts is a scary one! But even these are ultimately under the sovereign control of God.

Interestingly, Luke 10:17-20 features some of the images in this passage ~

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing at all will harm you. However, don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

9:13-21 (trumpet six)

The four angels released by the sixth trumpet may be the four horsemen mentioned in chapter 6. At the head of a mounted army of two hundred million (!), these angels go to war against human beings not redeemed by the Lamb.

The purpose of all of these judgements is to deliver justice to those who had been killed for their faith, and additionally, to bring the unsaved to repentance and faith. Unfortunately, v20-21 reveals that even under these judgements, the people did not repent of their sin.

THE BIG IDEA

In Exodus, God sent plagues against Pharaoh and his people to cause them to repent (of their unjust enslavement of the Israelites). With echoes of these events, and the same purpose, God judges humanity.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-10. What is the distinction Paul is making here? If you've experienced both forms of 'grief', try to describe the difference between the two.

The weird scorpion-locusts are permitted to torment those who haven't been sealed (redeemed) by God. These almost certainly aren't actual animals, but may be demonic forces. Do you believe in the existence of demons? Have you ever experienced them or seen evidence of them?

Each of the judgements described in 8:6-9:21 seem to be designed to bring unbelievers to repentance. In your view, why is it hard for people to repent? (see 9:20-21)

NOTES

REVELATION 10-11

Intro note: Between the sixth trumpet (9:13-21) and the seventh (11:15-18), another interlude is inserted. This section dramatises God's patient delay in inflicting his full and final wrath, and it assures believers that God will protect his own through the coming traumas.

- Adapted from ESV Study Bible. Crossway, 2008.

10:1-7

The Lamb has broken the seals and the scroll will be given to John to proclaim. Now we will witness how God's kingdom will come on earth.

John is forbidden from writing down the message of the seven thunders, perhaps because there is to be no more delay before the seventh trumpet sounds.

Ultimately, this is an example of God's mysterious plans being kept hidden from his people (cf. Deut. 29:29).

10:8-11

As the prophet Ezekiel ate a scroll and found it sweet as honey in his mouth, so John must do the same, receiving God's words in his heart before he speaks them.

It may be the scroll made John's stomach bitter because it is revealed that many of the people would resist the Lamb and ally themselves with evil.

11:1-2

John sees the Temple and the martyrs and is told to measure them and set them apart, but the outer courts of the Temple are excluded and are attacked by the nations.

Some Christians see this as a prophecy about a coming

destruction of Jerusalem, but it's more likely that the Temple here refers not to the building itself, but to God's new covenant people (cf. 1 Cor 3:16; Heb. 3:6; 1 Peter 2:4-5).

Thus, the faithful will be persecuted, but their enemies won't be able to destroy their standing as redeemed people.

11:3-14

God appoints two witnesses as prophetic voices to the nations. These are not individuals, but churches (cf. 'lampstands' v.4)

These witnesses are killed by a beast from the abyss, but God vindicates them by resurrecting them, as he did with Jesus. Many people are killed by the subsequent earthquake, but the survivors respond by repenting and worshipping God.

So, at the very centre of the book, the method for God bringing his Kingdom is revealed: His church will bring God's Kingdom in the same way Jesus did: by proclaiming God's rule and imitating the Lamb by dying instead of killing. The result is repentance in response to mercy.

11:15-19

The seventh trumpet finally sounds, and the earth is shaken as God's Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

CHURCH † TRIUMPHANT

**THE
BIG IDEA**

Now that the scroll's seals have been broken by the Lamb, the will of God will be revealed, and we'll see how he is going to bring his Kingdom to the earth.

According to these visions, the mission of the church is to:

1. *Remain faithful to the Lamb*
2. *Prophesy and proclaim the Kingdom of God to the nations*
3. *Triumph, not by killing, but by dying*

How does this description of our mission make you feel?

*In what sense are we fulfilling our mission at Red Door?
What, if anything, do we need to change?*

**QUESTIONS
FOR
REFLECTION****NOTES**

Intro note: Through two visions or 'signs', this chapter describes the spiritual forces behind the persecution of the seven churches. Though speaking to the context of first century Roman rule, what it reveals applies to the entire history of the church.

12:1-6

The symbolism here goes all the way back to Genesis 3. The woman (morphing from Eve to Israel to Mary to the Church) is opposed by Satan (serpent, dragon). She gives birth to a son who is destined to rule, and is caught up to heaven to reign with God.

This pattern of God's people being opposed by Satan and dark forces is repeated through history. The earthly forces that oppose them change (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome etc.) but the mobilising force behind them has always been the same.

12:7-12

In the same way, God's own forces in the form of angels battle against the dragon. Ultimately, the people of God conquer in the same way that Jesus did (12:11):

*They conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
for they did not love their lives
to the point of death.*

12:13-17

The final section of the vision describes the persecution of the church. The woman, symbolising the church, is pursued by the dragon who had been defeated, but not yet destroyed, by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Because he knows he is a defeated power, and that his time is short (v.12), Satan is motivated by frustrated anger.

All of the demonic activity we see from Jesus' ministry up to today is an expression of this frustration.

In the midst of the wilderness (symbolic of life in the church age), Satan pours water from his mouth to overwhelm the woman. This is likely symbolic of the serpent's schemes to deceive the church with false teaching (from his mouth) in the same way he deceived Eve.

This strategy of Satan continues to this day as he attempts to destroy the faith of the woman's offspring. These are the Christians who (v.17) "...keep the commands of God and hold firmly to the testimony about Jesus."

**THE
BIG IDEA**

The opponents of God's people have changed through the centuries, but they have always been motivated and mobilised by the dragon, Satan.

**QUESTIONS
FOR
REFLECTION**

Do you believe in the spiritual enemy the Bible calls Satan?

What evidences have you seen in your life for his existence? What does he do? What motivates him?

Reflect on the means used by God's people to overcome the dragon (v10-12). How can we use the same means to battle spiritual forces today?

NOTES

Intro note: The vision of the two beasts seems to be a retelling of the cosmic battle described in chapter 12. In this case, the two beasts are described using language from Daniel 7-12. The beasts appear to symbolise political leaders who use power for the cause of Babylon (corrupted authority) and the Dragon (Satan).

13:1-10

The beast from the sea functions as a type of *anti-Christ*. Like the Lamb, it looks as if it had been slain. Like the Lamb, it is worshipped and given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation.

13:11-18

The beast from the earth has the same mission as the beast from the sea, and aids it in leading people into blasphemous worship. Demanding absolute allegiance to the powers of evil, the beast requires all kinds of people to receive a mark on their hand or forehead.

666

The mark is a kind of *anti-shema*. The shema is a Hebrew prayer of allegiance to Yahweh that faithful Jews would recite twice per day. You can find it in Deut. 6:4-8

Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart... Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead.

The number of the mark is given by John as 666. This number has made its way into popular culture

to represent all kinds of things. However, it seems to be a clear reference to the Roman Emperor Nero who persecuted Christians violently during the first century.

John's invitation to calculate the number of the beast in order to reveal the identity of a person (v.18) can be accomplished using *gematria*, an ancient code using the numerical values of letters. When written in Hebrew, both *beast* and *Nero Caesar*, add up to 666.

It's important to remember that the message of these visions is not limited to one period of history. Nero was an example of this corrupted power in John's day, but he wasn't the first or the last.

14:1-13

In opposition to the beasts, the Lamb calls his people to himself, proclaiming the eternal gospel, and praising the one true God. Their message is to flee from Babylon (the city that embodies injustice and tyranny) and to receive God's blessings, even as they die for the faith.

14:14-20

The final vision is of the final judgement. John is putting a stark choice before the seven churches: remain faithful to the Lamb, or face judgement with God's enemies.

**THE
BIG IDEA**

There are two ways to live in these last days. Believers can remain faithful to the Lamb, even to death, or they can forsake him and worship the beasts of temporary earthly powers.

**QUESTIONS
FOR
REFLECTION**

The shema called the Israelites to daily affirm their allegiance to the one true God. Do you employ any similar practices that reaffirm your faith?

What are some examples of corrupt power in the world today? In what ways do we participate in the corruption?

John leaves us with a stark decision between allegiance to the Lamb or the Beast. Have you made your decision? In what sense (if any) are you caught between the two?

NOTES

UP NEXT...

Part III: Revelation 15-22

After a break we'll jump back into John's Revelation of Jesus Christ and examine the final third of the book:

Rev 15-16 Bowls of Judgement

Rev 17-18 Evil Exposed

Rev 19-20 The Return of the King

Rev 21 The Bride

Rev 22 The End

Please read ahead between now and then, taking note of things that jump out at you, or that you have questions about.

If you would to submit a question to The Red Door Files (our online Q&A) please go to reddoorchurch.com.au/ask

If you would like to do some further reading and study, here is a list of the books I have found to be most helpful:

Richard Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*.

G. K. Beale, *Revelation (A Shorter Commentary)*.

Tim Chester, *Revelation for You*.

John Dickson and Greg Clarke, *666 and all that*.

W. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*.

Craig Koester, *Revelation (Anchor Bible Commentary)*.

Scot McKnight, *Revelation for the Rest of Us*.

Vern Poythress, *The Returning King*.

“LOOK, I AM
COMING SOON!
BLESSED IS THE
ONE WHO KEEPS
THE WORDS OF
THE PROPHECY OF
THIS BOOK.”

~ REVELATION 22:7 ~



PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE
MAKE ALL OF LIFE
ALL ABOUT JESUS

Red Door

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