

Jesus Is King

Week One – Introduction to the Apocalypse
Pastor Stephen Martin

INTRODUCTION:

Hello my name is Stephen... Welcome guest/get connected.

PROMOTE/CELEBRATE/PUSH: New Member's Event coming up!

Harker Heights- 9/12 (next Sunday) at 5pm

Belton- 9/20 at 630pm

Text Vintage Church!

I want to welcome all of you to the first message of our **new**, six-part series, entitled **Jesus Is King**. Together, over the next 6 weeks, we are diving into one of the most powerful books in the Bible, the book of Revelation.

Revelation has no equal in the New Testament. No other book has provoked greater fascination than Revelation. Its profound mysteries, rich symbolism, powerful predictions, and vivid imagery are unparalleled in all of Scripture. ***This is going to be a fun, impactful, and very interesting study.***

Personal: I remember my first time reading the book of Revelation, I wanted to sleep with the lights on for weeks – but as I grew in my understanding I began to see it as a book of faith, comfort and hope.

Today, let me begin with a few **questions** –

- *Have you ever opened the book of Revelation only to quickly shut it, feeling confused and uncertain?*
- *Are you unsettled by the recent economic, political, and civil unrest around the world?*
- *Have you recently been asking questions about the future you've never asked before?*

You don't have to look far to see that the world around us seems more **unsettled** than ever. Battle lines are being drawn in totally new places.

- A Global Pandemic.
- Massive Civil Unrest in our cities.
- Threats all around from foreign Regimes. Everyone seems to be drawing battle lines.
- And lets not even get talking about the WOKENESS and the complete upending of our social and economic landscaps.

So, "Pastor, **Why study the book of Revelation?**" Great question. Here are **three** reasons:

1. **Preparation** – As your pastor, I want you to be prepared. The Word of God gives us a picture of the times to come ***in order to equip us.***

This book **THE BIBLE** prepares us not just with information, but also with an attitude of faith and expectancy of what God is doing and wants to do.

2. **Perspective** – It is impossible to be afraid when you are focused on Eternity.

Revelation 1:3

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

People, more than ever, are asking about the future. In chapters 4 through 22, the book of Revelation spends a vast majority of the time speaking of things yet to come.

3. **Peace** –As we study the book of Revelation you will be reminded over-and-over that ***Jesus is in control*** and holds your life in the palm of His hand.

Let me set some **ground rules** for our series:

1. Although the book of Revelation is *apocalyptic* or future-oriented in nature – we must remember it was written by the Apostle John as an **encouragement** to seven churches in ancient Turkey. Here is a **map of these churches** at John's writing.



We need to also remember the truths written to these seven churches apply to the global Church today – *that's you and me*. **The book of Revelation is designed to give us hope today and to free us from the fear of our tomorrow.**

2. Next, although the book speaks of the Return of Christ, it is clear **no one knows** the day and time He will come again.

Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." The Bible does give indications of the season, but no human knows the **exact** time... and **beware** of anyone who says they do.

Illustration: *Y2K, 2000, Harold The Truck Driver. 666. Mark*

3. Finally, remember this fact. the **theme** of the book of Revelation is **Jesus reigns and those who believe in Him will overcome.**

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

WE ARE LIVING A PREQUAL!!

Illustration: I remember seeing a movie on the Rapture entitled *A Thief in the Night*. It scared the hell out of me. That's ok to say in church. Hell is a place – it's in the Bible.

But the book of Revelation was never meant to scare anyone, but to **encourage and equip us**.

In order to place the book of Revelation firmly in our minds, here's a little **background**.

- Revelation is the **last book** in the New Testament and it is a letter, an epistle of encouragement, from the **Apostle John**.
- John, the "beloved disciple," was probably the youngest of Jesus' disciples and was the only one of the twelve not martyred for his faith. John wrote this book while exiled for his faith to the Greek Isle of Patmos.
- Jesus died and was resurrected around 30AD, and yet the book of Revelation was written around 89-90AD. Hence, as this book is written, John is probably 75-85 years old.

The book of Revelation is broken down into **three key sections** as **Revelation 1:19**

Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

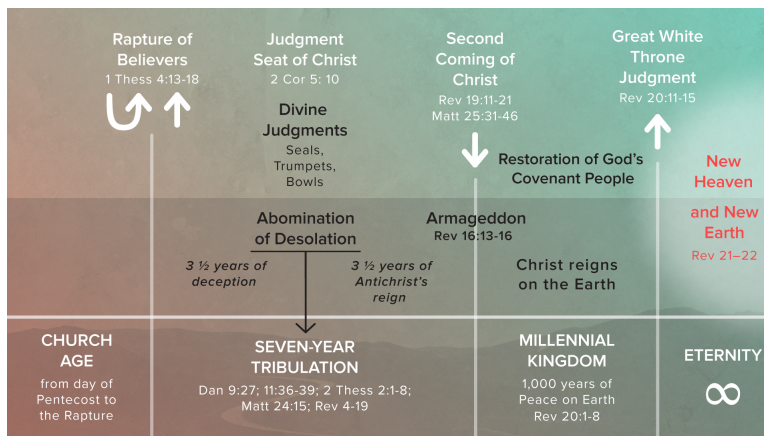
In other words – *what was, what is, and what is to come*.

- **The first section**, the initial chapter, focuses in on the things that have already taken place as he was receiving the Revelation. John is deeply burdened for the churches he oversees and is praying, and Jesus shows up on the scene with

some clear encouragement.

- In **the second section**, found in chapters 2 and 3, John is sharing the concerns and encouragements he received from Jesus with the seven churches to admonish, rebuke, and encourage them.
- In the **third and final section**, in chapters 4-22, Jesus gives us a picture, an idea – not a Google map – but an idea of the things that are to come; such as the Tribulation, the Rapture, the Battle of Armageddon and Great White Throne Judgment.

Speaking of those let give you a timeline from my research that outlines the end time events: **Timeline of Future Events**



Now, let me make mention some of the **Main characters in this book**. There are quite a few we will encounter.

- **John**, he serves as the messenger, the host - you know, like Ryan Seacrest. John takes the reader on a journey and conveys in the best way possible the vision Jesus gave him.
- Some other key characters are the **seven churches** found in chapters 2-3.
- We will also learn about the **Dragon** – who we know as the Devil.
- We will go on to look at the **Two Beasts** – one being a *counterfeit Christ political leader* and the second beast is a *counterfeit Christ religious leader*.
- We will also address the **Two Witnesses** found in chapter 11. They come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah to Jerusalem during the Tribulation.

- We will also learn about the **Harlot**. She is a mysterious character that seeks to lead the church into spiritual and/or sexual adultery.

But overall, **The superhero of the Book of Revelation is Jesus Christ.**

Revelation 1:1-2

1 This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, ² who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of **Jesus Christ**.

Remember the full name of the whole book that we see in the first verse – is the “Revelation of JESUS CHRIST!” Jesus is the End All - Be All. He’s the Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End.

When the book opens, we find John on the Isle of Patmos concerned for the persecuted church in Asia Minor under the cruel reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian.

- **Note the situation** – Christians are being oppressed, they’re **suffering** all over the known world! Just watch the news today – the persecution of believers is at an all-time high.
- **Caesar Nero** notoriously persecuted the Christians of Rome around 63AD. Caesar **Domitian** brought that persecution empire-wide in about 90AD. Domitian was beloved by the masses and looked most favorably on those who recognized him as divine. All who refused to claim him as God were severely persecuted. They couldn’t work, buy, or sell within the empire and were often ostracized, beaten, and even killed.

So, during the rest of our time and out of chapter one let’s answer – ***Who Jesus is and what He is doing.***

Revelation 1:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the

dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The book opens about Jesus! It is about Him.

A REVELATION ABOUT JESUS

1. Jesus is Truth.

Revelation 1:5

...Jesus Christ, the faithful witness...

Illustration: Culture is shifting, **but truth doesn't shift.** Culture tries to redefine, truth. Yet it doesn't move. What is truth? Jesus.

John 1:14 (NIV)

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

I'm amazed and saddened at conversations I have today where people say, "There is no truth." But yet, here stands Jesus. He is the Truth. He is our true north.

2. Jesus is Life

Revelation 1:5

Jesus Christ, ... the firstborn from the dead...

Jesus was the first to be raised to life from the dead – *never to die again*. He did what no other has ever done... **He defeated death.** He conquered Hell and left it vanquished. He's the life and has defeated death, hell, and the grave!

John 14:6

⁶Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can

come to the Father except through me.

3. Jesus Is King

We see this in Revelation over-and-over – many times just in the first chapter. He's the King – *who was, who is, and who is to come*. He's King – past, present, and future. Jesus is the sovereign King of the world...

Revelation 1:5

Jesus Christ... the ruler over the kings of the earth. Every president, every ruler, every leader has Jesus as their King.

Jesus is in control no matter what we see, no matter what we hear, no matter what we experience. Jesus is the sovereign King of our pasts, our present, and our future. *He holds our future.* **Now, from chapter 1 let's look at...**

What should we do?

1. Do not fear

Revelation 1:17:

...But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last." Here we see the power of Jesus' gentle touch. Jesus came up to John and laid His hand on him.

With Jesus' hand on us we don't need to be afraid. He's in total control. He's victorious. Fear not and stand strong.

2. Resist conformity

Press back on the pressures to conform to the values of society that contradict Scripture. We do this by surrendering to the One who gave Himself totally for us.

Revelation 12:11: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love

their lives to the death. Know that this world and its values are shifting and passing away, but the way of Jesus and the kingdom of God lasts forever.

Let's look at one final passage

Revelation 1:14-15

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters.

Let me close with one final question: Do you know and stand in awe of the awesome, glorious, powerful Jesus portrayed in these verses? Or have you adopted a culturally appropriate, mild-mannered, user-friendly Jesus of your own imagination?

TRUTH! He's coming back - not as a suffering lamb, but as a victorious lion. **Are you ready? Jesus is coming.**

Lets Pray