

Revelation & The Wizard of Oz

January 22, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled Revelation and The Wizard of Oz. Thank you to Earl Jon, Dianne and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Revelation 1:1-8.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning, everyone. I certainly wish to welcome everyone and we're happy that you're here. We'll have some announcements this morning to begin. Happy birthday to Marie and Donna. No anniversaries this week. To the budget. So I saw Adam handing out copies. There are hard copies. If you do not have one and you wish to get one, he will have them. And we have an annual meeting on February the 12th at 11:30. Ask that you keep that in mind and we'll pass the budget at that time. You have a chance for feedback during the next several weeks. If you have any issues or things that you would like to discuss, then perhaps Adam's the person to call or one of the elders.

We want to also mention something, and that is in terms of prayer request. Pam is not with us this morning. I thought she might be. I had asked her permission last week if I could mention this, and she agreed. She's having very major dental oral surgery tomorrow. To that end, let's go to God now

Our Father, we thank you for all the ways that you blessed us in this life. We thank you for our families. We thank you for our church family here, for this support that we can gain from each other and be to each other. And we pray, especially at this time, for Pam, for her surgery, upcoming tomorrow, we pray for skillful hands of surgeons, and we pray for the recovery period, which will not be a pleasant experience. We pray, Father, that you will help us to keep her before you in our prayers this week. And we ask Father that you help us to prayerfully consider how we might help her financially at some point. This month. Father, we pray that you will help our time together to be beneficial to each other, to be encouraging as we give you praise, honor and glory that you so richly deserve. We thank you for Jesus, for the fact that He came into this world, that He took the sins of the world upon him on the cross. And because of that, father, we have hope beyond this life. So we pray, Father, that you'll help us to lift you up in praise, glory and honor. And we pray that you will help us to encourage one another. In this hour, together. We pray that You'll be with Don as he brings us the lesson and help us to move forward from this place today and serve you in our community this week. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Communion

Recently, Gloria has been getting up a little earlier than I get up in the morning. So she goes out in the living room and begins to read the Bible. So lately she's been reading from the Book of Exodus. And Lev- Leviticus. Then I get up and she starts telling me what she read. And I've got while the details of what God expected of the Israelites is amazing. And so we learned about the detail of clothing, the detail of the laws and and all the rules and regulations. It's just mind boggling when you think about it. I stand here this morning saying, boy, I'm glad we weren't under those rules today. There's a reason for. And Jesus said in Hebrews that he didn't say, but Hebrews ten says when he said above, Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings. These are offered according to the law. Then he added, Lord, I have come to do. They will be

abolished. This is the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily in the service as service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins who in Christ it are for all time, a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until the enemy should be made a stool for his feet, for by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Isn't that amazing? We just, saying, Jesus, the cross. He did all that because he loved us and gave that one sacrifice. That frees us up from all those rules and regulations. And so it's our responsibility today. Hmm. It's. We are to remember him. Remember what he did for us live according to his will, to do those things, which helps others along the way. He told us the great commandment Love God with all of your heart, mind, body, soul and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. In the first Corinthians Chapter 11. This is what Paul tells us to do.

So for- and beginning in verse 23, for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and what He had given thanks. He broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me in the same way also the cup and after supper saying This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. That's what he did for us. So we have a few moments to reflect on the body, the bread and the cup, the precious blood that continues to cleanse us of our sins.

Let's go to him in prayer. Father, we thank you so much for Jesus, who took upon himself the responsibility of saving us. And He allowed himself to come to be born and to teach us, and then to give us life upon the cross of Calvary. But it doesn't end there, Father. We know that he's coming back again. And so we ask that you will help us to remember him at this time. And we pray that you will help us to live for him until the day he comes again. For we pray in his precious name. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 1:1-8

This morning's reading is from Revelations verses 1 to 8. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants what must now soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to a servant, John, who testifies to everything he saw. That is the Word of God. And the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy. And blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it. Because the time is near.

Greetings and Doxology: John, through the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from him. Who is and who was and who is to come. And from the seven spirits before his throne. And from Jesus Christ. Who is the faithful witness. The first born from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins. By his blood. And has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father. To Him, be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Look, he is coming with the clouds and every I will see him, even those who pierced him and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be. Amen. I am the Alpha. And the Omega says the Lord God. Who is and who was and who is to come? The Almighty. Amen.

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. I know that's a unique title up on the screen, but I hope things will come clear here this morning. We looked at the Book of Ezekiel, which is very much an apocalyptic book. It creates a picture, but what does the picture mean? There are books in the Bible that are very apocalyptic. And one, of course, is revelation that gives these amazing pictures, these stories that you look at it and you go, What is that all about? And trying to grasp what the concept is. But it comes down to this: God wins. God wins. There are pictures throughout this amazing book of the revelation and I've often thought this is where my imagination gets caught up. Reminds me of the story of The Wizard of Oz. These pictures, these amazing pictures that are that are just there. You know the story. Dorothy just wants to get home. And the lion comes across, and he needs courage and the Tin Man is part of that group, and he needs a heart. The scarecrow wants a brain and the wicked witch wants power and control. Just like Satan wants power and control. And yet God wants us and he loves us and we love Him. And that one day love will dominate all things. There'll be no more sorrow, no more death, no more grieving, no more pain, no more confusion. Now it will be what God always intended. And that's something that you and I can look forward to. It's part of the present, just knowing it. And part of what we will experience.

So we went through the book of Ezekiel this morning, which is somewhat apocalyptic. And I want to do the same today by just noticing pictures. And I feel very confident preaching revelation because no one really knows what revelation means anyway, so can't be that wrong. But the fact is, God wins. We want to be on his side. So what I'm going to do today, a very brief message is just look at a couple of scriptures as we go through this book in Revelation. It begins with these words as was read. Look, he's coming in the clouds every eye will see him. Even those who appears to and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be an amen? And then he says, I am the Alpha and the Omega. I'm the beginning and the end. And then in chapter one as well, it says, Don't be afraid. I am the first, the beginning, and I am the last. I am the living one. Jesus said I was dead and behold I am alive forever and forever. And I hold the keys of death.

And so then from Revelation, there are these letters that are being written to different churches. The encouragement for all of these churches was Stay faithful, be close to God. And many times there were criticisms of these different churches, a couple of churches, there were no criticism. It's just the understanding of return our faith to God, be close to God because God is so close to us. And just a couple of scriptures that talks about this, where he says he who overcomes will like them be dressed in white. I will never blot out their name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge his name before my father and his angels. Whoever has ears, let them here. And then it says him who overcomes? I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God. In the name of the city of my God. In the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God. And I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear let him here.

Okay, so we have this book. What do we do with it? It's exaggerating. It is over the top. But it's this way of nobody really gets the whole picture of it. Nobody out grabs the whole gospel part of it. And when you read the Bible, especially if you have a commentary that goes alongside it, you'll often hear this or see this in writing. We think this means we believe this might be it's this apocalyptic literature. It's this feeling, it's this understanding of God is in control. And there are powerful scriptures here that I think are interesting. Chapter four said, I looked in there before me was a door standing open in heaven, and

the voice I had first heard, speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here and I will show you what must soon take place after all of this. And there's a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. Well, guess who that is? And there's a rainbow there, and it's resembling an emerald encircled by the throne. And I'm not sure what all that means. From the throne came flashes of lightning rumbles and peals of thunder. It's apocalyptic literature intended exaggeration of this is the ultimate in the center around this room. And guess who sat and who sits on this room day and night? And those surrounding the throne never stopped saying these words. Holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is. And somebody help me is to come. Can we wait for. He's waiting for us. Can we wait for him? Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on this throne, who lives forever and forever, they fall down before him and they worship him. And here's what they say. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and they have their very being. And then a revelation. All of a sudden were introduced to a lamb. The LAMB of God. And guess who that is? Yeah, you're right.

It's Jesus. God, the father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. And here is sometimes God is called the lion of the Tribe of Judah. And it's powerful because it says the creatures would fall down before the lamb and worship, saying this, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open it. See us to open up what it means because you were slain and with your blood you purchased many women for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth. Now, let me ask you, do you think you're included in this? Because we are. Because we are. And if you ever doubt yourself or doubt does God really love me? Does Jesus really think of me? Is the Holy Spirit really in my life? Just read a couple of these verses and he makes it clear this is not an exaggeration. This is the intention of all things. That one thing, that one day, all things will be made new. And so as we go through revelation, again, there are these intended exaggerations. And it talks about how this meek lamb is more victorious over the most powerful nations in the world.

In Revelation Chapter six, in verse 15, it says, Then the kings of the earth and the princes and generals, the rich and the mighty and every slave and every free man. Hearing caves and among the rocks of the mountain they called to the mountains. And the rocks fall on us and hide us from the face who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb. In other words, people who knew they should have been following God didn't. But there were people who did, and there are wonderful illustrations of, Well, I'll just read it to you. And after this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language. And they were all standing before the throne in front of the lamb Jesus. And they were wearing white robes and holding palm branches, which means a welcome. And they cried out in a loud voice. Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb and all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell down on their faces before the throne, and they worshiped God.

So the writer of this book is John, and I don't know exactly what happens if he fell asleep and God brought him this vision or if he was just sitting somewhere and God brought him this vision or whatever it was. But can you imagine seeing what he's seeing and that you and I are part of it? Because salvation does belong to our God. He does sit on the throne and He does sit with the lamb, Jesus and the angels around them, circling and saying Amen. Most of us, when we have dinner, will offer prayer, and at the end of it will just say Amen. But it grabbed my attention very early this morning. Amen isn't frivolous. There's a statement before the event, and this statement is one of the greatest statements

that has ever been made. Amen. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. So be it. That's exactly true. It's a big yes. It's a big I do to you. And then one of the elders asked me, who are these people in these white robes? Again, this is somewhat of an exaggeration to grab the meaning. And he said, these are they who have come out of a great tribulation. They have washed their robes. This is so cool. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. How do you get blood out? It's not very easy, but the intended exaggeration is correct. They washed their robes and made them white because of the blood of the lamb. And they're before the throne of God. People serve him day and night, and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them one day. Listen. Never again will there be hunger. Never again will there be thirst. The sun will not beat down upon them, nor any scorching heat for the LAMB of God. At the center of the throne will be our shepherd. He will lead us to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. A reminder that one day all things will be made well, all things will be made right.

So in Revelation, Chapter 12 is one of my great chapters for me. Anyway, reading it because here's the story, here's this picture. Let me just read this to you and just picture in your mind what is actually happening. It's one of the great scriptures in all of the Bible. It's called The Woman and the Dragon. But it really is interesting. It says this a great and a wondrous sign appeared in have a woman who was clothed with the sun in the moon and her feet in the crown and 12 stars on her head. She was with child. So picture this. She was with child and cried out in pain as she was as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven, an enormous red dragon talking about Satan with seven heads and ten thorns and seven crowns on his head. His tail swept a third of the stars, meaning angels out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. Now, I'm not going to have time to do this, but you can go back to Matthew chapter one, where it talks about the birth of Jesus and how Herod wanted to kill all the young boys at that age. But Jesus escaped. So here the story. The Dragons stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth so that he might devour her child. That the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child. Jesus, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she was taken care of and there was a war in heaven.

The very thought of wars in heaven. And there was a war in heaven. Michael, the archangel. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. Satan and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon. His angels fought back, but he was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven. And the Great Dragon was hurled down that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth and his angels with him. Well, we want to tell him. Go away. You've been on this earth long enough. You've done injustice long enough. You've called murderers long enough. You have served a wrong God and you are not God. There is only one God. And I suppose it's somewhat dangerous of me to stand up in front of people and talk about this because Satan still around and he has power, but not power enough. Not power enough to take away our faith. Amen. So listen to what is said. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them Satan before our God day and night has been hurled down. Now this. And we we overcame him by the blood of the lamb. The word of their testimony. And we do not live our lives so much that if we had to die, we do it. We do not love our lives so much. Even us to shrink from death.

Why are we so fortunate that we live in this century in time? Can you imagine what it must have been like back in those days? What we've been reading? Being persecuted simply because you say I believe Jesus the Savior and God and the emperors couldn't stand that. They couldn't handle that. Let's just get rid of them. But you know what? You can't get rid of faith. If you have faith, you're not going to get rid of your faith because it's God who gives you your faith. So this book. Yeah. Is it difficult? Yeah. But we overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. And we do not love our lives so much that we even shrink from death. So how does the Bible just wrap up now? How does the Bible displayed? Well, what what's happening? What's going to happen for all of us? Well, here's what John saw. Here's what he said. Here's what he wrote. Then I saw a new heaven and a new was for the first heaven. And the first earth had passed away. And I saw the holy city now gets this. The new Jerusalem going up to heaven. No, I saw the holy city. The new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Listen to these words now the dwelling of God is with people. He will live with them. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be there. God watch this. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or cry or pain, for the old order of things. That's gone. It's passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne, Jesus is saying, I am making everything new. He didn't say, I'm going to. He said, I am making everything new. Then he said, Write this down because these words are trustworthy and true. And then he says These words, it's finished. I am the alpha and the Omega. I am the beginning and the end to him who is thirsty. I will give to drink without cost. From the spring of the water of life, whoever overcomes will inherit all of this. I will be His God and he will be my son. Wow. Does it get any better than this? So there are times in our life when we feel like I'm just not sure I can go on. Remember, you can go on. Jesus believes in you so strongly that He gave himself to us on the cross. But He also lives in us and he wants us to remember that he is part of us. He knew us before where we're born, and we are part of him. I don't know what your favorite Christmas gift was this year, but we just read this is the best gift any of us will ever have. Amen.

Closing Prayer

So we thank Don for your lesson this morning. And just another prayer request, and that is Michael. We want Mike to know that we are thinking of him this week. He's going for a specialist appointment. He has had several eye surgeries. And, you know, things things are not as well as we would like them to be for him. And therefore, he's going for a special appointment to see what else can be done for him. And so we ask that you would please keep Michael in your prayers as well as Pam this week. Let's go to God. Father, we thank you for the time that we've had to be together. We thank you for each person here, for the various spheres of influence that each of us has. And we pray that you will help you, Lord, to reign in us this week so that we can radiate it to the people that we come in contact with. Father, as we've offered our prayer already to you for Pam, we pray again for her, for her surgery tomorrow, for a successful outcome and for peace and for healing. And for Michael. We pray the same. We pray, Father, that there will be a way that something can be done to improve his eyesight. We pray, we're thankful that we live in a world at this time in our history that we have so many people who are specialized in medicine, who are trying to relieve the pain and suffering that exists in our human flesh. And we pray, Father, that you will find a way to help both of these folks in

the coming weeks and months. Father, we pray that you will be with us this week. Guide us as we go in Jesus name, amen.

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