

# Revelation (Part 1)

August 27, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message begins a new series on the book of Revelation. Thank you to Ed, Dave, Diane, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Revelation 12 10 to 12.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Once again, an example that on a holiday weekend Beamsville is not a holiday destination. However, however, we have Greg and Peggy with us today. Welcome, and we hope our time together can be uplifting. Sometimes it's important to boil things down to what's really important. When Jesus is asked by various people, "What do we have to do to be saved?" and he says, "What does the law say?" "Oh well, the law says love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, love your neighbor as yourself." "Yes, you are right." So what is this about this morning? It's about being together for an hour or so to know that we do not journey together to as individuals we journey also in part as a community. So as we come together it's good to see each other and to see that there's faith there and that there's life direction that we have dedicated our lives to the Lord and to know how to honor him in what we do by loving each other.

So as far as announcements go this morning, this week Helen is having a birthday and Care is having a birthday and we hope those folks have a good time. I had a birthday last week and someone say it was a significant. I'd say at my age that they're all significant. And anniversaries, Mary and Brian have an anniversary this week coming up. Marie has traveled to down east to have a memorial service for a sister who passed away during COVID and we need to honor her in our prayers. Also Keith R is undergoing triple by-- bypass surgery this week and needs our prayers as well. And Brenda is meeting with neurologists about having had a CAT scan and getting a report on that. You know, sometimes people appear in our bulletin that we need to pray for and we don't always know who they are and rest assured there are people who are connected to our community. Our service is seen in India by a church in the evening and sometimes we get messages from them, people requesting prayers. So we honor these folks in our in our prayers. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven we are grateful for this time that we can be together. We're grateful for your love and mercy. We're grateful for your being. We know Father that your spirit is all around us and we pray Father for the indwelling of the Spirit that we might be the people that we are meant to be in your sight. We pray Father that you'll help us with our decisions, that you'll help us with our language, that you'll help us with our attitudes, that we might honor you in all that we do, that as we interact with people somehow we can leave them better off. We pray Father that we might look to you and honor you in our lives, in all aspects of our lives. We pray for the courage that you promised to Joshua, be courageous and strong. We pray for those attitudes and characteristics in our lives that we depend on you, that we honor you. For those of that have been mentioned this morning we pray your your mercy and grace on those folks that in their time of distress and difficulty that they might find strength in you and that they might be emboldened by your mercy and grace that no matter what happens through life or through passing that they know that you are there and that you are present and you are caring. We

pray Father for our time together today that we might honor you and that we might encourage each other and to that this end we pray this prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

## Communion

I'm going to talk about the Lamb of God and excuse me if some of these thoughts are pretty scattered. I'm what? A sheep. I scatter. In the gospel of John he records John the Baptist saying this, "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." This the meaning of this would not be lost on those who heard it because the Lamb of God is a tremendous part of their the Israelites experience and relation to God. Perhaps it was not completely understood but it was a frame of reference that they knew. They knew what the Lamb of God was. They would have been remembering the history of how they left Egypt hundreds of years before and were saved from the terror of the 10th plague that of the killing of all of the firstborn children and animals who weren't covered, the doors with the blood of the Lamb. This was the Lamb of God. So we have this, interesting, in Exodus chapter 12: "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn, both men and animals and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. This is a day when you this is a day you are to commemorate for the generations to come. You celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance." This meant a lot as you could probably see to those Israelites who escaped captivity but to all of their generations to follow. They were saved because the blood of the Lamb.

And Jesus when he took the passover feast with his disciples in Mark 14. The first Lord's supper if you will. On the first day of the festival or the feast of unleavened bread when it was customary to sacrifice the passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him where do you want us to go to prepare this? Later, when they had made preparations and while they were eating Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it. Saying to his disciples, "Take it, this is my body." He took the cup and gave thanks and offered it to them and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many." He said to them, "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

We have the opportunity to remember the Lamb of God, the sacrifice through his death. We have these emblems that we use as a remembrance of the body and the blood and the sacrifice of God his only and his only son the Lamb of God once and for all. There's a hymn in our hymn book that we sometimes say it's called the Lamb of God and the chorus says, "Oh, Lamb of God; sweet Lamb of God; I love the holy Lamb of God. Wash me in his precious blood; my Jesus Christ the Lamb of God." Heavenly Father we struggle to understand the great sacrifice of your son and how it affects each of us in our lives as we live to profess Christ in our life. As we remember his sacrifice now with these emblems we pray for strength we pray that we may reach others and we pray that we may help those who need help. Bless us Father as we remember the Lamb of God your son Jesus in whom we pray, amen.

## Reading

### Revelation 12:10-12

I'm going to read down to 12.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power  
and the kingdom of our God,  
and the authority of his Messiah.

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,  
who accuses them before our God day and night,  
has been hurled down.

They triumphed over him  
by the blood of the Lamb  
and by the word of their testimony;  
they did not love their lives so much  
as to shrink from death.

Therefore rejoice, you heavens  
and you who dwell in them!

But woe to the earth and the sea,  
because the devil has gone down to you!

He is filled with fury,  
because he knows that his time is short." Amen.

[Music]

## Sermon

Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for being with us today. Today I want to begin a new preaching series. We've gone through most of the New Testament and we're going to cover the difficult book of Revelation very much an apocalyptic book but I hope that we'll have some fun going through this. Revelation and I hope this doesn't offend anyone really reminds me of the movie The Wizard of Oz. The reason I say that is that it's very much a dream. You remember this wonderful movie The Wizard of Oz. Dorothy has a dream she's caught up in an amazing adventure. She meets a cowardly lion. She meets a tin man. She meets a man a straw man and then they're on their way to the Wizard of Oz who will be able to help Dorothy get back home. But there's this wicked witch who wants to destroy Dorothy and especially Toto, the little dog. The witch didn't like that dog at all. And the lion, the tin man, the straw man, and their big question was this. How do we get back home? How do we get back home? Well, we go to the wizard and the wizard's going to tell Dorothy after a long journey that she always had the ability to get back home. All she needed to do was to say I want to get back home. Click her heels three times and she can get back home. And I just thought about this over and over because she realized that loved ones were already there and they were waiting for her, and I think for all of us we get that. Many of our loved ones are with Jesus and they're waiting for us and they'll welcome us home.

So, Revelation is a book that has these grandiose pictures but it's this loving theme that's remarkable and I have to tell you that one of my favorite scriptures in all of the Bible is in Revelation. Revelation 12 11 and they overcame by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony, and they did not love

their lives so much even to shrink from death. Death was not going to stop them, and death will not stop us. That we will see Jesus face to face. They overcame by the blood of the lamb, the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives so much even to shrink from death. They overcame by the blood of the lamb. Do you know how often that is in the New Testament, "by the blood of the lamb?" Let me just give you some of these things. This is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins Jesus says in Matthew chapter 27. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of the atonement through the shedding of blood. Romans chapter 3 and verse 25. Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption by his blood. So, we kind of get the idea. 1 Corinthians 11:25 This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, it's in remembrance of me. Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 20. This is the blood of the covenant which has been commanded you to keep. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. And then Peter writes, "For you know it's not with perishable things such as silver and gold that we had been redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to us by our forefathers but by the precious blood of Jesus." In 1 John chapter 1 and verse 7. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin. And then because we're in revelation, Revelation chapter 12 and verse 11. And they overcame him. Satan. They overcame him by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much even to shrink from death.

They overcame by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. Now we're—bibles usually in our pews—and if you want to follow along in the Bible, we're going to do some reading today. The word of their testimony. Acts chapter 4 is this amazing story. In Acts chapter 2. Many, many people come to Christ but there are a lot of Sadducees and Pharisees who wanted Christians to be extinct. They didn't want them anymore, but they spoke the word of their testimony. So, I'm just going to read a couple of verses from Acts chapter 4 and notice some of these things. Acts chapter 4 says the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. And what they were speaking to the people is that Jesus is the Savior. That he was crucified that he died but he rose again and that he's coming again. And they were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. So, they seized Peter and John because it was evening. They put them in jail until the next day but many who heard the message believed and the number of men grew to five thousand. We don't know how many people when you put men and women together how many of them came to Christ. It's this beautiful understanding in Revelation. They overcame by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. And so, Peter and John say these things. Salvation is found in no one else for there's no other name under heaven given by men which we must be saved. And when they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled ordinary men they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. And it gives me pause if I was there watching all of this that maybe I, maybe you, maybe all of us would say tell us about this Jesus. What is all this about? This is incredible. You've been teaching us about the blood of the lamb and the word of this testimony. His word is that powerful? Absolutely it is. And so, then they called them back in and commanded them don't speak or teach in the name of Jesus at all. And I love Peter's courage. But Peter and John replied, judge for yourselves whether it's right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. And then listen to these words—for we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard. And so, the enemies of this said well we're going to threaten you. So, they threatened him after further threats they let them go because there was nothing that they could do about that.

And so, this great understanding of this Christ who is he? How profound is he? And so, we look at this all the way through and there's just such great scriptures talking about day after day in the temple courts and from house to house they never stop teaching. They never stop proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. They overcame by the blood of the lamb.

And then it says, and they did not shrink from death. Now the book of Hebrews is very much a unique Bible book and, and it's—I wonder if you want to, if you have a Bible on the pew you may want to look at this because it's a pretty profound passage of scripture. In Hebrews chapter 11, I'm going to start reading in about verse 8. So, this will be fairly lengthy but our time will be soon gone anyway. It says by faith Abraham when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance obeyed and went even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise for he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect is the builder and that of course is God. And then it says, and all these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, and they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on the earth and people who say such things so that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left they would have had opportunity to return instead they were longing for a better country, listen, a heavenly one and I had to ask myself the question several times this morning have I been longing for the new country? Have I been longing for the heavenly one? We're going to see our loved ones again. We're going to see them face to face and we'll see Jesus face to face and we'll see God face to face. It's not a lie. It's a reality.

They were longing for a better place, a heavenly one not to be ashamed but to be calling their God because—listen—because God has prepared a city for us. Can we wait for this? It's a remarkable book the book of Hebrews. It reminds us over and over again the precious promises of God. It says so many people were unworthy and so many people were worthy and the people who were worthy were okay if their life was messed up for the fact of preaching the gospel. If they were put in jail, if some of them were killed they're not going to stop their faith and so in Hebrews chapter 11 it talks about this and in an amazing way so let me just read these words to you. And what more can I say? I do not have time to talk about Gideon or Barak, Samson or Jephtha or David or Samuel and the prophets who through faith listen conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what has been promised who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames and escaped the edge of the sword whose weakness was turned to strength and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women—listen—received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned, they were sought in two, they were put to death by the sword, they went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and living in holes in the ground. They were all commended for their faith yet none of them received what had been promised. Now listen to this: Because God had planned something better for us. For us! God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect with us.

And so the Hebrew writer, whoever he or she, whoever they are, we don't know who wrote the book, but then these words. And I think they're just as valid today as they were when these words were written. Speaking to each one of us individually, listen to the words, "But you have come." "But you

have come to Mount Zion." "You have come to the heavenly Jerusalem." "You have come to the city of the living of God." "You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly." "You have come to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven." "You have come to God." "He already sees us with him." So, the Hebrew writer reminds us, don't back off. Difficult times will come, don't back off. Hurts will come, don't back off. Keep your faith in God because God has faith in each one of us. He has called us to himself through Jesus Christ. So, he says, as a warning, see to it that you don't refuse it. See to it that you do not refuse it.

This book is a marvelous book. They overcame by the word of their testimony. They did not even shrink from death. And so let me conclude today in Revelation. And if you want to look in the Bible in Revelation 21, it's this wonderful illustration. For many people when this Bible was written, Jerusalem was still populated by great, great faith. And then in Revelation 21, John the Revelator reveals these words that were so important for them back then and just as important for us today. Listen and see if you can see it. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth has passed away, and there was no longer any sea." I think what they meant by that, there was no more fear of shipwrecks or anything else like that. It was a combination of heaven and earth coming together as one. "And 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 these words to us. Now the dwelling of God is with us, and he will live with us. They will be his people. God himself will be with us and be our God. And he will wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more crying, no more pain, for the old order of things has passed away. And he who was seated on the throne." God said, Donny, and you mention your name, this is what God says to us. It's done. "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I'm the beginning and the end. And to him who was thirsty, I will give to drink without cost because he who overcomes will inherit all of this, and we will be his children forever."

And so, John sees this temple, and then he said, the temple in the city is now gone. I didn't see it anymore because the Lord Almighty God, the Lamb is now the temple, and the Lamb is now the lamp, and the nations will all come into the light of the Lord. And then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal flowing down from the throne of God and the Lamb of God in the middle of this tree of life. How wonderful, how remarkable. And then he said, behold, I'm coming, soon, and my reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what they've done. I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And the book concludes with these remarkable words, and he who testifies to these things, John, God has spoken to him clearly, precisely, their future, our future. He who testifies says these things, and he speaks to us alone. I am coming soon. Can we wait for that? Can we be the people of God today waiting for that? I overcame, he overcame, we overcame by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and we do not love our lives so much, even to shrink from death, because death is a promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Thank God for his precious promises. Amen.

## Closing

Some of you know I went back to school this year and taught career studies to a couple sections of students at Great Lakes. At the end of the course, I got a letter from a student, and it started with, when I heard you were going to be our teacher in career studies, I thought it was going to be really boring. Her second sentence was, boy, was I wrong. She went on to describe that in the course of the class and the material that we looked at. She said, you pointed me to some things about myself that I

never knew before and never realized about myself, and you modeled being kind and the importance of being a good person. Well, Don read today about New Testament Christians, that they had seen and heard things and that they were going to speak about those things. Unfortunately, in our world, most of the people that we talk to don't have a connection with the Lord. Many do, but many don't. So, the word of our testimony, it's important for that student, something they got from the class. So, I guess what I would like us all to consider is what is our word of the testimony. What have we seen and heard and seen and heard in our imagination that we can pass on to give people hope and faith in the Lord. So, as we apply the lesson of today, think of how we can provide the word and testimony to others about our lovely Lord and Savior and the great God, that created this world. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we are grateful for the written word that we have that points us to you. We pray that we might meditate on it, and we might think about it and imagine what heaven will be like, but imagine it that it'll be a great place for many people of many different backgrounds in many different situations and together we can sing and praise you for eternity. But in the meantime, Father, we pray that you'll be with us and help us to be an example for you. For many people, we are the only Bible they will ever read. So, we pray for courage to be strong and courageous and to be bold and to be your people, the people you want us to be, for your honor and glory. To this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Have a great week.

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