

Revelation (Part 3)

September 10, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message concludes our series on Revelation. The scripture reading is Revelation 1 1 to 7. Thank you to Dave, Glynnis, Ed, and Don for being part of the video. We'd like to wish a happy birthday this week to Glynnis and to Kathleen.

Welcome, Announcements & Prayer

Welcome. We're glad you're here. We thank you for your presence. I have a few announcements. We pray for Mary and her continued recuperation.

Psalms 63 verses 1 to 5. We've been doing some study in our adult class in the morning in Psalms and they are beginning to speak to our situations and always have. But rereading and reading and reading, making good connections. And here is a psalm that sort of aims our spirit toward worship.

Oh God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I've seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory because your love is better than life. My lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods. My lips, my singing lips, my mouth will praise you. Let's pray.

Lord, we welcome your presence among us today as we celebrate the gift of life that you have lavished upon us through your Son and in your spirit. We ask that you would open our ears that we may hear your voice, open our minds so that we may receive your wisdom and open our hearts, Lord, that we may serve the needs of others. Thank you for all things. You know our concerns for others. We pray for Mary and others with their struggles with health and safety and their continued care. Help us be your servants. Yours is the glory. In Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.

Communion

Good morning everyone. So good to see everyone this morning, this week. I'm a Facebooker. It's not the cool thing to be anymore. It shows my age. That's okay. I have a couple of really great friends who post things from time to time that really give me pause. It's like, "Ooh." And one of them came by this week as I was, and I was, as I was thinking about the communion talk, I thought I would share it with you. The post reads, "Ponder how valuable your soul must be for Satan to pursue it tirelessly and the King to lay down his own life for it." And it was like, "Wow, I'd kind of never thought of it quite that way." I mean, we think about these things all the time, but to think about how tirelessly Satan pursues us and of course how valuable my soul must be that Jesus would die for me. That was kind of shook me.

And I got thinking about currency and what the currency was of Satan and what the currency is of God. And that led me to think about Galatians 5 in verse 19 to 23. The acts of the flesh are obvious, and to me this is Satan's currency. Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions in envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And here's God's currency. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance or patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

1 Peter 5 verses 8 and 9 say, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him." How? "Standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." Romans 8, 31 and down to 39. What shall we say then in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? "He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?" It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Jesus Christ who died, more than that who was raised to life is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we face death all day long, we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let's pray for this amazing sacrifice that allows us to live as we could never, ever live without Jesus.

Dearest Lord God, as we go to take the communion that you blessed us with so many years ago, God, we are so grateful. We're grateful for your sacrifice for the sacrifice of your Son and we're so grateful for your Spirit that counsels us, that prods us, that moves us to work towards being blessed with your currency. God, help us to live using your currency. God, help us to stand firm in our faith when we're tempted because we know that you literally have our back in every situation no matter what. God, we are so grateful for you. We're so grateful for Jesus and we're so grateful for your Spirit and it's in their names that I pray. We ask you to bless our communion time. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

[Music]

Reading

[Revelation 1:1-7 \(GNT\)](#)

Revelations chapter one, one through seven.

This book is the record of the events that Jesus Christ revealed. God gave him this revelation in order to show his servant what must happen very soon. Christ made these things known to his servant John by sending his angel to him and John has told all that he has seen. This is his report concerning the message of God and the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. Happy is the one who reads this book and happy are those who listen to the words of this prophetic message and obey what is written in this book. For the time is near when all these things will happen.

From John to the seven churches in the province of Asia, grace and peace be yours from God who is, who was, and who is to come. And from the seven spirits in front of his throne and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first to be raised from the dead from death and who is also the ruler of the kings of the world. He loves us and by his sacrificial death he has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. To Jesus Christ be the glory and power forever and ever.

Amen. Look he is coming on the clouds everyone will see him including those who pierced him. All peoples on earth will mourn over him so shall it be. Amen.

Sermon

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for being with us. We're in the book of Revelation and we're going to hurry it up today. So we want to finish the book of Revelation which I think, the book of Revelation never ends, and it can be read multiple, multiple, multiple times and we're still trying to figure out what it all means. I'm not a very smart person but I think it goes this way. Jesus wins. That's it. Jesus wins and Satan's trying to lose us but we won't be lost by him. The temptations of Satan is obvious and all throughout this book there is this battle between good and evil. So I've got on the first part of my bible these words. Revelation is very difficult to grasp but the point being is Jesus eventually does win.

And all throughout even the Old Testament there was this look toward a new heaven and a new earth coming. For example way back in Isaiah chapter 65 listen to these words because they sound like they're also in the book of revelation. Isaiah 65 verse 17 "Behold I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered nor will they come to mind but be glad and rejoice forever."--listen--"in what I will create for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight" and I think when he's talking about Jerusalem the people who have righteousness. I will create and give people such joy. So Isaiah is a marvelous book and throughout Revelation I continually refer back to Isaiah so I'm trying to teach myself not to do that. Today we want to finish the book of Revelation.

In Revelation even though there are many references at different places. How many people have ever been to Bobcaygeon? You know there's a wonderful song from Bobcaygeon: "It was in Bobcaygeon I saw the constellations reveal themselves one star at a time." Wonderful, wonderful song and in Revelation there are stars everywhere and the number seven is everywhere but the uniqueness about the stars is that Jesus himself he is called the bright and morning star. If you ever had the opportunity to be up north away from light and look at the stars it is awe-inspiring and every time I get that opportunity I think there is the bright and morning star and all the constellations surround. So in Revelation the number seven is always there because the number seven is God's number a complete number. For example, we touched on this last week. I'll just give you a couple. I can't say them all. 52 times the number seven is in this book meaning complete and perfect. The beatitudes are seven, seven spirits, seven golden lampstands, seven horns, seven trumpets, seven signs, seven eyes, seven thunders, seven plagues, seven golden bulls, seven hills, seven kings. The overall theme of Revelation is number seven.

So I love the fact that Genesis is the beginning of all things revelation is the continuation of all things. So Revelation has this beautiful apocalyptic Wizard of Oz kind of experience where you look at things and you look at figures and what are these animals or what what's happening through all of this. But the thing that helps us I think to understand the book is Jesus himself how often we can see Jesus himself in this book. So what's also interesting is Jesus writes letters to different churches seven different churches all with different situations where they're trying to deal with this. For example in chapter two the church in Ephesus. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write these words. These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand (always seven) and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds. I know your hard work. I know your perseverance. I know you

can't tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary. Now, it would be nice if we just stop there but we can't because he says "but." But. I know your deeds, your hard work, your perseverance, you've persevered and have endured hardships in my name, yet I hold this against you. You have forsaken your first love and as I read all this, I thought well what does that mean? Have they turned their back on Jesus? Have they walked away from Jesus? Have they forgotten all about Jesus? I'm not so sure about that. I think maybe one of the things he's saying is you just kind of pushed them out of your life or you just kind of pushed it back. How many times have I talked to Jesus today? How many times do I think about Jesus in a given week? Not just about our salvation because of Jesus but Jesus himself. How he walked, how he talked, how he gives us encouragement, how he put his arms around the lonely and all of this is available for us today to know that God is with us. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you and Jesus when he lived his life and taught he shared something that really changed people's lives.

I read this once and I thought maybe it was helpful. Hope is what you get when you suddenly realize that a different worldview is possible. A worldview in which the greedy, the powerful, the unscrupulous do not after all have the last word even though it may seem like that. The same worldview shift that is demanded by the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the shift that will enable us to transform the world. Jesus is the bright and morning star and in Revelation he writes to these churches encouraging them with whatever problems they have. For example in Revelation chapter 2 where he writes to the church at Smyrna he says, "These are the words of him who was the first and last who died and came to life." We know we're talking about Jesus. He says, "I know your afflictions, I know your poverty and yet you are rich, spiritually rich. I know the slander of those who say they are Jews but aren't, but they do belong to the synagogue of Satan." Satan will not give up but Jesus doesn't give up. Many people who lived in the synagogue of Satan have changed their life and become Christians.

And so all the way through this book, these seven different churches, there's a little bit of difference between each one into the church at Thyatira. It says, "These are the words of the Son of God whose eyes are like blazing fire and bronze. I know your deeds, I know your love, I know your faith, I know your sacrifice, I know your perseverance and that you are now doing more than you did at first." And then this next word, "Nevertheless, nevertheless I have this against you. You tolerate this woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess and that she was a person even in that church that really did nasty things, became very immoral and it was something that was not what Jesus wanted. And so, to this church at Thyatira there needed to be repentance. In fact, in each one of these churches there needs to be repentance by people. And sometimes when John writes this through the work of Jesus, he says to the church at Sardis, "These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds, you have a reputation of being alive but you are dead." And then it says in exclamation, "Wake up! Wake up." And I wonder sometimes if that's just something that each of us needs to say. Am I growing closer to Jesus? Or have I just taken him for granted? Have I ever dreamt about Jesus himself? Have I ever thought about how often Jesus thinks about us and our church and our lives and our friends? It's not just individual, it's for everyone. God loved the whole world that he gave himself and he continues to give himself to us today. "I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you, I am always with you."

So, in the Revelation where he's writing to these different churches, they each have a little bit of a conflict with one another, things that they needed to get taken care of. But in Revelation chapter 12,

which we spent a little bit of time on last week, is one of my favorite passages in all of the Bible. It talks about in Revelation chapter 12, "A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars under her head. And she was pregnant and cried out in pain because she was about to give birth. Then another sign in heaven appeared, an enormous red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The woman, 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." Talking about Jesus. "And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." It's this beautiful understanding that we have angels surrounding us and helping us. Verse 7, "And there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon," Satan, "and the angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon his angels." They fought back, but he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. Satan, the great dragon, was hurled down that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, listen, who leads the whole world astray. He's still doing it. He's still trying to do this.

So, the word of John in Revelation, 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 before our God day and night, has been hurled down, and 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. I don't know about you, but I think it's really difficult for me to grasp all of it, but can you imagine what it was like in the first century where being a Christian was terribly persecuted and some of the horrible things that were done to Christians? We live in a time now where we have the word of God. More importantly, we have God. We have the love of Jesus. More importantly, we have Jesus who lives in us. We have a Holy Spirit who's part of God, who also lives in us. The blessings of God are immeasurable. I don't think we could live many, many, many lifetimes and never really grasp this incredible love that God gives to us.

So, throughout this book, there are apocalyptic scenes, things where there's all kinds of numbers written and pictures flashing, and you just go, "What does all of this mean?" And I've read this book this past week, I think three or four times, and at the end of it I said, "God, I think I'm more confused now than ever." I don't really grasp all of these intricate things that are there, but it's always a pleasure to listen to the positives that we have. "The temple was filled from the glory of the Lord and from his power, and no one could enter the temple because of the power of God in the temple." So, it's really quite amazing as we go through all of this, and it talks about so many nations falling because of being evil and not paying attention to everybody else, but then one of the great passages of scripture is in Revelation chapter 19, and if you have a Bible, you may want to look at this because there's a word that is used over and over and over again. Let me just read it to you. Revelation chapter 19. "And after this I heard what sounded like a roar of a great multitude in heaven, shouting, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned that great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries," talking about Satan. "He has avenged on her blood his servants." And again, they shouted, "Hallelujah!" The smoke from her goes up forever and forever. The 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, and they cried, "Hallelujah!" Then a voice came from the throne saying, "Praise our God, all you servants who fear him, both small and great." Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters, like peals of thunder shouting, "Hallelujah! For our God, almighty reigns, let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory, for the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has

made herself ready. Fine linen and clean, and clean was given her to wear, (fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints). Then the angel said to me, "Write this down, blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb." And he added, "These are the true words of God." And I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it. I'm only a fellow servant," talking about an angel, "I'm only an angel, a servant with you, with your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God is what he says, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

How many times is the word hallelujah used in the Bible? Four times. I thought it was everywhere. Four times. And it's all here in Revelation. Hallelujah. We sing great songs with the word hallelujah. Sometimes when we're exceptionally happy, we'll say hallelujah. Something great happens. Well, hallelujah. But we don't really find it very often in the Bible, but it's an encouragement for us with this word. And so let me start to wrap up.

Revelation 21 is one of the amazing passages in all of the Bible. You've probably heard me say that about many chapters, but it really is one of the most incredible books in all the Bible. It has everything to do with what John was writing and what John saw. And it has everything to do with what your moms and dads and aunts and uncles and grandmas and grandpas have read for years and years and years. And it's priceless. Chapter 21. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth passed away and there's no longer any see. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem. Listen, coming down out of heaven from God, not going up, 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. Now the dwelling of God is with men and women and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. And he will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning, no more crying, no more pain for that order, old order of things has passed away. Can we wait for this? And he was seated on the throne, said I am making everything new. Write this down. He said to me, it's done. I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who was thirsty, I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. And he who overcomes this will inherit this and I will be his God and he will be my son.

And then also in chapter 21, it gives us this glimpse. If you will, just let your imagination go with this. Chapter 21, verse 22, I did not see a temple in the city because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need sun or the moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and the lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will the gates ever be shut for there will be no night there. The glory and the honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it. Nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Can you just picture a book that sits on Jesus's lap, and he opens the book and he writes down your name and my name and loved one's names. We are in the Lamb's Book of Life. No accusation. We belong to the Lord God Almighty.

And if that's not enough, in Revelation 22, beginning in verse 12, he says these words, "Behold, I'm coming soon." Well, it's been a while God. Yeah, but I'm coming. I'm coming soon. We may go to him before he comes to us, but he's coming soon. I'm coming soon. My rewards are with me and I will give to everyone according to what they've done. I am the Alpha, the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs who practice magic, arts,

immoral, murderers, and so forth. But I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I'm the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And then he says, "The spirit and the bride say, come." And let him who hears say, "Come." Whoever's thirsty, let him come. And whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. And then in verse 20, "He who testifies to these things says, yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come Lord Jesus and the grace of the Lord Jesus will be God's people. Amen.

Genesis, the beginning of all things. Revelation, the continual beginning of new things. May the encouragement of Revelation be something that motivates us and helps us to be closer to Jesus. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could be as close to Jesus as Jesus is to us? Amen.

Closing Prayer

I'd like to thank Don for his message and Glynnis for her words at the table and for Ed and Adam for their participation in leading us. I would like to apologize. I'd like to use age as an excuse, but it's just a number. And I'm always thinking, I should have said this. I should have done this. You know, you kind of rethink things. I am remiss in not specifically welcoming Trevor and Sarah and their family with us this morning. We are glad to have them with us and visiting. We're glad to have Donna back from her operation and recovering. And Michael seems to be okay and recovering nicely. I wouldn't want that. We're glad you're here. All of you.

And I leave you with these words from the last two verses in the book of Jude. To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. To the only God, our Saviour be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages and now and forevermore. Amen.

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