

Revelation and the Wizard of Oz

June 15, 2025

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled, Revelation and the Wizard of Oz. Thank you to Ed, Achile, and Don for being part of the service. The scripture reading is Revelation 1, 1 to 3. Happy birthday this week to William and Shirley, and happy anniversary to Tina and Earl, and to Gloria and Jon.

Scripture Reading

Good morning. The scripture reading this morning is from the book of Revelation, chapter 1, from verse 1 to 3.

The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his 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 aloud 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.

Sermon

I know they're crying because they're missing the sermon, I understand that.

Most books in the Bible are pretty easy to grasp. However, there are some books that are very difficult to grasp. The Book of Lamentations, it's a horrific book. The barbarity of it is just beyond. It's so cruel, and yet in the midst of all that, God is comforting his people. So the question is, is the Book of Revelation figurative? The answer is yes. Is the Book of Revelation literal? The answer is yes.

If you remember the movie, The Wizard of Oz, it takes us to a new realm. Dorothy is caught up in a new land of munchkins. They very much like Dorothy, and they tell her to go to The Wizard of Oz because he'll know what to do and how to get home. As she follows the yellow brick road, she meets a tin man, a straw man, and a cowardly lion. And the wicked witch is doing everything she can do to destroy them all. But the wicked witch is not strong enough to destroy Dorothy and her friends. In Dorothy's tiny puppy, Toto, she wants to get to Oz, and she believes she can, and the wizard can get her back home. The wicked witch is just about to destroy Dorothy and her friends, but the witch is not strong enough as she thought she was. It took only a pail of water thrown on the witch to destroy her. How many remember that story? Dorothy wakes up and she realizes it was a dream. More than anything else, she just wanted to go home. She always knew that hope would get her home.

The wonderful theologian N.T. Wright talks about hope. He wrote this, "Hope is what you get when you suddenly realize that a different worldview is possible, a worldview in which the greedy, the powerful, and the unscrupulous do not, after all, have the last word." The same worldview shift that is demanded by the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the shift that will enable us to transform the world. The world does not have to stay the way it is, and hope is a fulfilling faith. And here's

what Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. I'm the first and the last. I am the living one. I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and forever."

And then John writes in Revelation to the church at Ephesus, he says, "I know your deeds. I know your hard work. I know your perseverance."

And then John writes to the church in Smyrna and says, "Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." This is not symbolic. It is a reality.

And so John says to him, "Who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne." And there was a door standing open in heaven and a voice saying, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place, what must take place." And then in heaven from the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder. And in heaven day and night they never stopped singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come." And whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, the 24 elders in heaven all fall down and say, "Lord, you are worthy to receive glory and honor because you have created all things. You knew us before we were born." And then I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from any nation or tribe and people. And they were standing before this throne saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on this throne and worship saying the words that we often use. Amen." Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and forever. Amen.

And then in chapter 12, these words, the battle, the battle, Satan thought he was strong enough. He would never be strong enough. So in chapter 12 it says this, "Those who have believed in Christ, they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb by the word of their testimony," listen to this, "and they did not love their lives so much even to shrink from death. Rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them."

And then in chapter 14, this amazing book, "Angels Flying in Midair," then I saw another angel doing exactly that, flying in midair. And he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth. That's us. The angel said in a loud voice, "Fear God, but give him glory because of the hour has come. Worship him who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the springs of water and all that's made."

And then in chapter 15, he said, "I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire, standing beside the sea who had been victorious. They held harps, given them by God," can you imagine? The servant of God, "All nations will come and worship before you for your righteous acts have now been revealed." And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.

And in chapter 19, I think this was said in a loud voice, "Hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to our God because he is the power." And the 24 elders and four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who seated on the throne and they cried aloud, "Amen, hallelujah." For our God, Almighty reigns, let us rejoice and be glad and give glory. And then in chapter 20, the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. No more, no more.

Then I saw a new heaven and I saw a new world for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And then I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, listen to this, 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, "Now the dwelling of God is with us and he lives in us." And not only that, he will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death.

We had a funeral yesterday. She knew where she was going. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or crying or pain. For the old order of things had passed away. And he who overcomes this will inherit all of it. I will be with his God and he will be my son. And then toward the end, the angel said, "Come." He showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal flowing down from the middle of the great crystal street. On each side of the river, the tree of life bearing 12 crops of fruit yielding its fruit every month and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of all the nations. Whoever is thirsty, let him come. And whoever wishes, let him take this free gift of the water of life. May we do so.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "You will find that Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." Remember the hymn, "Shall we gather at the river where bright angel feet have trod, with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God?" Yes, we will gather at the river. The beautiful, the beautiful river gathered with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

The famous blind Fanny Crosby attended a midweek prayer meeting in the service 1891. Fanny was stunned when Dr. Cosby suddenly died. Pondering the sadness of death, she asked herself, "I wonder what my first impression of heaven will be?" A moment later, she answered her own question with sudden insight. She said, "My eyes will be opened, and I will see my Savior face to face." And then she wrote, "Someday the silver cord will break, and I know more as now will sing, but all the joy when I shall wake within the palace of the King." It's precious when children picture heaven and what it's like.

Just happened to read an article the other day. One child, seven, said, "I think heaven is up in the sky, and you can look down at circuses for free if you want to, but really you need to ask permission from God." Isaiah talks about new heavens and a new earth. Be glad and rejoice forever. The sound of weeping and crying will be heard. No more. We will be looking into the eyes of Jesus. And this is not metaphorical. It is our reality. We said goodbye to Dorothy yesterday. Now Dorothy and Len are together again. See, God's promises are sure and everlasting. Difficult yes, but no more death, no more crying, no more pain. Our future is secure. Amen.

Contact & Copyright

Thanks for watching or listening. The Beamsville Church of Christ meets at 4900 John Street, Beamsville, Ontario.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version© NIV© Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc. TM Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked NRSV are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

You can learn more about the congregation on our Facebook page or at BeamsvilleChurchOfChrist.ca.