

“How Then Shall We Live?”*Revelation 22***Introduction** – **SLIDE1**

Today we come to the end of our journey through the last book of the Bible—the Revelation of Jesus Christ (by Jesus, about Jesus). I started this walking tour of Revelation back in January, and it has been quite a journey hasn't it! (confusing & clarifying, disturbing & encouraging, overwhelming & awe-inspiring). Some of you are glad we're finishing, others feel it's gone by way too fast. I doubt that all of your questions about Revelation have been answered because mine certainly haven't been (e.g. When is the millennium?). Yet alongside lingering questions there are also lasting impressions (e.g. the greatness of Christ, the power of prayer, the unmasking of Empire¹). This is precisely what Jesus intended when he sent his angel to pastor John on the prison island of Patmos. (*cf.* Toronto pastor Hyeon Soo Lim imprisoned in North Korea for what it called “crimes against the state”).²

Biblical Contact

So I hope you have come to see the book of Revelation not as a crystal ball for curiosity seekers, but a discipleship manual for those living in difficult and dangerous times. Darrell Johnson, one of our tour guides on this journey through Revelation, was right when he told us back at the beginning, that

“No other book of the Bible, in the face of all that threatens to undo us, proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ the way the last book does....No other book helps us see him in a way that overcomes our fears and frees us for radical faith.”³

What it does is grow radical faith (i.e. rooted, strong, & sustained). *How* it does this is by giving us a God's eye view of reality which is bigger and fuller and greater than what we can see with merely our unaided human senses (e.g. Elisha & his servant in 2 Kings 6¹⁷...“Get real!”). Revelation is the ultimate “reality check”. NT scholar Richard Bauckham makes this point well when he says,

¹ Empire = militarily powerful, economically wealthy nations who believe they have the right: (a) to rule other nations and, (b) to shape history according to their own agenda. God is opposed to this because these are the very things he has promised to His Son. Thus they become rivals to, and enemies of the Son & his kingdom. - Brian Zahnd *Resisting Empire*
² <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/03/01/canadian-pastor-jailed-in-north-korea-meets-swedish-ambassador>

³ Darrell Johnson, Discipleship On The Edge, p. 13.

“We should remember that Revelation’s readers in the great cities of the province of Asia were constantly confronted with powerful images of the [Empire’s] vision of the world [Structures, Statues, Songs, Currency]... Revelation provides a set of Christian prophetic counter-images... The visual power of the book effects a kind of purging of the Christian imagination, refurbishing it with alternative visions of how the world is and will be.⁴ (i.e. “re-branded”)

Read Revelation 22:6-21. SLIDE2

Structural Contact

A) Living With Genuine Foresight SLIDE3

Although this epilogue is made up of various short sections, one of the clear themes it spells out is the *authenticity* of this book as a divine revelation.⁵

Stamps of authenticity:

a) divine authorship—1¹⁻²; 22⁶ “*The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets*” (cf. 2 Pet. 1²¹ “*For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”; cf. Heb. 1¹; 2 Tim. 3¹⁶)

b) angelic delivery^{Heb.2:2; Dt.33:2; Acts7:38},

c) apostolic confirmation—v.8; 1¹⁻², etc.

d) ring of truth⁶ in its historical accuracy and perspective of reality.

This book helps us live with **genuine foresight & divine insight.** SLIDE4

- Genuine foresight does at least three things: 1st it gives Certainty vs. Ambiguity (v.6,8,16) SLIDE5
 - It takes us out of the realm of “maybe” and “perhaps” (solid vs shaky)
- 2nd it gives Hope vs. Despair (v.7; cf. 1 Pet. 1³⁻⁹) SLIDE6
 - 2 Cor. 4¹⁶⁻¹⁸ and 1 Peter 1³⁻⁹ are wonderful illustrations of how Paul & Peter had a living hope in the light of this genuine divine foresight.
 - Read Rev. 1¹⁸ “*I am the Living One...And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*”
- Anticipation vs. Anxiety (vv.12-14) SLIDE7

⁴ Quoted by Darrell Johnson, Discipleship On The Edge, p. 36.

⁵ It is a genuine prophecy (1³; 22^{6,9-10,18-19}) by a duly commissioned prophet (1^{1,9-10}; 22⁸⁻¹⁰) to be read in the churches (1^{3,11}; 22¹⁸) for the encouragement of the faithful (1³; 22^{7,12,14}). Though given by angelic messenger, its source and main content is Jesus himself.

⁶ “The NT, given a fair hearing, does not need me or anyone else to defend it. It has the proper ring for anyone who has not lost his [or her] ear from truth.”—J.B. Phillips, Ring of Truth, p. 27.

- **Imminence**: “the things that must **soon** take place^{v.6} ...I am coming **soon**^{v.7} ... the time is near^{v.10} ...I am coming soon^{v.12} ...Yes, I am coming soon.”^{v.20} The adverb **ταχύ** can mean “**soon**”⁷ (i.e. without delay) or “**sudden**” (i.e. when least expected), both are probably in mind.
 - Martin Luther King **video clip** (“My eyes have seen the glory”)⁸

B) With Divine Insight **SLIDE9**

1) Into where & how **Satan** is at work **SLIDE10** “dragon, beast, false prophet”

“John’s vision gave insight into “what must soon take place,” in his era (1¹)....He wrote a scathing critique of political idolatry in the first-century Roman Empire, not an analysis of Al Qaeda or the inequities of modern globalization. But just as the letters of the apostle Paul have become God’s Word for us today when the Holy Spirit breathes through them, so God uses Revelation to illuminate our theological and political landscape.”⁹

- Introduce **Video clip** of Bernie Sanders and Trump nominee Russell Vought¹⁰

2) Into where & how **God** is at work **SLIDE12** “the one on the throne & the Lamb”

- Rev. 2-3 “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance...I know your afflictions and your poverty...I know where you live...”
- Rev. 4-5 – At the controls of history...Directing history to its God ordained outcome...Through Lamb Power vs. Beast Power...”
- Rev. 6-7 – Where is God at work in the chaos & conflicts of history?
- Rev. 8 – The power & importance of prayer (e.g. in golden bowls, reversed thunder)
- Rev. 9 – Warning sounds (trumpets) & the tipping point...

3) Into where & how the **church** is at work **SLIDE13**

- As golden lampstands in the world & in the city & in the marketplace, colonies of heaven, marching to a different drummer...
 - Faithful under pressure example = Ravi Zacharias story of Professor Lee & Ahmed Deedat (2 minute **audio clip**)¹¹
 - Work of reconciliation among the nations (e.g. Rising Eagle event)

⁷ Gordon Fee, Revelation, p.308.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoG5YfYL1IM>

⁹ J. Nelson Kraybill, *Apocalypse and Allegiance*, p. 22.

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1Qw-jpSP5Y>

¹¹ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/2shik0nzpstv11h/Ravi%20Zacharias%20Story.mp3?dl=0>

C) With Patient Persistence (1⁹; 2^{3,19}; 3¹⁰; 13¹⁰; 14¹²) **SLIDE14**

- Same Greek word behind the three verses = νικᾶω (conquer, overcome, triumph, gain victory...in court *or* in battle *or* over false teachers)
- Used 28x in the NT...25x by John...Most of these in Revelation (17x)
 - **SLIDE** “Do not weep! See the Lion/Lamb...has triumphed.” (5⁵) = absolute_{EDNT2:468}
 - **SLIDE** “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16³³)
 - Explain “the world” as “the world in opposition to God & His ways”
 - **SLIDE** “to those who are victorious...” (21⁷; cf. 2^{5,11,17,26}; 3^{5,12,21}; 12¹¹; 15²; 17¹⁴; cf. 1 Jn. 5⁴)
- “We are more than conquerors through Christ...” (Closing Song??)

Talk Back **SLIDE18**

- Lingering questions?
- Lasting impressions?

PRAY