

REVELATION

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Week 1

Summary

In this exploration of the Book of Revelation, we're invited to see beyond our preconceived notions and approach this often misunderstood text with fresh eyes. The key message is that Revelation is not meant to confuse or complicate our faith, but to reveal the fullness of Christ in a way that brings blessing and hope. We're challenged to put ourselves in the shoes of the first-century church, who received this letter while facing intense persecution. The central theme is the 'apocalypse' or unveiling of Jesus Christ - not just as we know Him from the Gospels, but in His full, eternal glory. This revelation was meant to strengthen and encourage believers in their darkest times, reminding us that no matter what challenges we face, our ultimate hope lies in the majesty and power of Christ. As we delve deeper into this study, we're encouraged to seek a more profound, yet simpler understanding of who Jesus truly is, beyond our limited human perspective.

Key Points

- The Book of Revelation is primarily about revealing Jesus Christ, not predicting future events.
- The original recipients were persecuted Christians who needed encouragement and a deeper understanding of Christ. The seven churches also had limited literacy issues.
- John's vision presents a more magnificent and comprehensive view of Christ than previously understood.
- The book is meant to be a blessing and should not cause confusion or anxiety.
- Understanding Revelation requires looking at it through the lens of the Old Testament and early church context. Many Old Testament texts will act as “keys”- unlocking the deeper meaning of the book of Revelation.
- The revelation of Christ should minimize our life challenges by giving us a greater perspective.



Scripture References

Mentioned

1. Revelation 1:1-20
2. 1 Corinthians 12:3
3. Luke 15 (Parable of the Prodigal Son)
4. Exodus 19
5. Philippians 3:10
6. Isaiah 11:2
7. Revelation 14:13
8. Revelation 16:15
9. Revelation 19:9
10. Revelation 20:6
11. Revelation 22:7
12. Revelation 22:14

Not Mentioned but Applicable

1. Matthew 5:3-12 (Beatitudes - "blessed" is mentioned)
2. John 21:1-14 (Jesus cooking breakfast for Peter)
3. Judges 6 (Gideon tearing down the altar to Baal)
4. John 19:25-27 (John at the cross with Mary)

Main Themes

1. On the revelation of Christ:
 - Colossians 1:15-20
 - Hebrews 1:1-4
2. On being bondservants/witnesses:
 - Romans 1:1
 - James 1:1
 - 2 Peter 1:1
3. On patience:
 - 2 Peter 3:9
 - James 5:7-8
4. On the voice of God:
 - Ezekiel 43:2
 - Psalm 29:3-4
5. On the majesty of Christ:
 - Revelation 5:11-14
 - Philippians 2:9-11
6. On persecution and suffering:
 - 2 Timothy 3:12
 - 1 Peter 4:12-14
7. On the heavenly perspective:
 - Colossians 3:1-4
 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Small Group Guide

Key Takeaways:

1. The book of Revelation is meant to be a revelation (unveiling) of Jesus Christ, not primarily about end-times events.
2. It was written to encourage persecuted Christians in the first century, and should be a source of blessing and encouragement for believers today.
3. John's vision presents a fuller, more magnificent understanding of Christ than what we see in the Gospels alone.
4. The book uses symbols and imagery to communicate its message, making it accessible even to those who couldn't read.
5. Our approach to Revelation should be to seek a deeper, richer relationship with Christ rather than getting lost in complex interpretations.

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your previous experience with or understanding of the book of Revelation? How does this sermon challenge or change that perspective?
2. The pastor emphasizes that Revelation is meant to be a blessing, not a source of confusion or fear. How might this change the way you approach reading and studying this book?
3. John, who was closest to Jesus during His earthly ministry, was overwhelmed by his vision of the glorified Christ. What does this suggest about our own understanding and experience of Jesus?
4. How does the historical context of Revelation (written to persecuted Christians under Roman rule) inform our interpretation and application of its message today?
5. The sermon suggests that a deeper revelation of Christ can help minimize life's challenges. Can you share an experience where a greater understanding of who Jesus is helped you through a difficult time?



Practical Applications:

1. Read through the book of Revelation in one sitting, focusing on the overall message and depictions of Jesus rather than trying to interpret every detail.
2. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal more of who Jesus is to you personally.
3. Research one of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3. How might their situation relate to challenges the church faces today?
4. Practice "exegesis" with a passage from Revelation: read it carefully, considering the original audience and context before applying it to your life.
5. Share with the group one aspect of Jesus' character or role revealed in Revelation that particularly encourages or challenges you.
6. Reflect on areas in your life where you need to be reminded of Christ's lordship and ultimate victory. How might this perspective change your approach to current challenges?



Day 1: The Revelation of Christ Reading: Revelation 1:1-8

Devotional: As we begin this journey through Revelation, we're reminded that this book is fundamentally about unveiling Jesus Christ in His fullness. Just as John experienced a deeper revelation of Christ, we too are invited to see Jesus in new, awe-inspiring ways. Today, reflect on your current understanding of Christ. How might God be calling you to know Him more deeply? Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see Jesus in His majesty and glory, beyond just the familiar Gospel accounts. Remember, this revelation is meant to be a blessing, not a source of confusion or fear. As you go through your day, be attentive to how God might be revealing more of Himself to you in unexpected ways.

Day 2: Companions in Tribulation Reading: Revelation 1:9-11; Romans 8:35-39

Devotional: John describes himself as a "companion in tribulation" to the early churches. This reminds us that following Christ often involves suffering, yet we're not alone in our struggles. Consider the challenges you're facing right now. How might viewing yourself as part of a larger community of believers who have faced similar trials throughout history change your perspective? Remember that Christ Himself is our ultimate companion in suffering. He understands our pain and walks with us through every trial. Today, reach out to a fellow believer who might be struggling. Share encouragement and remind them of God's faithful presence, even in the midst of tribulation.

Day 3: The Voice Like a Trumpet Reading: Revelation 1:12-16; Exodus 19:16-19

Devotional: The description of Christ's voice as "like a trumpet" and "like the sound of many waters" speaks to His power and authority. This awesome depiction might seem far removed from the gentle Jesus we often imagine, yet it reveals an important aspect of His nature. How does this majestic image of Christ challenge or expand your view of Him? Take time today to listen for God's voice in your life. It may not sound like a literal trumpet, but His Word and Spirit speak with authority and power. Ask God to attune your ears to His voice amidst the noise of daily life, and to give you the courage to respond when He calls.

Day 4: Falling at His Feet Reading: Revelation 1:17-18; Isaiah 6:1-8

Devotional: John's response to seeing the glorified Christ was to fall at His feet "as though dead." This profound encounter with God's holiness reminds us of our own smallness in light of His majesty. Yet Christ's response is one of comfort: "Do not be afraid." Reflect on times when you've felt overwhelmed by God's presence or the weight of His holiness. How did He meet you in those moments? Today, practice humility before God. Spend time in worship, acknowledging His greatness and your dependence on Him. Allow His comforting touch to dispel your fears and empower you to serve Him boldly.

Day 5: Letters to the Churches Reading: Revelation 2:1-7; Matthew 11:15

Devotional: As we conclude this week's readings, we're introduced to the letters to the seven churches. These messages remind us that Christ intimately knows His church - both its strengths and weaknesses. He speaks words of encouragement, warning, and promise. As you read the letter to Ephesus, consider what Christ might say to you or your church today. Where have you been faithful? Where have you lost your "first love"? The call to "hear what the Spirit says" is an invitation to deep, transformative listening. Close this week by asking God to give you ears to truly hear His Word, and a heart ready to respond in obedience and love.