

revelation

the not-so-scary, hope-filled book of new beginnings

session three:

God is exposing evil & empowering his people
(chapters 6-11)

desired outcomes for this class:

- we are **freshly awakened** to and **energized for** the mission of God (*missio dei*) in the world.
- we are better equipped than ever before to **study** and **engage with** Scripture
- we enter into the next season with peace, expectancy, and **God-confidence**

learning aims for today:

- get a sense of Revelation 6-11 from *heaven's* perspective
- see God's faithfulness and mercy amid judgment
- Increase understanding of what it means to be a faithful witness

table discussion questions:

*what has been most **troubling** or **challenging** about Revelation for you?*

*what has been most **hopeful**?*

the view from heaven - the first six seals (Rev. 6)

Seals 1-4: Four Horses and Riders

Revelation 6:1-8

¹I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and

there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Some significant numbers in these passages:

Four (4):

- Horses/horsemen - Rev. 6
- Creatures - Rev. 5 & 6
- Angels, Corners of the Earth, Winds - Rev. 7
- Angels @ Euphrates - Rev. 8

Seven (7):

- Scroll seals - Rev. 5 & 6
- Trumpets - Rev. 8-9, 11

Twelve (12):

- Elders (24) - Rev. 4-5, 7, 11
- 144,000 (12x12,000) - Rev. 7

Zech 1:18-17; 6:1-8 (peace & rest)	Rev. 6:1-8 (limited judgment)	Roman Factions
Red	White	White
Black	Red	Red
White	Black	Blue
Dappled	Pale Green	Green

Seal 5: Martyred Souls Under the Altar

Seal 6: Cosmic Unraveling

interlude - servants of God (Rev. 7)

Revelation 7

⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

⁹After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Ephesians 1

¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

the view from heaven - final seal, six trumpets (Rev. 8-9)

Seal 7: Silence

Zephaniah 1

*^{7a}Be silent before the Sovereign Lord,
for the day of the Lord is near...*

*¹⁴The great day of the Lord is near—
near and coming quickly.
The cry on the day of the Lord is bitter;
the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.*

*¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath—
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of trouble and ruin,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness—*

*¹⁶a day of trumpet and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the corner towers.*

Seven Trumpets

Use of Trumpets	Hebraic	Roman	Revelation
	Announce: God's Presence	Announce: Caesar's Coming	Announce: Egypt-Like Plagues (Rescue)
	Announce: God's Judgment	Announce: Important Message	Announce: Unmaking of old
	Announce: God's Mercy	Announce: Battle Cry	Announce: Caesar's reign has ended
	(Call Creation to Attention)	(Sound of Imperial Authority)	(Sound of Lamb's Impeding Arrival)

Revelation 9

²⁰The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood —idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Faithful Witnesses (Rev.10-11)

John: The Faithful Prophet

Revelation 10

⁸Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.'" ¹⁰I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. ¹¹Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

Ezekiel 2-3

⁹Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, ¹⁰which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

¹And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel." ²So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

³Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

⁴He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them."

The Two Truth-Teller Prophets

The Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11

¹⁵The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

¹⁸The nations were angry, and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—

and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

¹⁹Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.

continued reflection

- Why might it be important to recognize most of these passages are being told from Heaven’s vantage point?
- What does it mean for God’s people to be “sealed” (Rev. 7)? How might that give hope in times of chaos?
- How do you see the church’s role as a “witness” (Rev. 11) playing out today?
- When you hear about God “judging” evil, does it strike you as good news or bad news? Why?
- **Read Revelation 12-16 in preparation for next week.**
 - What sticks out to you?
 - What challenges or encourages you?
 - What questions does this provoke for you?