

Through the Bible at 30,000 Feet

Revelation | The Dramatic Conclusion

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This morning, we have come to the end of our journey through the Bible at 30,000 – to the book of **Revelation**. And, since it's the first Sunday in December, I thought we would begin by looking at the Christmas Story in Revelation together.

How many of you have ever opened to Revelation to read the Christmas Story during the Advent Season? 😊 Most professing Christians have NO IDEA that stories like this are in Revelation.

When most people think of Revelation, what are some of the very first things that come to mind?

- *End of the world. The Great Tribulation*
- *Who is the Antichrist? What is the mark of the beast? What does 666 mean?*
- *What about the Rapture – or the Apocalypse – or the Battle of Armageddon?*

What's crazy is that these are the kinds of things that most people tend to associate with Revelation, and NONE OF THESE THINGS are what this book is about. In fact, half of these things aren't even in the book of Revelation at all.

- Guess how many times the book of Revelation mentions **antichrist**? *Zero times.*
- Guess how many times the book of Revelation mentions a **rapture**? *Zero times.*

So, what is this book about?

- **It's about Jesus.**

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ...”

~ Revelation 1:1

As we finish our journey through the story of the Bible, the last thing God wants us to see is Jesus Christ. **The first thing you need to know as you open to Revelation is that it is NOT a book about the end times.** It's a book about Jesus.

And OF COURSE it should be about Jesus – because this entire story has been pointing to Him. Revelation is the dramatic conclusion of a story that has ALWAYS been about Jesus.¹

Revelation was written to help people see Jesus.

Illustration: Comments from coworkers at **UPS** who saw my Bible open to Revelation:

- *“Are you trying to mess yourself up, or what!?” [Several days later] “So, how are the four horsemen of the apocalypse and the seven bowls of judgment...?”*
- *“Careful. That's dangerous. Reading that will make you crazy.”*

¹ Col 1:16–18. So, what does God want us to see as we study Revelation? He wants us to see Jesus...because that's what this whole universe is about (Rev 4:11). From beginning to end, first to last, this story is all about Jesus Christ (Rev 1:8, 11, 17; 22:13).

One of the reasons people think these kinds of things about this book is because they think it's called 'Revelations' (*plural*) – implying that there are a whole bunch of things that God wants us to see here at the end of the story. If we think that this book as “*revelations*” (*plural*), then it's no wonder that people get overwhelmed because there's a lot of crazy imagery in here:

- like four creatures that are covered in eyes & four horses of different colors & bowls of judgment & trumpets that seem to unleash judgment & a scroll with seven seals that nobody can open & two witnesses who are murdered and then raised to life & the fiery red dragon & a beast from the sea & another beast from the earth & the mark of the beast & the great harlot riding on Babylon & New Jerusalem come down from heaven & the millennial reign of Christ & streets of gold...

Crazy stuff! All of these things are in this book, but none of these things are what this book is actually about ... because the book isn't called 'Revelations'; it's called **REVELATION** (*singular*) - and that's REALLY important.

In just the first 5 words of this book...²

- God did not give us this book to *confuse* us. He gave us this book to *reveal* His Son.
- It's not a *mystery* book; it's a *revelation* (one revelation – *not about the end of the world*, but **about a person**: Jesus.)

The first three verses set the trajectory for this book right away:

1. **It's meant to reveal**, not confuse (1).³
2. God meant for this book to be a **blessing** (3).⁴ If this book leaves you frustrated, you are missing what God is showing you – because He intended for this revelation to produce a supernatural happiness in those who read it.
3. God expected the readers to **obey** it, to “*keep those things which are written in it*” (3). If God's people were to obey what was written in this book, they must have been able to understand it.
 - a. If I speak to my son in riddles that he doesn't have the tools to understand, then I shouldn't be surprised when he doesn't obey what I've told him.
 - b. But God expected obedience from these first century Christians, which means He expected for this book to be understood.

GAME PLAN:

1. Pray 😊
2. Start by reading the Christmas Story in Revelation. Why? Two reasons:
 - a. Because it's the Christmas season,
 - b. And because it actually helps set the stage for *why* Revelation was written.
3. Consider the big picture of Revelation:
 - a. How does this book fit into this story that God has been writing since Genesis?
 - b. What does this book reveal about Jesus?
4. How should we respond?

² Three words if you are reading from the Greek

³ If this book confuses us, the most obvious explanation is that we aren't reading it the way we are supposed to - because God intended for it to be revealing, not a mystery.

⁴ **μακάριοις**: favored, blessed, fortunate, privileged, happy. See also 22:7, 9.

1. PRAY

2. THE REVELATION CHRISTMAS STORY

~ Revelation 12:1-5, 17 ~

What do we see in this story?

- A woman⁵ (1) giving birth to a male Child (5)
- who was going to rule the nations⁶ (5) and who ascended to the throne of God⁷ (5)

Who is this Child? *Jesus*.

How do you know?

- Because of the promises in **Genesis 3** and **Psalms 2** and **Isaiah 7 & 9** and **Luke 1** that speak of a woman giving birth to a son who would rule the nations and sit on the throne of God as the Messiah.

When this Child was born, who was waiting for Him?

- A fiery red dragon (3)

Who is this dragon? *Satan*

How do you know?

- Because the text says that it's Satan (9).

In this story, what does the dragon do when he realizes that he was unsuccessful in killing the Child? He makes war against all who are part of the Child's family (17). *Christians*. You and me.

That's a very different picture of the Christmas story than the glamorized Hollywood version we tend to think about. Right! When we think of Christmas, we think of falling snow and sleigh rides and hot chocolate and gifts underneath the Christmas tree while we sing, "*Silent night...all is calm, all is bright*".

But John says, "*No, actually, on that first Christmas, there was a dragon!*" And when the woman gave birth to the Ruler of the Nations, this dragon was waiting to devour the Child. And when the dragon was unsuccessful, he turned his head to you and me, "*and he went to make war*". **That's** the Christmas Story in Revelation!

This is not to say that we should stop opening gifts, drinking hot chocolate, and singing "*Silent Night*" at Christmastime. I think these are beautiful ways of celebrating the greatest gift in history together.

But it should make us stop and think about what was really happening on that night: the promise that God made to His people in **Genesis 3:15** was coming true! For the first (and only) time in history, a virgin was giving birth to a male Child who was prophesied to rule the nations, sit on the throne of God, and crush the head of Satan.

⁵ The woman represents the faithful remnant of Israel (Gen. 37:9; Isa. 26:17-21).

⁶ Psalm 2:9; Rev 2:27; 19:15.

⁷ Mark 16:19; Heb 1:3.

⁸ *Deck the halls; it's the most wonderful time of the year; rocking around the Christmas tree; another tender Tennessee Christmas.*

When Jesus was born, the King of Heaven was invading the kingdom of darkness. In the spiritual realm (*like what John sees here in Revelation 12*), it was **NOT** a silent night. It was a night of angels and dragons and war and singing and unimaginable miracles and suffering and sacrifice. It was the most monumental, earth-shaking moment in the history of the universe. This baby in the manger was the Messiah who had come at last to crush the head of this serpent dragon, and Satan knew it. **Praise God for this holy night.**

NOW... how does this story help **set the stage** for the book of Revelation?

And the dragon was enraged with the woman,
And he went to make war with the rest of her offspring,
Who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
~ Revelation 12:17

At the time that John was recording this revelation into a book – *which was then sent (as a letter) to the local churches*, Satan was making war against the Christians, and their persecution was more horrific than most of us could even begin to imagine.

I, John,
both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,
was on the island that is called Patmos
for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.
Revelation 1:9

The **stage** for this epic drama in Revelation is **Christian persecution.**

This book was written sometime during the first century when Christian persecution was unbelievably intense.⁹

- Historians of that time talk about crucifixion posts scattering the landscape like a forest.
- Nero was using Christians as human torches to light the pathways in his garden.
- Christians were being persecuted from both sides: from the Romans on the one side and from the Jews on the other side.
- John is the only apostle still alive. All the others have been executed for their faith in Jesus.

Try to put yourself into John's shoes:

- He is the **last remaining apostle**. All the others have been martyred for their faith.
- He has been **exiled** to a prison island.
- The churches under his care are **suffering persecution** of every kind.
- **Jesus hasn't returned yet** – like He promised.¹⁰

⁹ The dating of Revelation is actually extremely important in determining the big picture narrative, but (in a single Sunday morning sermon) we don't have time to look at the arguments. Scholars are divided on essentially two options: an early date (mid 60's AD) or a late date (mid 90's AD). Following Dr. Kenneth Gentry's dissertation, "*Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation*", I am thoroughly convinced of an early date, which means that the big picture narrative of Revelation is about the destruction of Jerusalem (*and, thus, the destruction of the old covenant system and symbols & the end of the old covenant age*) in AD 70.

¹⁰ Mark 13:26; cf. John 14:1–3; 2 Pet 3:12.

- And so, it must have been extremely tempting for John to give into despair. Like...
 - *God, where are You? Are You done? Is it over? Is the mission over?*
 - *What about Your church? What about the Good News?*
 - *You said that You had all authority in heaven and on earth.¹¹ So, what happened?*
 - *You said that Your kingdom was going to grow.¹² You said the gates of hell wouldn't prevail against Your church.¹³ You said that the earth would be filled with the knowledge of Your glory like waters cover the sea.¹⁴ So, what happened!?*
 - *Is this how the story ends?*

Have you ever felt this way?

- Have you ever felt that sense of utter hopelessness?
- Like, *God, I don't know what You're doing right now.*
- *Where are You? You're promises don't feel true. God, I can't do this anymore.*

John is here on this island with every reason to despair... and then Jesus appears, and He reveals Himself to John through a series of visions which were intended to fill this lonely Christian with **MASSIVE HOPE** – not fear.

READ 1:10–11, 17–18

1. I am the beginning of this story, and I am the end of this story (1:17).
2. I am alive forevermore (1:18) – which means that His promises are still alive.¹⁵

Church, as you read Revelation, the prayer of your heart should be, “*Show me Jesus. Give me a vision of Christ. Reveal my Savior to me.*” And if God opens the eyes of your heart to see, oh what you will see!

- Jesus is the end of your story...not this hardship that you're in (1:11, 17).
- He is still with His church (2:1).
- He alone is worthy to hold the future in His hands (5:1–10).
- Speaking of the future, Jesus reveals that He made a way for your salvation before this world was even created (13:8).
- He is unrivaled in power and authority (17:14).
- He is bringing a day when there will be no more tears (21:4).

3. STORYLINE

When I was growing up, my only knowledge of eschatology (*the study of last things*) came from the “**Left Behind**” books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

“In one cataclysmic moment, millions around the globe disappear.
Vehicles, suddenly unmanned, careen out of control.
People are terror stricken as loved ones vanish before their eyes.
In the midst of global chaos, airline captain Rayford Steele must search for his family,
for answers, for truth.
As devastating as the disappearances have been, the darkest days may lie ahead.”
~ from the back cover of *Left Behind*

¹¹ Matt 28:18–20.

¹² Matt 13; Mark 4.

¹³ Matt 16:18.

¹⁴ Hab 2:14.

¹⁵ *Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow*

All of the Christians are secretly snatched out of the world (the rapture), and so now the world is full of unbelievers who are left behind. And as they try to figure out what in the world is going on, they find some videos from a local pastor who knew that the end was coming soon. This pastor (who was now gone) had recorded himself teaching through the book of Revelation to help those who were left behind see just how bad this world was going to get before Jesus finally returned to establish His earthly kingdom.

Up until my early 30's, *that* was my eschatology. I understood the book of Revelation to be a graphic picture of just how bad this world was going to be when Jesus finally returned.

And I wasn't the only one! This fiction series was so well written that it swept across the country like a wildfire – selling somewhere around **80 million copies**, and these books played a fundamental role in shaping how millions of Christians read the book of Revelation and how we expected the world to end.

I thought this earth was on a downward spiral to hell. **I thought that:**

- *the kingdom of Satan would continue to grow in power*
- *and that the darkness of evil would just continue to engulf the globe*
- *and that the church would continue to lose its foothold in the culture*
- *and that things would get worse and worse and worse...*
- *and then, when things couldn't get any worse, Jesus would secretly rapture His remnant before sending a great tribulation on everybody who was left behind.*
- *And then, when the tribulation was over, He would destroy this earth with fire and create a new earth – which I wasn't quite sure why because we were all going to be living with Him in Heaven.*

And **that kind of thinking affects how you live as a Christian** (and how you pray – and how you invest your life), because my hope was not in this earth being covered with the glory and the gospel of God; my hope was in getting **raptured out** before it all goes to hell. My hope was not in the gospel of Jesus vanquishing the darkness on this earth; my hope was in “**a great escape**” from a growing darkness that would eventually cover this world completely. When you have a “Left Behind” eschatology, you don't pray, “*Your Kingdom Come*”; you pray, “*Jesus, take me home.*”

My hope was in a great escape: like “**In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I will rapture you out it**” (**John 16:33**). Except that's not what Jesus said.¹⁶

And then, several years ago, I began to see a **MONUMENTAL PROBLEM** with this pessimistic view of the future. Ready!?! ***I couldn't find it in the Bible.*** It was one of the most theologically reorienting moments in my life. As I began studying the 65 books leading up to Revelation, I couldn't find any *patriarchs* – or *prophets* – or *preachers* – or *promises* – or *parables* – or *prayers* supporting this kind of *pessimistic* view. In fact, what I discovered was that they all seemed to have the exact opposite view.

For example, when God's people were on the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, listen to what God says to Moses:

“**Truly, as I live, all the earth shall be *filled* with the glory of the Lord.**”

~ *Numbers 14:21*

¹⁶ He said, “In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (**John 16:33**), and so do all of my children (**Revelation 12:11**).

Instead of anticipating an earthly trajectory of gradual decline into sin and darkness until only a remnant remains and the earth is eventually destroyed with fire, Moses believed that God's plan for *this* earth was to fill it with the glory of the Lord. Why did Moses believe this? Because this is what God said would happen.

As you trace the storyline of the Bible, what you find is that this is what EVERYBODY expected!

- **Adam** expected it.¹⁷ **Noah** expected it.¹⁸ **Abraham** left everything behind because he expected that God was going to do a work through him to bless “*all the families of the earth*”.¹⁹
- This was **Joshua**'s confidence as he crossed into the Promised Land, believing that “*all the peoples of the earth would know the hand of the Lord*.”²⁰
- The **Psalmist** prophesied that Jesus would be given “*the nations for His inheritance and the ends of [this] earth for His possession*.”²¹
- This was **Isaiah**'s hope,²² and **Habakkuk**'s hope.²³
- Even as **Jeremiah** was weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem, he believed that God was going to gather a great multitude of people “*from the ends of the earth*.”²⁴
- **Zechariah** believed that when Jesus came, His dominion would be “*from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth*.”²⁵ **Daniel** believed the same thing.²⁶
- When **Jesus** taught about the Kingdom of Heaven, His parables were about the GROWTH of the Kingdom – not its decline.²⁷
- **Paul** believed that Jesus was the heir of this world,²⁸ and that He would reign as the King over this world “*until He has put all enemies under His feet*.”²⁹
- The **disciples** went into all the world preaching the gospel of the kingdom because they believed that Jesus has all power and all authority to accomplish the mission that He gave to the church – which was to make disciples of all the nations – baptizing them and teaching them to live like Christians.³⁰
- They believed that **Jesus would build His church** on this earth, and that not even the gates of hell could stand against it.³¹
- And the story of the church in **Acts** shows that **this is (in fact) the trajectory of the gospel**. What began as a small group of Christians in a single room grew into a global movement to the point that they were accused of turning the world upside down!³²

And then, with all this eschatological momentum, when we finally get to Revelation, what does John hear Jesus say?

- “**Do not fear: I am the First and the Last... and I have the keys**” (1:17–18).

¹⁷ Gen 1:27–28.

¹⁸ Gen 9:1, 6–7.

¹⁹ Gen 12:3; 18:18.

²⁰ Josh 1:3; 4:24.

²¹ Psalm 2:6–8.

²² Isaiah 11:9.

²³ Hab 2:14.

²⁴ Jer 31:8.

²⁵ Zech 9:9–10.

²⁶ Dan 7:14.

²⁷ Matt 13:31–32.

²⁸ Rom 4:13.

²⁹ 1 Cor 15:24–25.

³⁰ Matt 28:18–20.

³¹ Matt 16:18.

³² Acts 17:6.

And when John sees the redeemed people of God standing before the throne of Jesus, what does it look like? *It looks like a multitude that no one could number!*

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, Of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, And crying out with a loud voice, saying, “*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*”
~ Revelation 7:9–10

So how does Revelation fit into the story that God has written?

Answer: It’s the dramatic conclusion to the story of hope that God has been writing since **Gen. 1**.³³

So now, the question we should be asking is: *How should we read this book? How are we supposed to understand all the symbols and imagery and numbers that seem to show up everywhere?*

- Like, in **13:16–18**, we read about the mark of the beast on people’s right hand or on their forehead. What’s that?
 - Is it some kind of technological tattoo or **a microchip** implanted into your skin?³⁴
 - Shortly after Covid 19 hit the world, somebody sent me a YouTube video of a guy who had a white board covered with what looked like a giant math equation to show that the mark of the beast was actually **the Covid vaccination**.
- Or what about the cosmic deconstruction (like **6:12**)? What is that?
 - Ten years ago, John Hagee wrote a book titled, “**Four Blood Moons**: *Something is About to Change*” where he was predicting that the celestial activity in 2014 and 2015 as some kind of fulfillment to this prophecy.
- Or what about the **1:7** where it says that Jesus is “*coming with clouds*”? What does that mean?
 - How many of have ever wondered if Jesus might be coming back whenever you see **a cloud in the sky with the sunrays shining through it**? Man, I remember, as a kid, I used to think that all the time – because I knew that Jesus was “*coming with clouds*”.

We could give many, many more examples, but you get what I’m saying.

The question is: how are we supposed to understand what all of these symbols mean?

TWO ANSWERS:

1. **Pay attention to THE TEXT.** To the best of our ability, we should always use the Bible to interpret the Bible. Instead of infusing our 21st century American meanings into a 1st century Jewish text, we would be wise to begin by asking if the Bible provides its own interpretations for the symbols and imagery in it. And, here in Revelation, the answer is a resounding YES!

³³ This isn’t just a random book (about crazy things that will happen 2,000+ years in John’s future) tacked onto the end of the Bible. It’s the conclusion of a single cohesive story that God has been telling since Genesis 1: a story of judgment for those who reject Jesus and staggering hope for those who believe in Him.

³⁴ I remember the first time I saw somebody swiping their thumb to pay for the groceries at **Cub Foods**, and I thought – oh, the end of the world is just around the corner!

Did you know that over half of Revelation is either an allusion to or a direct quote from the OT. In other words, this isn't the first time we see all of this symbolic imagery in the Bible. These symbols and numbers and images (though strange to us) would have been very familiar to a first century Jew (like John) who knew His OT Bible.³⁵

- John isn't scratching his head going, "What? A mark on your right hand and forehead! What in the world is that."
- No, John has known what it means to have a mark on your right hand and on your forehead since he was in diapers because (as a Jewish boy) he had the Shema of **Deuteronomy 6** memorized since he was able to talk.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul,
and with all your strength.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,
when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.
You shall [put] them as a sign on your hand, and [on your forehead].

~ *Deuteronomy 6:4-8*

This wasn't about a microchip or a vaccination; it was a symbolic way to speak of being marked by a total devotion to someone. Their word was to consume their thoughts and direct their actions. The command was their lives to be marked by a total devotion to God and to His Word, but here in Revelation, John speaks of people being marked by a total devotion to something/someone who is NOT GOD. John wasn't looking for microchips or covid vaccinations or tattoos; he was looking for evidence of people's total allegiance.

In "**Left Behind**" there's this guy who gets the mark of the beast against his will (**Rev 13:16**) which was a biochip injected in their body and the name of the Antichrist tattooed on their skin. They physically inject this chip and tattoo onto this guy against his will. And he was terrified that this mark meant that he was no longer able to go to heaven. And all of God's people end up having the God's Name supernaturally tattooed on their foreheads (**14:1**). **But** remember who this revelation was given to. It wasn't given to us. It was given to John, and these biochips and tattoos would have made zero sense to him, especially since he was already intimately familiar with the idea of being spiritually marked with a total devotion to God.

- "Coming in the clouds" (**1:7**). John knew that this referred to Jesus coming in judgment because (again) he knew his OT where "coming in clouds" refers to judgment.³⁶
- **Cosmic deconstruction** (e.g., *blackened sun, bloody moon, falling stars*) (**6:12-14**): again, John would have immediately recognized this as judgement language.³⁷ A 1st century Jew would not have been looking for blood moons or an asteroid shower; he would have been looking for coming judgment because that's ALWAYS the way this imagery is used. EVERY IMAGE in Revelation has already shown up in the OT. In other words, this isn't a crystal ball into future events that happen at the end of the world; it's the end of a covenantal story of judgment and blessing (e.g., **Lev 26:3-4; 14-16**).

³⁵ This means that if you don't have your OT open when you read Revelation, you should not be reading it. You don't need the newspaper headlines or your internet browser open to current events to read this book; you need your OT.

³⁶ E.g., Dan 7:13-14; Jer 4:13; Ezek 30:3; Zeph 1:15; Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 9:7. See also Zech 12:10-13:1 and the Olivet Discourse (Matt 23-25) for the OT context of this verse (Rev 1:7) in particular.

³⁷ E.g., Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Isa 13:10; 32:7-8; 34:4-5; Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:20.

2. **Pay attention to THE TIMING.** I would argue that we need to stop looking at what is happening in the 21st century as the way to explain what Jesus was showing John in the 1st century.
 1. This revelation was *not given to 21st century Americans* so that we can prepare for the end of the world; it was given to a 1st cent. Jewish man as a means of encouraging him.
 2. *Neither was this revelation written to us*; it was written specifically to the local churches in the 1st century who were under immense persecution from the Roman government and the old Jewish religion.
 3. John is very clear that this revelation was not about things that were going to happen some 2,000 years in the future. It was a revelation of Jesus Christ pertaining to “*things which must shortly take place*” (1:1) – “*for the time is near*” (1:3).³⁸

If we are being faithful to text, instead of looking at what is going on in the world 2,000 years after John, a careful reader would be wise to start by asking if Jesus ever used this kind of “revelation language” during His earthly ministry to predict some coming future event. And, lo and behold, HE DID!

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (Matt 23–25)

In **Matthew 23**, Jesus is talking to the religious leaders in Jerusalem who were in love with their religion instead of in love with God. They claimed to love God, but really – they loved their beautiful temple & their rituals & their rules.

So, in Matthew 23, Jesus tells them what God thinks about their religion.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
 For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly,
 But inside are full of dead men’s bone and all uncleanness.
 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men,
 But inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
 ~ *Matthew 23:27–28*

Read also **Matthew 23:37–24:3**

Notice that the disciples aren’t asking Jesus about the end of the world. They are asking Him about the end of the age (Matt 24:3). *What age?* The age of the Old Covenant which Jesus had come to fulfill.

- The age of a temple made of stones.
- The age of animal sacrifices.
- The age of a localized religion in Jerusalem.

God’s people had broken their covenant with God, and so He was going to come in judgement against their religious idolatry in a cataclysmic event that would literally shake the earth – just as He promised over and over in the OT (e.g., **Lev 26:14–39**; **Deut 28:15–68**).

Read **Matthew 24:29–31**

³⁸ See also 22:6, 10, 20.

Q. So, what event (*in the near future*³⁹) has Jesus already predicted with this kind of cosmic imagery?

A. The utter destruction of everything that symbolized the Old Covenant – including the Temple.⁴⁰

And, by the way, as you read the accounts of ancient historians (like **Josephus** and **Eusebius**), you see that ALL of this took place just as Jesus predicted when Rome sacked Jerusalem in **AD 70**.

SO, WHAT IS REVELATION ALL ABOUT?

My answer: it's a dramatic conclusion to the story of the Bible where we clearly see God keeping all of His promises in Christ Jesus.

- Here at the end of the Old Covenant age, He judges those who rejected Him – just as He promised He would – by coming in judgment against the harlot city of Jerusalem.
- **AND** He reminds us of the breathtaking eschatological hope that we have in the New Covenant of Christ – that we will spend eternity in the presence of God (**21:1–5**).
 - Where there will be no more tears.
 - No more sorrow.
 - No more pain.
 - No more chaos.
 - No more need for the sun because Jesus will be our light.
 - Where the Paradise of Eden is not only restored but made infinitely better (**22:1–5**).

And at the center of our forever home is the Lamb of God who purchased our salvation with His own blood. We will see His face (**22:4**).

And surrounded by every tribe and tongue and people and nation, we will stand on the sea and sing “**You are worthy**”.

SONG OF RESPONSE: IS HE WORTHY

³⁹ Matt 24:34, 44; Rev 1:1, 3; 22:7, 12, 20.

⁴⁰ Matt 24:2.