

# REVELATION

**Visionary Poetry**

# Opening Prayer



Blessed God, you have given us your word in scripture to nourish and to guide your people. Grant that we may hear your Word, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, which you have given us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

# Step 1: Forget Everything You've Learned on TV and in Books

- What are the first images that come to your mind when you think of the Book of Revelation?
- If you have only met the book through television or popular books, you probably think of destruction, plagues, death, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the end of the world.
- While those images are certainly present in the Book of Revelation, they are not actually the focus of John of Patmos' vision.
- The focus of John's vision, the focus of the Book of Revelation is the good news that Jesus wins.

# Step 1: Forget Everything You've Learned on TV and in Books

- “More than any other book of the Bible, Revelation lifts up the victory and the hope of Jesus. Underlying the entire book is the conviction that Jesus has conquered, and the invitation is issued that we conquer with him. . . . Revelation is also a confusing book. There is no book in the Bible that has so exasperated Christians, nor any book that has been so misinterpreted. Many a devout Christian has read into Revelation, only to close the book in frustration. Many people have come up with wild and differing understandings of the book, which serve to further the confusion.” (“Come Lord Jesus” by Mark Braaten, pg. 1)

# Step 1: Forget Everything You've Learned on TV and in Books

- TV and popular books often take the images in the Book of Revelation and use them as a foundation to build new stories and expanded universes.
- While those shows and books may be entertaining, they aren't an accurate representation of the vision God revealed to John of Patmos.
- So what are we to do?!

# Step 2: Don't Be Afraid

- Don't be intimidated by the Book of Revelation!
- Before we go on, take a chance to watch the following two videos for a brief overview of what happens in the book:
- <https://youtu.be/5nvVVcYD-0w>
- <https://youtu.be/Qpnlr bq2bKo>

# Step 2: Don't Be Afraid

- The images in the Book of Revelation are often scary and confusing for people, but don't be afraid.
- The book isn't included in the Bible to give you nightmares about the future.
- The Book of Revelation uses images, some of them frightening, to get our attention, to make a point, to help us understand the struggle between good and evil and to make it clear that ultimately nothing is more powerful than God.

# Step 2: Don't Be Afraid

- “We think of prophecy in terms of foretelling the future. We see prophecy as ‘history written in advance,’ or as being about predictions of future events, but John has a different understanding. For John there are two elements in prophecy. First, prophecy is an inspired message, received directly from God. . . . Second, prophecy for John involves true testimony to Jesus. . . . The function of prophecy is to direct people to the one Lord Jesus Christ, and to call people to live in faithful obedience to this Lord. Prophecy is about directing people in the life of faith. We need to be very careful here, for John’s view of prophecy is different from ours. For John true prophecy is not so much about laying out a road map to the future, as it is about calling people to live for Jesus in both the present and the future.” (Come Lord Jesus, pg. 5-6)



# Step 2: Don't Be Afraid

- The Book of Revelation is considered to be apocalyptic literature which is a picturesque, symbolic type of writing with rich imagery and cosmic battles.
- Apocalyptic literature often included angels, supernatural beings, plagues and trials, and battles between God and Satan.
- Often it focused on the end of the world.
- It was concerned with justice, that God and God's people be vindicated in a sinful world.
- It often contained words of warning for nonbelievers and words of encouragement for believers.
- One of the functions of apocalyptic literature was to provide hope for people in difficult situations.”

# Step 3: Focus on the Big Picture: Jesus Wins!

- Whenever you start reading the Book of Revelation remember “Jesus Wins!”
- The Book of Revelation was written by a man named John who had been sent to the island of Patmos for preaching the Word of God.
- John was a man of deep faith who must have known the early churches mentioned well.
- John shared his vision with the seven churches in Asia in the form of a letter around 100 CE.
- The concerns which John raises in the letter about how God’s people are living out their faith are specific to the seven churches he addresses, but the general concepts John lifts up can be helpful for us as we try to build our lives of faith in the world.

# Step 3: Focus on the Big Picture: Jesus Wins!

- The Book of Revelation is not a linear story that starts on Day 1 and moves forward one day at a time.
- It is a cyclic book, a book that contains cycles of visions, repetitions, and deepening developments of reoccurring themes.
- It's written as a spiral, with ideas and themes developed, then redeveloped and intensified as the book moves onward
- John will develop point A and point B. But then rather than moving on to point C, he will return to point A and redevelop and deepen that idea.
- Revelation is an artistic work, in which John uses a spiral of visions to proclaim the glory and power of God.

# Step 3: Focus on the Big Picture: Jesus Wins!

- Remember, people have been trying to figure out the Book of Revelation for centuries.
- The images are complex.
- The interpretations people have developed for the book often contradict one another.
- You will probably get confused – that’s ok.
- Take your time. Ask questions of people you trust. Look for helpful, faithful books and commentaries and remember “Jesus wins!”

# Questions to Ponder:



- Why do you think the Book of Revelation might be worth reading? What might we learn?
- In today's world, how would someone describe Armageddon? How do you think John's version of Armageddon differs from the popular notions?

# Have a Great Week!



REMEMBER to email

Marie ([mariemartinez@livingwordkaty.org](mailto:mariemartinez@livingwordkaty.org))

with **THREE THINGS YOU'VE LEARNED**  
and **ONE QUESTION YOU STILL HAVE.**

- Enjoy your week! Reach out if you need anything!