

In the Beginning

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- [0 : 0 0] Worthy is the Lamb. Father, if there's anything that I pray our church gets out of this teaching, is absolutely how worthy the Lamb who opens the scrolls, that He is the only one capable.
- May we truly see you in all your royalty and power. We ask these things in your most holy, incredible name. Amen.
- So we're here. We're at Revelation. Over the last couple of weeks, I have had more than a few people say that they are infinitely excited about diving into this book.
- I am a bit overwhelmed with the study, and we'll get to this in a bit why. I have read much. I have spent time talking to different scholars, other friends, pastors, theologians, just asking them different questions as I've been making my way through this study.
- The reality is there is no other book of the Bible that is probably more unread than the book of Revelation. We read the Gospel many times.
- [1 : 3 9] We read Romans many times, Ephesians many times, Philippians many times. We'll go back to Genesis. We know all those stories. But when it comes to Revelation, there just is a hesitancy.
- And it's almost as if there's this dichotomy. There's the group of people who know seemingly a lot about Revelation.
- That Revelation is the key point of their study. And they're right in that they are concerned about the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- They want to make it a priority. So they'll attend prophecy conferences, different conferences on how to understand end times, those type of things.
- And they really dig into the book. Then on the other end, there's a group of people who, well, not so much. And often the problem is they really, together, aren't really farther ahead than the other group, even with all of that study.
- [2 : 5 0] And I'll explain to you why in a little bit. Because what happens is, one point of view gets sensationalized beyond, I believe, the author's intention of the book.
- And others remain ignorant against the author's intent of the book. One Bible teacher I was just listening to recently said or made the observation that it's the book that makes people feel intimidated and embarrassed.
- And I think many of us can identify with this. I'll just share a short story with me, how I was kind of made foolish about my grandiose understanding about the book when I had graduated seminary.
- And in case you didn't know, the most biblical, knowledgeable person on the universe is either a Bible college graduate or a seminary student graduate who's recently graduated, right?
- You're filled with all this knowledge and you want to talk about it. So I am at this lunch with Mark Dever. And if you don't know who Mark Dever is, he's a Baptist minister out of Washington, D.C.

[4 : 09] He's written a lot on politics. You'll find some of his books in our library and in our church office. Wonderful man. And we were there talking about church planning.

And upon hearing where I graduated from, started to ask me some questions. And he's got this really wonderful way about him when he asks a question.

And he just kind of has this question. He comes to me and he just kind of says something to the effect of, do you really believe that Daniel had in mind about Revelations 20 in comparison to what we learn in Zechariah 14 and the earlier chapters that we see in Ezekiel?

Do you really believe it all connects? And for me, it's just wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. And I'm supposed to have just finished seminary, understand all these things.

And then he's talking about the Puritan writers and all their opinions on these passages. And I think probably the most intelligent thing I could come up with at the moment was, I think my burger's getting cold.

[5 : 28] Right? It's sometimes you're going to talk to people and they have such an immense understanding of the subject. And they know all the intricacies that's all involved in it, that it's confusing.

Right now, I've just been a part of this group and they've been talking about asking people to give a clear, concise understanding of what the mark of the beast is so people will not continue to fear the vaccine as being a part of the beast.

It isn't. It has nothing to do with that. But people who believe they're looking for all these signs think so. They're confused.

The reality is there is a lot of symbols that seem crazy and these images are striking. It's a colorful book. But for many, it's like you see the words and you understand them and I liken it to having a road map out.

And I don't know before, kids, and you can ask your parents to show you what a map is, but there was a time before we didn't look at our phones.

[6 : 53] We had to look at our map and I was doing this cross-country trip and I actually bought this map that was a mistake map. There was no labels on the map.

It was just the roads. It was obviously a wrongfully printed map and there was highway numbers but no cities were listed.

So here I am trying to find the right cross-section so I can get a bearing, sit north, south. And a lot of times when we get into Revelation, it's like that. We're reading this map.

We understand some of the words, the words themselves. We can read the words when you hear the word dragon. You understand what your imagination says, dragon.

But when you take it into the context of everything, it's overwhelming. My heart, during this series, and I don't know how long it's even going to go yet, is to start adding names to cities and roads and highways so that we will divide up the book so that you are comfortable with it and that you will be able to help someone else understand it.

[8 : 17] The reality is, the book of Revelation is a rich book of truth about future things. And we often get confused about future things.

When we read about prophecy in the Bible, we look back and we're able to see those prophecies. What's interesting is when you live before those prophecies, we sometimes have it in our mind that we're to try to read what's going on around us so we can guess when these things might happen.

That's actually not how prophecy functions. Prophecy functions when we're able to look back and we see God's absolute hand of teaching in those moments.

To say, He did speak of this and it did happen this way. Because what happens and what probably causes more grief for people in the book of Revelation is they're trying to read what's going on around us today.

And we take what we see today and try to fit it into our understanding of the Bible.

[9 : 53] And then we try to interpret Scripture by what we see around us today. And it's been going on for hundreds of years. And it's interesting when you read church history, you see how certain systems of interpretation developed.

And I'll comment on some of these things and I don't want to begrudge any of the major systems of interpretation. I have mine that I believe is correct.

But some of them have some. I get why they believe, why they do. And we're going to talk about this in a bit. But often it's because we take what we see and understand in our real world and we try to incorporate it into our Bibles.

And I believe that causes a lot of confusion. So, ultimately, I want to give you an overview of a book.

And as we go through this series, I'm going to camp on certain themes that are inarguable. So, next week, I'm actually going to talk about the importance of the second coming.

[11 : 22] And my time actually isn't going to be spent in a revelation per se, but we're going to be looking at the words of Jesus and throughout the Bible on how important the second coming is.

And I think it's really important for us to understand that. So, there's different themes we're going to see. We're going to see the theme of the throne room, which is an incredible picture that we read in Revelations chapter 4 and chapter 5.

And then we're going to look at the Lamb and we're going to look at the people's response to God. And we're going to look at some of the scopes of the judgments that God gives us in Revelation as the seals are open.

We read the judgments and we read bowls. And we're going to try to get an idea of what those mean. I'm not going to go into the details. So, if you're looking for me to tell you exactly what every image means, you're going to be disappointed by this sermon series.

But I hope to give you a level of comfortability that you will be able to take this map, read it, study it effectively, and understand the most glorious truth that Jesus Christ is coming back again.

[12 : 46] again, this is without doubt the greatest teaching that yes, he came once and saved us from our sin, but he's coming back to make things right.

The questions that we answer about disease, about whether it be COVID or why things happen or why do wars occur, he's coming to wipe that all out.

And he's setting up an eternal kingdom. And for those who worship him, there is a place for us with the king in the kingdom.

And this is the most glorious truth that I want us to understand. So, this morning, I want to give you five reasons why this book is difficult to understand.

All right? Five reasons beyond your own, but five general reasons why there's a struggle or why we feel intimidated or why we feel embarrassed digging into this book.

[14 : 17] The first reason why this is such a difficult book is that there is no other book like Revelation. None. Zip.

Zero. It is written in a style that is both unique and foreign to us. It is what is called apocalyptic literature.

All right? That word revelation that we see in verse one, the revelation of Jesus Christ, apocalypsis in the Greek. And it means to communicate knowledge that was previously hidden.

So, it's things that were always going to come to pass, but they are now being revealed. Now, we all know that when we read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, those are narratives in the Gospels.

And we're able to define certain rules on how we understand them. There's even books on parables, how to understand biblical parables.

[15 : 23] We know narratives are stories. And it goes all the way back into the Old Testament. And there's certain rules of literature that helps us understand these things.

It's kind of like when we read Psalms. We understand there's poetry in those Psalms. So, when we read it literally, we're not literalistic.

And what I mean by that is when God's strength is like the mountain, we understand that it's not really a mountain, but it's big and great and mighty because we understand mountains to be that way.

So, it's using a form of genre to understand. We see that in Proverbs. Proverbs are truisms.

And what I mean by a truism is that just because you do those things, it doesn't always 100% happen that way. But, more often than not, if you follow those rules, those Proverbs, those words of wisdom, good things will happen.

[16 : 43] Right? when we read the prophets, the 12 prophets, and they talk about things in the future, there's certain, as we compare the books, we're able to develop a system of interpretation.

Revelation has no other books to compare itself against. Now, there are apocalyptic books in Jewish literature, literature, but there's problems with those.

The most obvious one is they were not written under the power of the Holy Spirit. So, when it comes to Revelation, we have this incredibly unique book.

Now, there are prophets that have sections that are apocalyptic. Joel, Amos, Ezekiel, Zachariah, and Daniel have apocalyptic type writing within the book itself, but nothing like Revelation.

So, it's interesting, I've got books on how to understand different genres of the Bible, epistles, and Revelation is unique.

[18 : 04] And I think, and I'll speak to you kids, you guys know this, when you hear once upon a time, you automatically are able to know that a story is coming.

Once upon a time, there was three bears that lived in the woods, and they had three rooms and three beds, and they liked to eat porridge. Right?

You kids know that it's just a story, it's not real, but it might mean something to always have porridge to keep mom and dad happy.

I don't know, there's other little things that you can do, but you understand what I mean by this. So, the first reason that Revelation is a difficult study is because it is a genre like no other.

The second reason, which is attached to the genre, is that there is a wide use of imagery and symbols used throughout the book.

[19 : 13] And some of them, as we read in chapter one, it talks about seven lampstands and seven stars. John tells us what those are. But as we get into the text, we're going to find out that there's greater meanings behind the symbols.

Now, many of you know I follow a school of interpretation, or the technical word is hermeneutics, is a literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of Scripture.

What that means is whatever the most natural meaning of the text is, is usually what it is. So, when I read a text, I'm trying to think, what was the original author trying to communicate to the original audience, right?

So, I have to understand the historical context, use of the language, those type of things. But what happens is when you run into symbols and imagery, taking it literally isn't always what the intention of the author is.

And it's easy to get lost in there if you understand my meaning. There's imagery. But at the same time, there's a school of interpretation that spiritualizes everything.

[20 : 49] I don't know how one decides what to spiritualize and when not to spiritualize.

That's what I think is the biggest problem with spiritualizing things. Sometimes you really have to dig deep. And we're going to get to the reason why this is such a difficult thing.

but two things that I want you to take away from this. One, literal does not always automatically mean real, actual, or true.

In the same way, symbols don't always mean imagination, untrue, or something that just existed in someone's mind.

So, we're going to see that many of these symbols are both mystifying and they are striking.

[21 : 55] And some of them are concrete and real and some of them are abstract. So, we're going to try to have some fun figuring out some of those things.

But in some of those areas, we're actually going to teach what the overarching theme is and that's what we're going to put our hope in. Oftentimes, we're going to read that John is using words that best describe to him in his context what he is seeing.

And we're going to read that a lot of the symbols that he uses are pictures and we all know that pictures are worth a thousand words. As we saw in Revelation 1, we see lampstands, thrones, stars.

We're going to read about horns and beasts and creatures, lions. And then we're going to get into this whole thing of symbolism of numbers. For instance, the number three, number of holiness, holy, holy, holy.

It means God. So, it's more of the meaning of God. The number four often means the number of creation. Those are created beings, whether it be four angels, four corners of the earth, four living creatures.

[23 : 23] Many of us know that seven is usually seen as the number of perfection. But sometimes seven is just a seven. A thousand years is a literal thousand years.

It isn't day among many days. It's just a thousand years. Twenty-four is just twenty-four. A hundred and forty-four thousand can just be 144 thousand.

But the number might be significant in other ways. So, that's the second reason why Revelation is a little bit difficult to understand.

The first reason, there is no other book like it. and two, the heavy use of symbols and imagery. The third reason why Revelation is very difficult to understand is that it's heavily dependent upon the Old Testament.

And what's interesting about the book is it does not cite any Old Testament verses, but in more than half of the verses of Revelation, there is allusions to the Old Testament.

[24 : 39] That's incredible. And that shouldn't be surprising to us. We all know that God's word begins in Genesis and really ends in a Revelation.

It's a complete story. So, by the time we get to the end, we understand the things that came before.

And often when we're reading Revelation, we might not have a good grasp of, let's just say, the book of Daniel or the book of Zechariah.

There's a lot of images taken from there that are used in Revelation. So, when we get there, sometimes it's easy to get lost if our knowledge is sparse in those ways.

So, it's a good reason why in our devotions we should be taking readings from all over the entire Bible. It's interesting, Genesis begins with the creation of all things, and Revelation is the ending of all things.

[25 : 56] And without an understanding of the flow and how God works through time, Revelation won't make much sense. So, that's the first.

So, remember the first reason is that there's no other book like it. Two, there's so much imagery and symbols, and number three, it's heavily dependent on the Old Testament, and our knowledge is sometimes suspect.

In fact, if we were going to do an in-depth study of Revelation, we would have done an in-depth study of Daniel and Zechariah just to help us along the way if we wanted to get into the nitty-gritty, which we are not.

The fourth reason that makes this book a little bit difficult to understand is that it is written in a time that is 2,000 years ago.

There is a historical context that we do not get. We're going to read that it's written by John, who has been exiled to an island of Patmos, and the Christians at the time were being wildly persecuted.

[27 : 13] And we're going to see a lot of the interpretations are really driven by the immediacy of what was going on with John. So there's going to be different views taken on how much emphasis you place on those events.

And the fifth and final reason, which I'm going to take some time to explain to you, is that there are different approaches to interpreting revelation like any other book of the Bible.

And I just want to say something to you. We've heard these words, they're systems. You've heard the word Calvinism or Arminianism and those are terms to describe our views of salvation.

man. Man sometimes writes designs boxes that help us understand Scripture.

You've heard the term systematic theology. There's books written that go through the Bible and they put all the verses together, say, on the Trinity or man, sin, and then there's a system called eschatology, which is the study of the end times.

[28 : 48] And sometimes there's a problem with systems. The first problem is obvious. It's designed by man. Because they're designed by man, they can be flawed.

And sometimes we get more excited about the system than the Word of God.

And sometimes people try to fit certain verses or interpret certain verses into their system rather than letting the verses stand on their own.

All right? So, if you were to go to a Christian bookstore, and let's just say there's a really great Christian bookstore here in the city, and you were to go down and you say, I want the best commentary written on the Gospel of Matthew, I can pretty much tell you which commentary you will get.

If you ask, what is the best commentary on Romans, I pretty much know which one they'll give you. The book of Ephesians, the book of Genesis, could be about three or four of them, but if you went into this Christian bookstore and you said, I want the best commentary on Revelation, they're not going to give you anything.

- [30 : 20] What they're going to do is they're going to start asking you some questions. They're going to ask you, well, what church do you go to? Who are your favorite Bible teachers? What part of the country did you grow up in? And when you study the history of theological thought, it actually depends on where you live.
- There's a difference between your end-time understanding if you grew up in America or Europe or Russia. There are certain schools of thought that permeated geographical places more than others.
- They'll ask you what denomination you are, where did your parents come from, all these type of things. And they're all very important questions because what he's trying to determine, or she, is what commentary fits your view.
- do you understand the problem with that? And if you said, listen, I just want a commentary that's going to teach me revelation, what they're going to do is they're going to give you the commentary that they believe in.
- [31 : 43] And it may not be the one that I would recommend as your pastor. the reality is here at Squamish Baptist Church, we have no official position on the system of eschatology one has to have to be a member.
- Now, I have a view that if you have a different system, you're not a Christian. No, I'm just teasing. There's different views within the body of Christ.
- But the reality is there are essentials that we have to believe that all positions adhere to.
- So, if you know about anything about revelations and the study of revelations, there's charts. There's tons of charts. So, I'm going to ask Ryan to post our first chart.
- And as you're going to see, these are, they're called the millennial views. And as we see, there's three views. And we're going to attach handouts to our website.
- [33 : 03] So, if you want to download these later in PDF form, you will have that opportunity. So, as you're going to see, the first one is the pre-millennial term, which that Jesus returns to reign with believers on the earth for a literal thousand years before the day of final judgment comes.
- You'll notice the post-millennial position is that Jesus returns after a literal thousand years of peace and gospel growth on earth to bring final judgment.
- And the amillennial position is that Jesus reigns in heaven now with deceased believers for a symbolic thousand years before returning to bring final judgment.
- Now, what I want you to see here is that every single position believes in Jesus Christ's first coming. So, that is the non-negotiable. The second non-negotiable is that Jesus is coming a second time.
- So, take a look. You'll see the sword there is used as the imagery. And the other non-negotiable is that there is a final judgment coming.
- [34 : 19] The disagreement is where and when does that thousand-year earthly reign. reign. Now, that thousand-year earthly reign is called the millennium.
- And that is found in Revelation 20. And we'll get to that later. So, one of the things that I really want to key on is that these are three accepted positions within Bible believing Christians.
- So, in the pre-millennial category, there's actually different views. If you've heard of the rapture and the great tribulation and that God has a or the term dispensational, that all exists in the pre-millennial position.
- People who would follow that would be John MacArthur, John Piper fits in there as well, but he has a different view on certain things.

Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, I believe, has their view in that one. As a matter of fact, just in case you're wondering, I'm a pre-millennialist.

[35 : 36] That's what I believe is the most natural reading the text gives us. Then you have what's called the post-millennial. Most of these guys that are post-millennial tend to be on the Presbyterian, Evangelical Presbyterian side.

Ligon Duncan would be a pretty well-known guy if you know some of your Presbyterian ministers. If you know anybody who went to Reform Theological Seminary, there's a big chance.

One of the distinctions of this view is that they believe that the church, just through its witness, will have such an impact on the world today that it will create almost a Christian worldwide government and that then Christ comes to reign here for that thousand years.

Then the last position is the awe-mill position. Guys who would hold to that would be R.C. Sproul, J.I.

Packer, Mark Dever. You would find both Presbyterians and Baptists. I believe if you went to the Baptist Church that we support, the fellowship supports, they'd probably give you an all-mill belief.

[36 : 55] I'm not sure. I know Gordy went to the seminary with Moses a long time ago, so he'll probably be able to give you a better understanding. So, the key question is, and you might be asking yourself, why do all these different, well-respected Christians have different views on this position?

So I'm going to ask Ryan to put another slide up. And what this slide is telling us is, does the book of Revelation reflect past, present, or purely future events?

So, when we look at the symbols and imagery that we read in Revelation, the interpreter has to ask, did this already happen, or is it coming?

So, when you look at it, there's essentially four views of history. So you'll notice, there's the cross, and then we see the time of writing.

And scholars believe that John began writing the book around 90 AD. So, you have those that are in the preterist camp, and the preterist camp is those that believed that Revelation is about events in the past.

[38 : 34] The events described in Revelation all took place around the time of the letters writing and should be read with that historical context in mind.

So, basically, they're saying that John was writing this to the exact Christians that existed in that time who were being persecuted to their faith.

So, when you read it, you're going to try to interpret some of the things because Nero was attacking the church at that time and Christians were being martyred. you are going to believe that the Antichrist would be Nero, right?

So, as such, we need to understand how they would originally read it and then apply it to ourselves.

Now, people who are preterists would be those in the all-mill position tend to exist there, and some people who are post-mill would exist there.

[39 : 38] And they would point, we're going to learn, that the temple that was destroyed in AD 70 for an all-millennial is kind of, how do I say this?

They don't really believe in a thousand year kingdom, but they would say that Christ is reigning right now in the millennial kingdom from up in heaven.

So, the events all occurred in the past. The next one is the futurist position, which is the position that I hold to. It is the events described in Revelation were predicted to take place in a far distant future, at least from the points of view of the original readers.

So, the focus is on the events that are still to come, including time, as I said, the tribulation, the millennium, those that hold to this position, would be MacArthur Dallas Theological Seminary, and if you've heard the terms rapture, dispensation, they fit into the futurist camp.

Now, then, the next one you have is the historicist, and I have some sympathy for the historicist, because some of them, they're going through, it's kind of interesting just speaking to them.

[40 : 58] I know one of the guys believes we're far down the road in the tribulation, and they point to different times in history where some of the events have happened, and you know what, I see a lot of really good reason for that.

I believe John Piper fits in this camp, so often you will hear people being termed as historical pre-millennialists. this is where they fall in, so it's Revelation describes the key events of history stretching from the death and resurrection of Jesus to his return as judge.

It can be seen as a timetable, but that we can interpret the signs of the times. So in other words, real world events today are described in Revelation.

And then the last point of view is the idealist. And that Revelation isn't talking about a specific time, it is talking about a pattern of events or trends that will be repeated throughout history.

And it's used as an encouragement to God's people at all times who face persecution. So in that sense, the message tends to be timeless.

[42 : 16] you would find here some all millennialist and some post millennialist to you.

So I'm going to have Ryan bring you back to me. So as I said, we're going to post those on the website. So if you want to look, listen, there is no shortage of charts.

I was actually going to kid around with you. There's one chart that I swear to you has every word from the dictionary and it is just massive what some of these people have designed.

So now what I'm proposing to you as we go through Revelation is that we're going to cover the non-negotiables. If I started comparing the different views and how the different people interpret from those positions, we're going to be here in my biblical view till the rapture.

that until the second coming of Christ. It would just be a convoluted time. So I want to spend time on the non-negotiables.

[43 : 27] I also want to spend time on the literary context of how to divide up so you know what chapters point to what in is.

And just as a side, there are certain groups, membership churches, and I'm really glad this church doesn't do this. Some churches say that you have to subscribe to a certain view of eschatology to be a member.

I have no problem with a church that says this is the view that we're going to teach. church. But I struggle with saying that you have to be a member.

Just a couple months ago, I guess, one of my good friends, he's a pastor, he's applying at a church for a position, and the church ended up rejecting him because of his view on eschatology.

theology. And the reason why I believe it's somewhat foolish is there's just a lot of gray, and there's a lot of things to come that we don't really know or understand.

[44 : 39] I think we're going to know and understand looking back, but going forward, it's very tough. But I think there's some non-negotiables that we've talked about.

one, that Jesus Christ is coming again, that he is going to judge the living and the dead, and he is going to reign supremely.

And in case you're wondering, I'm going to read you our church's position, which is, this is what it states. It says, we believe that Jesus Christ will return personally, bodily, and gloriously, just as he promised and his apostles affirmed.

In the end, Christ will raise from the dead all who have ever lived, and he will declare God's perfect judgment concerning every person.

Those who have been saved will live eternally in the perfect, renewed creation, and those who have been unrepentant will exist eternally in the conscious punishment of hell.

[45 : 50] those are the non-negotiables of eschatology that we all need to adhere to. And we're going to look at why in the next coming weeks, why they are so important, and why the Bible makes it so important.

So if you ask me where this fits on the level of theology, I do not believe it's a primary issue. I do not believe it's a secondary issue.

I kind of put it in the third area of understanding, that I'm not going to... Some of my best friends have different positions, and they are as literally sold out to the Bible.

A lot of people in my position will say that we hold to a literal historical grammatical, so this is the way we are to get there. And they're right, it's true, but sometimes what we think is literal isn't always literal, and there's still that gray area.

So, just to wrap this up, guys, I'm not sure if you ever thought of the Christian faith this way, but if you go through the Bible, it's always a faith that is looking forward.

[47 : 13] Did you know that? Even from the very beginning, do you know what the first prophecy is? The first prophecy that we find in Scripture is actually in Genesis 3.15.

This is after Adam and Eve had sinned. The serpent had lied to them. And God gives this promise.

And it says, and I'll read verses 14 and 15, it said, the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. This is verse 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman.

And the woman is the euphemism for man, mankind, and between your offspring and her offspring. So the means and demons of Satan, there will be a battle against Eve's offspring, which is us, humankind.

[48 : 17] But there's going to be one particular offspring that it says, he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. And what that is, that's looking forward to the cross of Jesus Christ.

That there will one day come one born of Eve, born of woman, ultimately of Mary, that will come and defeat you.

Incredible, isn't it? So when we read that Old Testament, Jesus Christ is everywhere pushing forward, the Redeemer. And so at that time, we have redemption.

But as I said earlier, this world is still broken. we're still living with the consequences of sin. And that's why we have this book, which begins with this first verse, which is an incredible verse.

The revelation, the revealing of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must take place.

[49 : 36] There is no other book more focused, centered on Jesus Christ than the book of Revelation. Christian. I remember preaching many years ago, I was brought into the guest preacher, I'm preaching at a church, and I made this comment, and people were somewhat hurt by it, but the Jesus who's coming back is not the Jesus who sat with the woman at the well.

Right? We all want that Jesus who's kind of accepting of our sin and says, hey, go and sin no more. we love that Jesus, we worship that Jesus, we are thankful that Jesus went to the cross.

The Jesus who is revealed in the book of Revelation is not coming to sit with us by the well. He's coming to save us from the world.

He's coming to judge the world. And eventually he will set up his righteous, perfect justice in this world.

And that is what ultimately this book of Revelation is about. It is a book of hope. It is a book of worship.

[51 : 08] worship. And as we're going to see, this book is peppered with worship of the saints. This isn't a book to make believers fear or to try to guess what the Antichrist is going to do to us or who's going to be at the battle of Armageddon.

That was never the point of the book. the point of the book is to tell us what is to come. And the God, Jesus, who is coming back, is incredible.

So yes, it is about prophecy, heaven, hell, judgment, Armageddon, incredible wonders and signs, but ultimately it is the revealing of the full Jesus Christ.

And to know Jesus means we know the Jesus of Revelation. I just pray that God gives me the ability and wisdom to show you how incredible is the Lamb through this book.

Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, I'm just praying for your grace and your mercy as I try to unpack the incredible truths that are found in this book written by your servant John.

[52 : 49] Father, it is really a book and I'm going to preach it from the point of we need to understand the forest before we understand the trees. And I pray that we would come to understand the road map of the book in order to appreciate the incredible detail that is found within.

Father, let us give ourselves over to reading it, to writing out the incredible things that we see and maybe even writing out the things that perplex us.

But, Father, as we continue to read and through this sermon series, I pray that I'd be able to bring an understanding that helped us understand you so much.

Wow, clear, awesome, power. power. The words that I use are so weak when it comes to describing you in all your grandeur, all your holiness, all your majesty.

It's incredible. Father, each give us a picture of who you are through this study. May that picture resonate in our lives.

[54 : 05] How we speak, how we talk, just even the anticipation of your coming again, how we live this life. The reality is how we live now matters in eternity.

Give us that vision. Give us that spirit. Spirit. Give us that fire. God, we ask these things in your most gracious and glorious name.

Amen.