



WHERE IS JESUS TODAY?

A JOURNEY THROUGH
REVELATION

This resource was created with love and prayer on Wurundjeri Country. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and as a church we continue to pay our respects to Aboriginal people and their culture. We also honour the journeys that have led you here and the diverse ways God has been at work along the way.

As Glen Waverley Anglican Church, we believe discipleship is the lifelong practice of becoming more like Jesus. In seasons of comfort and in seasons of challenge, we trust that Jesus is Lord of all and faithfully present with His people.

We hope this resource offers a simple space to reflect together and continue following God in everyday life.

A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The book of Revelation can feel confusing, intimidating, or even overwhelming. Some of us have avoided it altogether; others have encountered it in ways that left us anxious rather than hopeful. But Revelation begins by telling us exactly what it is: “a revelation of Jesus Christ.” It is not first about decoding the future, but about seeing Jesus clearly.

As we journey through Revelation together, we’re not looking for timelines or predictions. We’re listening for Jesus’ voice. We’re learning how His victory shapes our faithfulness, our worship, and the way we live in the world today. And we trust the promise Scripture gives us: “Blessed are those who hear these words, and take to heart what is written.”

The book of Revelation can sometimes get a bad reputation as a divisive book which is confusing and difficult to understand. Historically some have over emphasised it while others have ignored it. My hope is by reading it together this year as a Glen Waverley Anglican Church community we will find it an illuminating, encouraging and challenging book that reveals Jesus Christ, the power of the gospel and the true nature of the world and that we will be prompted to a response! While Revelation is written in a style that may be unfamiliar for many, it offers us the same Biblical truth that we see in the rest of scripture it is just communicated in a different genre.

The opening words of the book point us to the purpose, the book is “a revelation of Jesus Christ.” The book is centred on Jesus, an unveiling of who he is and what the good news of his death, resurrection and coming again means and what sort of response this prompts us to. Even though the genre may feel strange to us at first, the message will be familiar. Like a story told from different perspectives or a movie shot from different camera angles, Revelation presents familiar biblical truths in new ways.

Again in the opening passage, Revelation 1:3 promises blessing to those who read it. “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and keep what is written in it.” The book assures us that reading it, hearing it, and living it brings blessing. May this promise prompt and encourage us as we read, experience and apply it together.

- Maria Brand

A GUIDE TO READING REVELATION

To understand any part of the Bible well, it helps to consider three things: the historical context it was written in, the kind of literature it is, and the theology it presents as part of the whole story of the Bible. This is true for every book of the Bible, but it is especially important for Revelation.

HISTORY

If we want to understand Revelation, we need to understand the historical context it was written into. The book works through two main historical lenses.

The Churches

In chapters 2–3, Revelation contains seven messages to seven churches. In the book, the number seven represents completeness, so these messages are meant to speak not only to those specific churches, but to the whole church across history. They address faithfulness, temptation, suffering, and persecution. These are all realities that every church, in every era faces. The letters are meant to encourage and challenge all believers.

The Roman Empire

Revelation was written to Christians living under Roman rule, and much of its imagery reflects the Roman world; its emperors, power, gods, and culture. If we ignore this historical context, it becomes very easy to misread the book and impose modern assumptions onto it. The images of Revelation were originally speaking to the political, religious, and cultural powers of the first century.

James K. A. Smith helpfully describes apocalyptic literature as being like adjusting the blinds on a window so that you can see the world from a new angle. He says that apocalyptic writing isn't mainly about predicting the future, but about unmasking reality — revealing things as they truly are. Empires try to hide what's really going on, but apocalyptic literature shifts our perspective so we can see the forces operating behind the scenes.

That's exactly what Revelation does with Rome. It pulls back the curtain and exposes the violence, persecution, false worship, and seductive power of the empire, showing the spiritual forces of evil at work behind them. But Revelation doesn't stop there. Rome becomes a lens through which we can understand every culture throughout history — including our own. By revealing the spiritual realities behind Rome, Revelation gives us eyes to see the spiritual realities at work in the world today.

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Every church and every society faces different temptations, false teachings, "Babylons," and strategies of Satan. Revelation seeks to uncover and challenge these realities, calling God's people to faithfulness and perseverance in the midst of them.

LITERATURE

Revelation is written in a genre called apocalyptic. Because this style of writing is unfamiliar to most of us, we have to resist the temptation to read it as if it were something else — like science fiction or a straightforward historical narrative.

One of the defining features of apocalyptic literature is its heavy use of imagery. These images are symbolic unless there is a clear reason to take them literally. When this is ignored, interpretations can quickly go off the rails for example; endless predictions about the end of the world or believing that only 144,000 people will be saved.

THEOLOGY

Revelation has a great deal to teach us about the triune God and the good news of Jesus. A very useful principle to remember is: Scripture interprets Scripture. And when it comes to Revelation, that usually means looking to the Old Testament.

Rather than quoting the Old Testament directly, Revelation draws on it constantly. The book weaves together a vast mosaic of Old Testament images. It's hard to read more than a few verses without encountering echoes of the Old Testament.

This mosaic isn't meant to confuse us, but to show us the depth and richness of God's purposes, especially as they are fulfilled in the cross of Christ. Revelation brings together imagery from ancient Rome and the Old Testament to form a powerful vision that strengthens the church's faith, love, and hope.

If we remember that Revelation uses Old Testament imagery to interpret first-century realities – and then uses those realities as a lens for understanding all of history, then we are able to discover that Revelation is full of treasure! It gives us a clearer vision of Christ's glory, a deeper appreciation of God's Gospel plans, and a breathtaking picture of the whole Bible coming together in a final vision of hope.

SYMBOLS IN REVELATION

Revelation communicates through images and symbols that would have been deeply familiar to its first readers. These symbols are not meant to confuse or to be decoded like a secret code, but to help us see reality from God's perspective.

Tim Chester suggests that Revelation is written in symbols because its aim is not merely to convey information but to capture our imagination.

Here is a brief guide from him to the meaning of some of them.

Seven: completeness or perfection (perhaps from the seven days of creation)

Six: incompleteness or imperfection (one less than the completeness symbolised by seven)

Seven spirits or sevenfold Spirit: the ever-present Spirit of God (seven signifies his complete or perfect presence)

Four: completeness, especially geographic completeness (the four corners of the earth)

1,000: many

12: completeness for God's people (from the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and twelve apostles of the New Testament)

144,000: $12 \times 12 \times 1000 =$ completeness \times many = all God's many people

Adultery: unfaithfulness to God

White robes: God's declaration of the wearer's purity, righteousness and vindication, and therefore also the right to be in God's presence

Horn: strength

Eyes: sight or wisdom (insight)

Sea: the forces of chaos (so a crystal sea represents complete control over the forces of chaos)

Living creatures: power or imperial powers

Earthquakes: Earth-shattering events

Rainbow: covenant faithfulness and mercy (from Noah's rainbow)

Virginity: faithfulness to God (ready for the marriage of the Lamb)

Trumpets: warnings of judgment, victory or battle

WEEK 1 – REVELATION 1

JESUS UNVEILED

Revelation 1:1-8

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

What do you think of when you hear the word "apocalypse"?

In Revelation 1:1, the word is translated as 'revelation'. What does this tell you about the way the word apocalypse is used in the context of the Bible?

In verse 3, John calls his work "prophecy."

Read Revelation 19:10.

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me,

"Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

What does prophecy mean here?

Many see the opening of Revelation as Trinitarian, featuring God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Where do you see this in the first four verses?

What in these opening verses motivates you to read this book?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

Many of the Old Testament prophets received verbal messages to pass on, however, throughout Revelation, John says, "I saw . . ." and proceeds to describe to us what he saw. What difference will this make to how we read and understand Revelation?

In verses 4–7 we're presented with numerous statements and titles that tell us about who Jesus is, what he has done, and what he will do. Which are particularly meaningful to you?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

How might reading this book challenge you?

What sort of blessing are you hoping for as you read this book?

If Revelation is engaging visual imagination and other senses, what difference does this make to the way you will experience God's presence and work in your life?

WEEK 2 – REVELATION 1

WHERE IS JESUS TODAY?

Revelation 1:9-20

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

Where is the figure whom John sees (verse 12)?

What's the significance of that (verse 20 might help)?

How does John describe the appearance of Christ in his vision?

Read verses 8 and 18. Who are they describing? How are they similar?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

A repeated theme in this chapter (and the book) is God being the one "who is and who was and who is to come"; God being the God of all of history. How does this comfort Christians who are facing temptations and persecution in the world around them?

What aspects of John's vision of the risen Christ particularly comfort you?

Which of them disturb or challenge you?

Where are the pressure points from our culture for Christians today?

Which do you feel is the hardest to resist?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

What might it look like for you to fall at Jesus' feet, where you're at in life right now?

How will this vision of Jesus encourage you to be bold and to persevere in your struggle?

How would your life be different if you lived daily with a continual expectancy of Christ's return?

WEEK 3 – REVELATION 2-3

THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS

Revelation 2 & 3

The number “seven” in Revelation refers to completion or perfection. So in these messages to the seven churches, they aren’t just messages to these churches – in a very real sense, these are messages to the complete church, to all churches across history.

So in some way, they are meant to open up seven different lenses through which we read the following visions of Revelation, and seven different angles on what it means to conquer as Christ’s faithful witnesses. While each church receives a message reflecting its own situation, there is one overarching issue: whether or not to compromise.

DISCOVER

What’s interesting here? What do you learn?

What don’t you understand?

Have a flick through the seven messages to the churches.

What different types of opposition are being faced by the churches?

Two of the churches aren’t criticised by Christ.

Which churches are they? What is it that they’ve done right?

What are the key criticisms Jesus has of each of the other churches?

In 3:21, it tells us how Jesus conquered. What, then, is the key to victory?

How are the promises at the end of each message fulfilled in the final chapters of Revelation (see table)?

PROMISES OF REVELATION 2-3	FULFILMENT IN REV 19-22
Eat of the tree of God - Rev 2:7	Rev 22:2
Not be hurt by the second death - Rev 2:11	Rev 20:6
Give white stone with name that no one knows - Rev 2:17	Rev 19:12
Give the morning star - Rev 2:28	Rev 22:16
Clothed in white and name never erased from the book of life - Rev 3:5	Rev 19:4 & Rev 21:27
Write on them the name of God - Rev 3:12	Rev 22:4
Sit with God on the throne - Rev 3:21	Rev 20:4

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

Based on the words of Revelation 2-3, what might the risen Christ say to us at Glen Waverley Anglican Church?

How do you think you might respond if you were put in a situation where you were persecuted for your faith?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Find the message in these chapters that speaks to you where you're at. Spend a few minutes poring over the words, and writing down a few ways that God's word is speaking to you here.

Spend some time writing a letter to back to Jesus, to confess where you're struggling, and to praise him for conquering for you, and for the great promises that give you hope.

AN INVITATION TO READ TOGETHER

Whether you are new to church, part of a long-standing Connect Group, or simply curious about reading Revelation with others, you are warmly invited to join in.

If you would like to be part of a Connect Group reading Revelation together, please scan the QR code and let us know.



Our prayer is that this resource draws us
closer to Jesus and to one another.

Come and read with us.

