



WHERE IS JESUS TODAY?

A JOURNEY THROUGH
REVELATION

BOOKLET 2

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.

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.

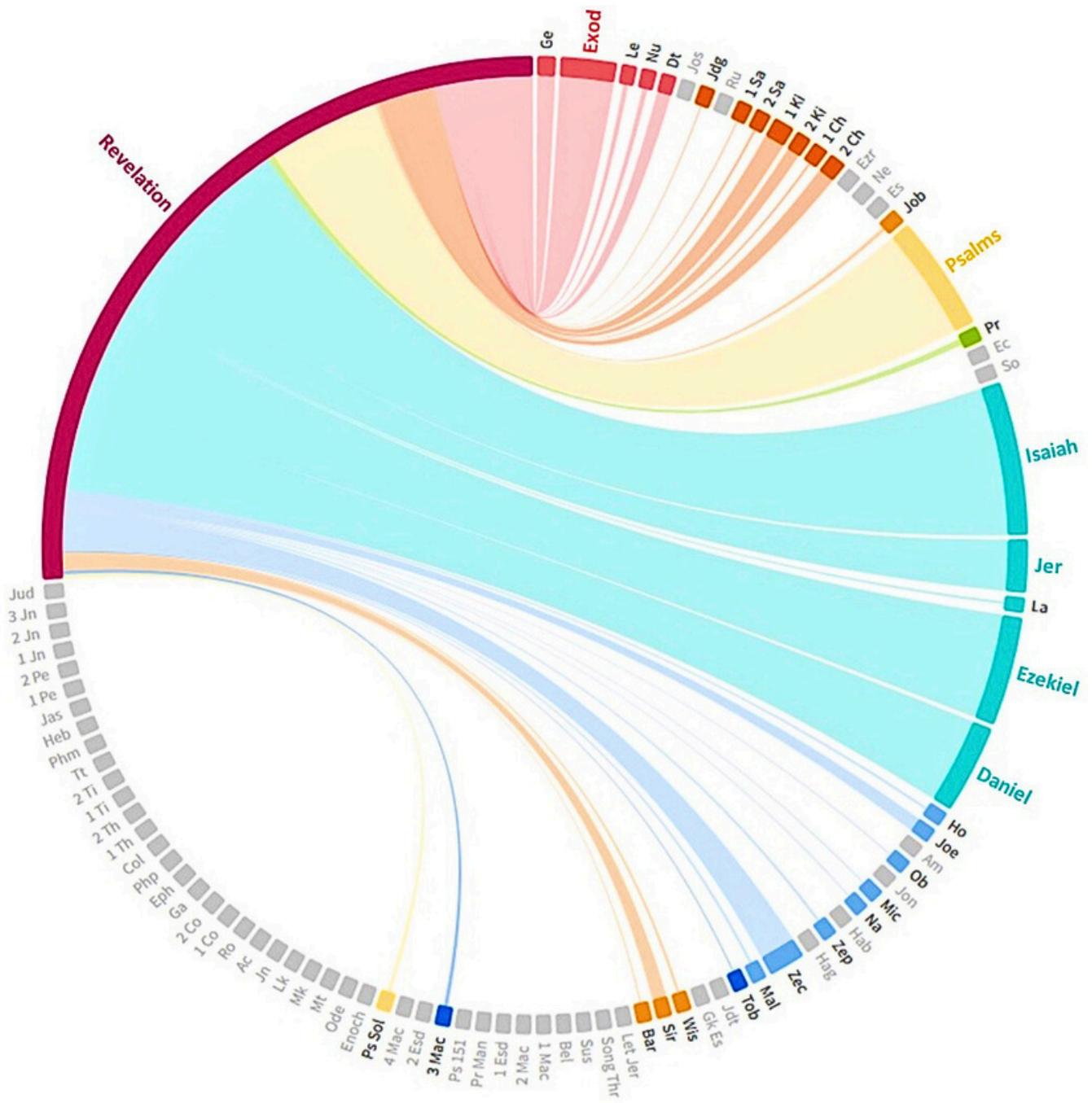
THEOLOGY

Revelation has a great deal to teach us about the triune God and the good news of God’s work through Jesus. We clearly meet the One who sits on the throne, the slain-and-resurrected Lamb, and the (sevenfold) Spirit of God.

Like ancient and modern sermons, Revelation engages our attention through a range of illustrations. Some are drawn from the first-century environment of the first readers. Natural disasters, lukewarm water, rampaging kings and warhorses, and the threat of beastly foreign armies are among the standard images of the day. Other illustrations are drawn from the Old Testament: the Scriptures of the first generation of Christians. Although the Old Testament isn’t quoted directly, Revelation echoes lots and lots of images concerning God’s people, his dwelling place, his enemies, and his long-term plans. (The breadth of these allusions is captured in the graphic on the next page.)

So we should expect to find ourselves confronted by a mosaic of illustrations, many of which might be unfamiliar to us. The mosaic is not designed to confuse readers or to hide coded messages for future generations. Rather, these images communicate the depth and riches of God’s whole-Bible plans, centred on Jesus’s death and resurrection and on his future victorious return. Like other ancient Bible illustrations, we may have to think about how to interpret them, and to value the way that God seeks to connect with all our senses and emotions.

Revelation seeks to capture not just our minds but also to spur on our hearts as we appreciate the place of God’s people in the world. The book is full of treasure, showing us the glory of the triune God, the value of his people, the delights of Christian worship now and forever – as well as the realities of opposition from Satan and from those who side with him. Revelation stirs us to commit to whose side we are on, and to persist with love, faith, and hope until God brings his long-term plans to a glorious conclusion.



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 4 – REVELATION 4 & 5

THE LION & THE LAMB

Revelation 4 & 5

After meeting the risen Christ, and hearing his messages to the churches as he walked among them, we are now taken up to see the throne room of God.

***When someone says the word “heaven”,
what thoughts and images come to your mind?***

DISCOVER

What’s interesting here? What do you learn?

What don’t you understand?

Have a quick read of all the songs in heaven.
What’s the main theme of these songs?

Read Revelation 5

We’ve already heard something strange happening between sight and sound in the book: In 1:12 we read that John saw a voice. What does John hear in 5:5? What does he see in 5:6? What’s the significance of this?

Why was Christ worthy to take the scroll in chapter 5?

Read Revelation 4:9–11 and 5:13–14.

How would you describe the atmosphere in these scenes?

What does worship look like in heaven?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

Have you ever seen worship that looks anything like this on earth?

Have you ever wept like John over the sense of hopelessness for the future of the world?

Have you ever wondered "Why doesn't God help me?" or "What's God up to?" How do these visions of heaven answer those questions?

How does the rule of the sacrificed Lamb challenge the culture of our church?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

Look back at your notes for last week. How do these chapters strengthen those churches, and us, to face those challenges?

What would it look like for you to worship Christ whole-heartedly?

This chapter tells us: "Don't be fooled" by the false worship in our culture. It tells us: "Don't give up" when it's painful to be a faithful witness to Christ. It tells us: "Don't weep" when we feel that everything is hopeless. How can you be reminding yourself of all these great realities that Christ has won for us when you're feeling tempted, hurt, or hopeless?

WEEK 5 – REVELATION 6–11, 15 & 16

THE SEVENS

Revelation 6–11, 15 & 16

From chapter 6 to chapter 16, Revelation unfolds in a series of "sevens."

First, the seven seals on the scroll are opened. Then there are seven trumpets. Later, there are seven bowls of God's wrath. All three "sevens" speak about God's judgement.

It can be easy to assume that the book works chronologically, but there are good reasons to think that the three sequences of "sevens" are working more like three different camera angles of the same event, of the judgement of God.

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

Compare Revelation 8:5, 11:19 and 16:18. What are the similarities?

Read Revelation 6.

What do the four seals represent? What do their riders and horses represent?

How is the question of 6:10 answered?

Do you find God's judgement a difficult truth to embrace?

At the end of chapter 6, we hear another question.

How does chapter 7 answer that question?

Again, we hear something interesting happening between sight and sound. What does John hear in 7:4? What does he see in 7:9?

How did the Lamb win the war in chapter 5? How are the followers of the Lamb meant to fight in the war?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

How are the robes of the faithful washed in 7:13–14? What does that mean for your life?

In 6:9–11 the cry is, “How long, O Lord?”

What would you cry out to God if you were completely honest?

What consolation is there in these chapters when it feels as if history is spinning out of control?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

As you take in this vision of Jesus and His kingdom, where do you sense Him inviting you to respond in worship, repentance, courage, or witness and what would that look like in your everyday life?

What might it look like for you to follow the lamb (14:4) by resisting the temptations of the world and faithfully witnessing to the power of the Gospel of God?

What might patient endurance look like in your current season?

How do these chapters encourage us to pray for the chaos in our world, and for those we know who don't follow Jesus?

*May Your kingdom come in us and through us,
until the day we see You face to face. Amen.*

WEEK 6 – REVELATION 11

THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:1–19

This is one of the more difficult chapters of the book. It's pretty jam-packed with images from the Old Testament that will be expanded on in the coming chapters.

As we get into it, just remember that this chapter is a parable about the nature and result of the church's witness.

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

Read Revelation 11:1–14.

There are four images in the first four verses that refer to the church? What are they?

Can you think of why each might refer to the church?

Read Zechariah 2:1–5 and 4:1–7.

How might these visions help us understand chapter 11 of Revelation?

What does 11:11 tell us about the power that Christ has given his people over death?

What does 11:13 tell us about the effect that God's faithful witnesses and God's judgement can ideally have over the world?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

How do you feel about this reality?

Have you ever felt like you're making sacrifices for God's kingdom for nothing?

How does 11:17 give us hope for now and for the future?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

What's one way that you can be taking a step forward in witnessing to the power of the Gospel this week?

What's one way that you can you be taking a step forward in supporting missionaries who are witnessing overseas for the sake of the Gospel?

WEEK 7 – REVELATION 12

THE BEAST

Revelation 12:1–17

Many movies and TV shows have focused on Satan and the Antichrist, and developed images and mythology of each character in their own way.

Why do you think this is such a popular theme in popular culture?

We've already met the Triune God in the first verses of the book. But now, we meet the counterfeit, satanic trinity: the dragon or serpent (the source of all opposition to God), the beast/sea-monster (representing the power of Rome), and the second beast/earth-monster (the propaganda machine leading people in false worship).

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

Read Revelation 12.

The main characters described by John in chapter 12 are a woman, a male child, and a dragon. Who do you think the child represents?

It's easy to think that the woman must be Mary. But if you have time, have a closer look. Compare her description with Genesis 37:9–11, and see how this image of the woman develops in Revelation 21:2, 9, and 22:17. How do these passages help us understand the picture of the woman?

This figure behind all evil is given four titles in 12:9: Ancient serpent (Genesis?), Satan (which means "adversary" in a courtroom), and devil (which means slanderer, false accuser).

What picture do we get of how this dragon does his work?

What does 12:11 teach us about how Christians conquer?

How is the first beast described in 13:2? This beast gets its description from four different beasts in Daniel 7. Read Daniel 7:17–18. What does this tell us about this beast of Revelation 13:2?

Read Revelation 13:3 and 13:13–14.

How does each beast mock the resurrection of Christ? Read 13:4 and Exodus 15:11. How are they mocking the power of God here?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

How does 14:1-7 remind us about the only way to true worship of God?

Where today do we see the power of the first beast (military power and oppression)?

Where today do we see the power of the second beast (seduction to believe lies and false worship)?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

"The propaganda of chapters 12-13 functions to make evil look good, the demonic divine, violence like peacemaking, tyranny and oppression like liberation. It makes blind, unquestioning allegiance appear to be freely chosen." Michael Gorman.

People often talk about God's plan for your life. Well, here we hear about Satan's plan for your life. How does this passage tell us that we can resist his plan?

Given the fact that Satan is a sworn enemy of God, his servants, and his plan, how can you be supporting your pastors and church this week?

REVELATION REFLECTIONS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

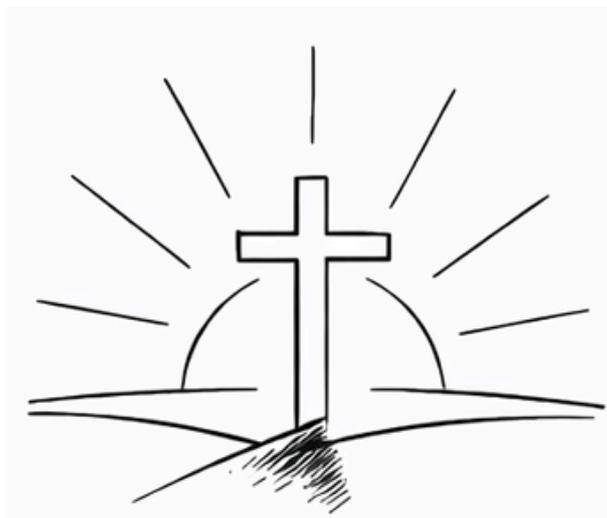
Here you'll find reflections from members of our GWAC community as we read and explore the book of Revelation together.

“ The lessons to the seven churches all can be applied to GWAC. We need to be constantly on our guard. ”

“ I was very hesitant about reading the book of Revelation but I have been encouraged and surprised by how much it has to offer us today ”

“ This series has challenged me to think about witness. Revelation isn't calling us to hide from the world but instead calls us to be a faithful presence within it. ”

“ I've loved having the freedom as a Connect Group leader to decide what works best for our group. We've been working through the Revelation booklet and it's been really helpful. ”



If you or your connect group would like to share a reflection the Revelation series please scan the QR code on the last page and send your reflection through to us.

THE CROSS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY...

The cross was not the final word.
The lamb who was slain reigns.

Jesus rose victorious, conquering sin, pain and death.

Revelation lifts our eyes to see him as he is today; alive, reigning, and powerfully present with his church, walking among us and holding history in his hands.

From the upper room to the empty tomb, we remember and proclaim:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We invite you and your Connect Group to journey with us this Easter and to bring family and friends as we celebrate the hope that changes everything.

Maundy Thursday - Thursday 2nd of April

6:00pm Foot Washing Service

A reflective service remembering Jesus' servant hearted love.

Maundy Thursday - Thursday 2nd of April

6:30pm-8:00pm Community Meal: Celebrating the First Lord's Supper

Gather around tables as we eat together and remember Jesus' sacrifice and the resurrection hope.

Good Friday - Friday 3rd of April

10:00am A Journey to the Cross (Kids Ministry Included)

An interactive and creative service as we reflect on Christ's sacrifice and the meaning of the cross. With Hot Cross Buns for morning tea.

Easter Sunday - Sunday 5th of April

Join us for our Celebration Services as we gather in the joy of the resurrection.

8am: A traditional service with the Lord's Supper

10:30am: An all ages service with the Lord's Supper, Kids Ministry and a 'Easter egg hunt'.

5pm: A contemporary service with the Lord's Supper and Kid's Ministry

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.

