



WHERE IS JESUS TODAY?

A JOURNEY THROUGH
REVELATION

BOOKLET 3

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.

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 8 – REVELATION 17-19

BABYLON

Revelation 17-19

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

Read Revelation 18

Does "Babylon" seem like a good place to live in?

What could be some of the advantages of being there?

What is the problem with "Babylon"? Why do you think that it might be a difficult for Christians to live there?

How does the Bride of the Lamb compare?

NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

How would you describe the Australian dream, an Australian's vision of the good life?

How does our world today compare with Babylon? Do we have the same problems and temptations?

Does the vision of Jesus in 19:11-21 comfort you or unsettle you?

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 mean for you to “come out of Babylon”?

Take some time to think of three very practical things that you can do to make this a reality in your everyday life.

How might we avoid being pulled into the evil of our own broken economic systems today?

How should we “rejoice” at the fall of evil (18:20)?

How can we make ourselves ready for the marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:6-8)?

How can we encourage one another to stick to following Jesus?



WEEK 9 – REVELATION 20

THE VICTORY

Revelation 20

Revelation is not just about one moment in the future. It is a vision that helps every generation of the church see what is really going on.

Across history we see a pattern:

Human power grows

Systems become self-serving

Kingdoms become what Revelation calls Babylon

In Revelation 20, we see that while evil is real and often feels close, it is not ultimate. God is already at work, restraining it, and one day He will remove it completely. This passage invites us to live differently.

Not in fear, but with hope.

DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn?

What don't you understand?

What do you think is the most significant historical event in your lifetime? Why?

"The Millennium" refers to the thousand years mentioned here, but the bigger focus is on God's victory, not a timeline.

What views of "the millennium" have you encountered?

Read Revelation 20:1–6.

How is the thousand years described?

Christians can only be victorious because of the cross of Christ and we see this in the image of 19:13.

"Christ comes to the battle with his robes dipped in blood. It is his own blood, with which he wins the war, before it even starts. Therefore, there is no literal war of the Lamb for those present at the second coming of Christ to participate in. Christ's only weapon in Revelation 19 is the sword of his mouth: his word." Michael Gorman.

What does this tell us about how God works in the world?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage?

How can we see God's character here?

Revelation reminds us that while evil is real, it is not something we need to fear or fixate on. Our focus is not on the dragon, but on Jesus.

What do you think it looks like to take evil seriously, without becoming fearful or overwhelmed by it?

Earlier in Revelation (chapters 2–3), Jesus speaks to the churches and gives promises to those who remain faithful.

See if you can find or remember some of these:

- They will eat from _____ in _____ (2:7)
- They will not be hurt by _____ (2:11)
- They will be dressed in _____ and their names are in _____ (3:5)
- They will _____ (3:21)

As you read Revelation 20, where do you see these promises echoed or fulfilled?

What do these promises show us about:

1. God's heart for His people?
2. The security we have in Jesus?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

Are there things happening in the world that make you feel overwhelmed or discouraged? How does Revelation 20 reshape how you see those situations?

Who is someone in your world who feels weighed down by fear, injustice, or hopelessness?

How could you bring a sense of hope or presence to them this week?

Take a moment to pray together. You might like to:

- Thank God that He is in control, even when the world feels chaotic
- Ask for courage to live faithfully in the world
- Pray for areas of injustice or pain in your community
- Invite God to help you live as people of hope

WEEK 10 – REVELATION 21 & 22

THE NEW CREATION

Revelation 21 & 22

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?

If someone asked you to describe the hope you have, what would you say? What images do you use?

Do you want Jesus to return soon, as he promises in 22:20?

Do you pray, "Come, Lord Jesus", as John does?

Is it possible to be so comfortable in this life that our desire for the new creation is diminished?

ACT

How should we live differently because of these words?

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

What in these chapters captures your imagination and speaks to your current challenges?

When are you in danger of losing sight of who Jesus truly is?

How does your life reflect a belief in Christ's promise of 22:12? How would your church be different if every member took this verse to heart?

How has God spoken to you through the words of Revelation? What specific steps are you going to take in response?

A FINAL WORD AND AN INVITATION

As we come to the end of our journey through Revelation,
we just want to say...thank you!

Thank you for leaning in.

For wrestling with a complex and beautiful part of Scripture.

For asking questions, and walking through this together.

Our hope is that this booklet has helped you not just understand
Revelation more, but see God more clearly



As we look ahead, we'd really value your feedback.

Did you find this booklet helpful to follow along with the sermon series?

Did it support your personal reading or Connect Group discussions?

Would resources like this be helpful for future series?

As we look ahead, we'd really value your feedback.

Any reflections that have stayed with you

Questions you're still sitting with

Things you're curious to explore more

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questions to our team. Your feedback helps shape how we
continue to grow as a church and how we create resources that
support our community well.*

