

HOPE

THE END OF THE BOOK

FINDING HOPE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

week 5



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(God) will wipe
every tear from their
eyes. Death will be
no more; mourning
and crying and pain
will be no more.

Rev 40:31

Memory Verse Week 5



WEEK 5 – FINDING HOPE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

MONDAY – A revelation of hope



Revelation 1: 3-4 (NRSV) *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come...*

Is there a book in the Bible as controversial and divisively interpreted as the book of Revelation? As a teenager, I heard a story of a man who had read “a book” (Revelation) and found he carried a “heavy burden”. On another occasion, I was given a book which outlined an elaborate interpretation of the imagery in Revelation. No one mentioned the words grace, peace or hope.

As you explore the book this week, do so through the lens of today’s pandemic but with an understanding of the original audience. It was written to seven churches in ancient Turkey; churches which John knew well. It would have been read aloud in

each of these churches. It would have brought blessing and hope to early Christians who were suffering horrific persecution.

If you believe that Revelation was prophetic, what message did it give the original recipients? What message does it give us today? In a broken world ravaged by inequality, disease and climate change, is the promise of Christ’s return something to fear or something to eagerly anticipate?

When you think of the very real struggles and uncertainty which you face today, does the promise of Christ’s return add to your fears or fill you with hope?



Prayer: Lord give me a new lens to engage with the book of Revelation. I open my heart, weak and broken as it is, to receive Your revelation of hope. AMEN

TUESDAY – Revealing what could be



Revelation 2: 18-20a (NRSV) *And to the angel of the church in Thyatira... “I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. But I have this against you...*

The book of Revelation contains John’s account of the words that he believed Christ spoke to him in a vision. Chapter 2 and 3 contain special messages for each of the seven churches that it is addressed to. There is a common structure to these messages that is similar to the “feedback sandwich” taught in some management courses:

Each church first receives a word of encouragement. But then comes a challenge, something they need to work on. Finally, they receive a word of hope that indicates what Christ has planned for them.

It is never easy to receive negative feedback from our boss, or from a spouse or a friend. No matter how “constructive” it can sting and leave us hurt and vulnerable. John ensures he

brings Christ’s message to each church in a way that will encourage, challenge and offer hope.

Christ wants us to be more like Him. He wants us to do better. But He also loves us as we are. And no matter what our lives have been defined by to date, He has a plan to define our lives by His love and grace. He longs to give you a new identify which originates in His Kingdom.

Spend some reflecting on:

- What Jesus would recognise as good in your life today (be generous!)
- What Jesus would challenge you on.
- What the picture of hope is that Jesus is placing before you.



Prayer: Lord, help me to find my identity in your Kingdom.

WEDNESDAY – Revealing a new song



Revelation 4: 8 (NRSV) *And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,*

“Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.”

Revelation 14: 3 (NRSV) *...and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.*

First, a word on the 144,000. This number is mentioned throughout Revelation. It would be unhelpful to interpret this literally as a limitation on those who will enter God’s Kingdom. It is in fact a way of saying “too many to count”. This is validated by Revelation 7: 9 which describes the crowd as too big to count. What we know was that this crowd could sing a new song...

There are many songs contained in the book of Revelation. We sing versions of them in hymns and modern worship songs. Many Christians struggle with understanding the symbols and apocalyptic style of Revelation. The original audience of the book may well have understood the message it brought in a way that is lost on us today. But the truth in its songs seems to transcend the millennia that separate us from them.

Biblical scholar John Goldingay explains how “songs” are used in scripture:

“Providing the people a song that they will be able to sing one day is another way of inviting them to live in hope....they’re invited to see that they have come this far by faith and can continue in hope, not because their faith or hope is big but because the God they trust and hope in is big.”

Perhaps you know the words of a popular [Casting Crowns song](#) “Let my life song sing to you!” What would it mean for your life to be lived in tune with the kingdom songs of Revelation? How could those songs bring hope to the challenges you face today?

What would it mean for your life to be lived in tune with the kingdom songs of Revelation?



Prayer: My life is in You Lord, my strength is in You Lord, my hope is in You Lord, in You, it’s in You. AMEN

THURSDAY – Revealing a new world



Revelation 21: 1-2 (NRSV) *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Revelation 22: 17 (NRSV) *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let everyone who hears say, “Come.” And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.*

One of the great centres of disorder and conflict is the city of Jerusalem. The disputes which continue to exist today are the result of centuries of conflict too complex to explain. If order can be restored to Jerusalem, how much more to the earth and its people?

How our world longs for renewal!
How we all long for renewal! As John brings his vision to its glorious climax, we are given a glimpse of what is to come. It is an echo of a prophecy found in [Isaiah 65:17-19](#) where we are promised that in the new earth no one will ever hear the sound of weeping or crying again.

This series on Hope has been an opportunity to reflect on the

disorder we find in our lives and in our world. As the Christian Scriptures approach their conclusion, we are promised a heavenly and earthly reordering.

The life of the Christ-follower is one lived in the light of the hope that this promise brings. Christ calls you to “Come”. Come... into His presence, come... with everything that makes life hard, come... into His hope.

Come....



Prayer: Lord I come to you. Let my heart be changed, renewed.
AMEN

Consider continuing your prayer with the song [“The Power of Your Love”](#)

FRIDAY – Revealing hope today



Revelation 20: 10 (NIV) *And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day*

and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 22: 1-2 (NRSV) *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

A core theme of John's vision was the defeat of evil. Characters including "Babylon," "the beast" and "the devil" are all overcome. Love wins. The original recipients of John's writings would have easily identified who each of these characters represented and would have found hope amid their despair.

But for what? Even when evil is overcome, is evil's destruction not left behind? When a violent dictator is overthrown, citizens do not instantly enter prosperity. Work is needed. Captives to be freed. Sick to be healed. Hungry to be fed, homes to be built.

Along with hope that evil will be overcome, the church must

continue to bring hope today. It must participate in the healing of the nations. We must not only live in hope of what is to come but make that hope real in the world today.

As you are reminded of the hope you have, how will you ensure that others are not left behind? When we see COVID-19 defeated, how do we bring hope to those who will continue to suffer from its economic fallout? As nations reject racial injustice, how do we bring about tangible change in our community and in our workplaces.

What will it mean for you to live Revelation hope?



Prayer: Lord, graft us into Your tree of life. May we as Your church be the branches that produce fruit and bring healing to the nations.
AMEN