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THE FORERUNNER & THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Session 3: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

I. It's All About Jesus

It is a book that talks about heaven's favorite subject: the Lord Jesus Christ. The theme of the book could be described as the majesty and glory of the warrior Lamb, King Jesus, who is coming again to rule and reign forever! I believe the book addresses the future, but I believe the book is even more interested in exalting Jesus. Regardless of how you understand the book, if you miss this, you have missed its main message.

II. The Beauty that Nearly Kills John - Revelation 1

John sees Jesus and falls over like a dead man! What does he see?

1. Priest
2. Ancient like God (Da. 7:9-14)
3. Penetrating insight and omniscient intelligence
4. Permanent - strong, solid, stable
5. Powerful and authoritative
6. Protective - He holds and controls
7. Perfect judgment - Word of God: cuts and cures, hurts and heals
8. Praiseworthy - radiant and majestic

III. The Passion for His Bride (7 Letters) - Revelation 2-3

- A. All of Jesus' letters to the churches begin with John exalting Jesus in some way.
1. To Ephesus He is the one *"who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands."* Re 2:1
 2. To Smyrna He is *"the first and the last, who died and came to life."* Re 2:8
 3. To Pergamum He is the one *"who has the sharp two-edged sword."* Re 2:12
 4. To Thyatira He is *"the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze."* Re 2:18
 5. To Sardis He is the one *"who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars."* Re 3:1
 6. To Philadelphia He is *"the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens."* Re 3:7
 7. To Laodicea He is *"the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation."* Re 3:14

B. Jesus is Speaking to His Bride

Each message to the churches has wisdom and application for the Church throughout history. Jesus is commending, criticizing, correcting and challenging the Church.

1. Ephesus: Don't leave your first love
2. Smyrna: Persevere to the end
3. Pergamum: Don't compromise the Truth
4. Thyatira: Kick out Jezebel
5. Sardis: Wake up from spiritual death
6. Philadelphia: Don't give up
7. Laodicea: Don't be lukewarm

IV. The Glory of the Father and the Son - Revelation 4-5

The thrust of the 2 chapters is that both by creation and by redemption God is sovereign over His world. He created it and He redeemed it. He may do business with it as He wills.

John is taken up into Heaven and what he sees is God being praised for His plan, who He is, His creation, His power and His holiness.

John then sees Jesus, the Lord of history, the Lord of victory and the Lord of Glory. He alone is worthy to open the scroll because He died and rose again for the redemption of mankind.

V. Jesus is in Control of Opening the Seals - Revelation 6

Though judgment will come on all the earth through deception, war, famine and death, Christ is sovereign over every step and is working through the trials.

Trusting Jesus and His plan during this chaotic time is crucial. The fifth seal is opened and John sees the martyrs crying out to Jesus, asking how long until He avenges Himself. He clothes them and tells them hold on a little longer.

The sixth seal shakes the visible world and the nations go into hiding.

VI. Jesus Protects His People - Revelation 7

In wrath, the Lord shows mercy. The earth is seeing devastation, Jesus is seeing widespread denial but His love for us is never lost. Much like Israel in the land of Goshen during the plagues of Egypt, Jesus marks His elect to keep them from harm.

VII. Silently Worshiping the Lamb - Revelation 8:1-5

Jesus opens the seventh seal and Heaven goes silent. Worship, however, is still unbroken. All attention is on God.

Seven trumpets are then handed to seven angels and the prayers of the saints are gathered before God.

VIII. The Angels Blow the Trumpets for Jesus - Revelation 8:6-13

Natural disasters devastate the already devastated Earth as the first 4 angels blow their trumpets. The wrath of the Lamb of God against sin is being poured out.

IX. When God Uses Evil to Judge Evil - Revelation 9

The last 3 trumpets release evil to judge the world. From locusts to demonic armies, God uses these to accomplish His goal: the praise of His Glory.

X. Prophecy of Jesus Fills the Earth - Revelation 10-11:14

In this interlude, an Angel declares to those left on Earth that there will be no more delay.

The Two Witnesses are released in Jerusalem to prophesy for 3.5 years as the 6th trumpet is blown.

XI. Jesus' Kingdom Announced from Heaven - Revelation 11:15-19

As the Angel declared, there is no more delay. The 7th trumpet is sounded and Jesus' Kingdom is announced. God's temple is opened as Jesus prepares to come back.

XII. Satan Wants to Be Worshiped Like Jesus - Revelation 12-13

These 2 chapters are full of symbolism. In chapter 12 we see a woman (Israel) give birth to a son (Jesus) whom the Dragon (Satan) tries unsuccessfully to destroy. The redemption story is retold and Satan's power struggle is played out dramatically.

Chapter 13 shows the rise of the antichrist, Satan's strategy to usurp Jesus and steal His glory. He will send the False Prophet to do signs and wonders and deceive the nations into worshipping a mere man, the antichrist.

XIII. Jesus' Glory Pronounced - Revelation 14

John sees Jesus standing with 144,000 Jewish believers, ready to return to the Earth and make war against the antichrist. 3 Angels descend to the Earth announcing: the Gospel, the fall of Babylon and the promise of God's wrath for those who take the mark of the antichrist.

XIV. The Release of God's Wrath - Revelation 15-16

Those standing with Jesus break out into a worship song (the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb) as seven angels receive seven bowls of wrath. The bowls are poured out on the Earth and some resemble the plagues of Egypt (sores, bloody water, water stopping). Others included a scorching sun, the antichrist's kingdom destroyed in a moment and the destruction

of ancient Babylon.

XV. Opposition to Jesus is Poetically Destroyed - Revelation 17-18

The Great Harlot/Prostitute (Babylon) has caused much rebellion against God throughout history. God's wrath is finalized as Babylon is emphatically destroyed.

XVI. Jesus is Crowned King - Revelation 19

Jesus returns to Earth as Heaven is emptied. Two great suppers are about to happen. Jesus is riding in procession to Jerusalem to defeat the nations that still refuse to worship Him. An Angel cries out to the birds to feast on the kings of the earth as Jesus destroys them. A short time later Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, is crowned King and the banquet of all banquets is held, the great marriage supper of the Lamb.

XVII. Jesus' Glory Fills the Earth - Revelation 20

Satan is bound and Jesus reigns as King on Earth for 1,000 years. He is praised as He redeems the sin-stained Earth. According to His plan, Satan is released at the end of 1,000 years, war is declared and Satan and his army is quickly defeated. Satan is then eternally condemned to Hell.

At this point, the Great White Throne Judgment occurs. The dead are judged according to the Lamb's Book of Life.

XVIII. New Heaven and Earth - Revelation 21

Death, Sin and Satan are gone. Heaven and Earth are new/renewed and God and man live together in the new Jerusalem.

XIX. Jesus Promises to Come Soon - Revelation 22

3 times in the closing chapter Jesus promises to us that He is coming soon. He longs to be with His Bride forever and He longs for us to see Him rightly and live in His grace.

XX. Keeping It All About Jesus

He is the great high priest that has put away the sins of his people once and for all. He is as aged and wise and mature as the great white-crowned Ancient of Days, yet with eyes that are aflame with the fire of youth and energy and hope and exhilaration for his unstoppable plans for you and for this church and for the world.

Gaze upon Jesus and let his royal power and his priestly forgiveness and his ancient wisdom and his fiery hope fill you with confidence afresh that (in the past) has not been in vain, and that (in the future) will be the appointed brush-stroke on the canvas of your life and on the canvas of history till the great mosaic of God's work is done.

-John Piper