

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] day. Especially compared to last Sunday. It was me and Roger. Well, Zach was here. Zach got us in and out. He came and shoveled the way so we can get in.

Then he left. Then he came back and he shoveled us out. But I missed you. And I missed you. And I missed you.

Even more, right? Gosh, you guys. Right? Great to see you. You were supposed to come last week, right? The snow. Living in Georgia, you get afraid of snow now?

Just, yeah. Great to see you. Glad you're here. Glad you brought the Klan. Good to see everyone. Can't believe how tall some of these people are getting. It's been that long.

Wow. Take out your Bibles, please, and turn to the next to last book of the Bible. So, not concordance, but Revelation.

[1 : 06] Sorry, bad joke. The last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the apocalypse of Jesus Christ. We began looking at this last week, just kind of opening the first few verses to see why it is written.

And this week, we're going to try to unfold and unpack a little bit about what the nature of this book is and then develop some principles of how to read it, how to study it, how to interpret it eventually. We're going to walk slowly. So, this morning, we're going to read from verses 1 through 8, which is basically the prologue to this book.

It begins and ends with very similar words and language. We're going to focus specifically verses 4 to 8 this morning.

So, if you're able, if you'd like to stand as I read from the book of Revelation, beginning of verse 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants, the things that must soon take place.

[2 : 30] He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Even to all that He saw, blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this 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.

And from the seven spirits who are before His throne. And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To Him. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and has made us kingdom priests to His God and Father.

[3 : 46] To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with the clouds.

And every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. and all tribes of the earth will wail or mourn on account of Him.

Even so, Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come.

The Almighty. So, reads His Word. Let us pray that we might grasp some of it. Father, as always, we pray and ask You to send Your Spirit on the reading and preaching of Your Word.

We recognize, Lord, that we are powerless without Your Spirit. And so, cause Him, by Your grace, to bring His sword to pierce us, to teach us, to correct us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to warn us, to enlighten us.

[5 : 10] May we hear these words, Father, by the work of Your Spirit today, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So, Jesus is coming.

John said, He is coming. Not will come, He is coming. Not has come, He is coming. So, I came across this little story that I thought might be able to relate to this.

A man in Ireland calls his son in London the day before Christmas and says, I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you, I'm not going to try to do an Irish brogue, okay? I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing.

45 years of misery is enough. Dad, what are you talking about? The son screams. We can't stand the sight of each other any longer, the father says.

We're sick of each other and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Leeds and tell her. Frantically, the son calls his sister who explodes on the phone.

[6 : 28] No way! No way they're getting divorced, she shouts. I'll take care of this. She immediately calls Ireland and screams at her father, You are not getting divorced.

Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing. Do you hear me? And hangs up. The old man hangs up the phone and turns to his wife.

Done. They're coming for Christmas. And they're paying their own way. They're coming. Jesus, see how that relates?

See how nice that segwayed in there? Good notes for preaching. How to find an illustration that's happening. Right. The apocalypse of Jesus Christ.

I looked up apocalypse. You know, it's used every once in a while in our culture. Usually related to some end of the world movie or something. Here's the definition.

[7 : 36] A prophetic revelation, a catastrophe, where the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil, which leads to the end of the world.

The term revelation, by which our book is called, is a translation of the Greek apocalypsis, apocalypsis, apocalypsis, which means to uncover, to unveil, to take the cover off, to reveal what has been hidden.

So this book isn't unveiling. It is an uncovering of things hidden. Now, some of you may say, as I read this book, it still looks hidden to me.

This book of Revelation is not only about uncovering what will happen in the future, but what is happening now. I'm more and more convinced of this.

This is not a book written for just the end time generation. because Jesus says over and over, the time is near.

[8 : 50] I am coming soon. That had to be relevant to the first century church. So, last week we began opening this book just looking at what its purpose is in writing.

This week we're going to look at how do we read it? How do we understand it? And I want to draw some principles from these verses. But just to review last week, the purposes in writing Revelation are many, but really as he writes the book and he unfolds it in the beginning verses, two purposes. One is to reveal. It is a revelation. It is to reveal. It's a symbolic portrayal of a cosmic, invisible battle that has been going on for centuries.

It is a look behind the scenes. It is an apocalypse, as I said. It uncovers, unveils. Ron, John, Ron, John, Ron's my brother.

John's my other brother. So, you understand. Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show. it's showing something to his servants of things that must soon take place.

[10 : 08] He made it known. He signified it literally. He gave it signs. He signified it to show visually.

And so, John says, I'm the witness. John is the witness. He's the one who's seeing and hearing the visions. 36 times in this book he says, I saw.

I saw. I saw. I saw. I saw. So, it's visions. It's visible. It's pictures that he's seeing. Secondly, it's exhortation.

We see in verse 3 there's a blessing. Blessed is the one who reads aloud. So, there's somebody who's standing up reading before the congregation. The first century, most people were not literate. So, you would have someone in the congregation and not everybody had a Bible, right, in the first century. You're not taking this home and reading it. You hear it in church. And so, they go to the gathering. Somebody who can read reads the letter.

[11 : 08] So, blessed is the one who's reading it aloud. That's singular. One who reads and then those who hear. Everyone else that's listening. Blessed are those who hear and particularly those

who keep what is written.

Do you know that this book is written to be kept? To be applied? To be used? Not just to wonder what's going on in the future, but to hold to.

To apply. To attend to. To hold fast these words. So, it is an exhortation. And one of the themes of this book, we'll see it as it's written to each of the seven churches, is the promise to the one who conquers.

To the one who conquers. To the one who conquers or overcomes. Each church has a particular issue they have to deal with. Each church is unique.

Each of these seven churches. and I believe they're representative of all churches all time that have different issues at different times to the one who conquers.

[12:21] Part of our battle. So, now, here's a book. I jokingly turned and asked Don, you want to preach today? And, he said, well, I'd kind of like a little more notice.

and, he says, oh, I want to hear Revelation. I said, oh, well, okay. Come back another time. No, there are so many views, so many different views on Revelation.

I was telling them the morning class, I gave a little outline on the board downstairs and I just said, this is not the outline. I like this outline, but no two scholars agree on how to outline the book.

I mean, it's just people with degrees, with scholarly approach to the book, who know the Greek, who know the Old Testament, who are just as committed as the other guys to the Word of God and to Jesus Christ, come up with different interpretations.

So, what's the point, right? Well, this book says, blessed is the one. So, I say that simply to say, we're not going to take a hard line on, this is what this symbol means and it's the only way to look at it.

[13:45] Okay, we're going to walk through this and we're going to reserve some of our interpretation of some of the signs until we get further along and have more information. Okay? So, with that in mind, how do we read this book right?

How do we draw out instead of read into the book? This is a different kind of literature than we're used to. We're used to letters. We're used to gospel narratives.

We're even used to Old Testament narratives. But this book with so many symbols, so many visions, it's foreign territory to us.

So, how do we begin to look at this? How do we begin to read it? And I think the verses here kind of give us some clues. So, what I would like to propose to you are some principles for understanding Revelation.

We see these in the first eight verses here. How do we approach this book? So, five principles and I want to tell you ahead of time, I'm borrowing most of it from Dennis Johnson who wrote a commentary on Revelation called Triumph of the Lamb.

[15:01] I think it's a good title for Revelation. Triumph of the Lamb. There's a vision for you. But it's the vision of Revelation. It's a lamb that's conquering. It's a lamb that has wrath.

So, I think he has a very sober and careful principles for this. And as I read his principles, I saw them in the first eight verses.

So, principle number one which we looked at last week, Revelation is given to reveal. That's why it's called Revelation. It's given to reveal, to uncover, to show, to signify.

It's something seen. Okay? Secondly, we saw this also last week, Revelation concerns what must soon take place.

it says that over and over again. It says at the beginning of the book and then you go to chapter 22 at the end, it says it three or four more times. Soon, soon, soon.

[16:02] So, not just part of the book is soon and the rest of it's the far distant future. This book, including the end, is soon. In some sense.

In some sense. Already starting, already inaugurating, in some sense. Okay? Otherwise, this book would mean, would be totally irrelevant to the first century Christians.

You gotta, do they only read the first three chapters and then the rest is, okay, that's way, that's 20th century stuff, so we're only gonna read the first three chapters. Of course not. He's telling these seven churches, historical churches of the first century, this is stuff for you.

This is for you to see behind the scenes what's going on. what's always been going on, what continues to be going on. And Jesus is coming then, and he's coming then, and he's coming then, and he's coming then.

And there's one day where he'll come the last time. But I think it's significant that it says he is coming, not he will come. He is.

[17:12] Present tense. He's coming. And he's coming. Okay, we'll get to that. I'm getting ahead of myself. Sorry. So, principle three. Numbers count in Revelation.

Like that? That's good. No? You don't like that? Numbers count in Revelation. They mean something. Yeah, they count. So, you get to see numbers all over the place.

For example, verse four, John to the seven, churches. Which seven churches? Well, the seven churches in Asia.

And he's going to name them a little bit later in this chapter. And they are seven historical churches that are on a kind of a postal route. Probably not postal, but it is a route.

It starts with Ephesus, which is a huge city. And it moves up to the second, third, fourth, and they're all in line on this route.

[18:12] But only seven. So if you went from the last church, Laodicea, you could go to an eighth church, which is Colossae. Remember Colossae? Well, that's one of the, why isn't it to that one, too?

What about the church of Thessalonica? What about these other churches? What about the Philippians? Why just these seven? Well, they're right there, and they're representative.

Numbers count. So this word seven, 55 times, the number seven appears in this book. He's writing to the seven church, which we will find out is also the seven lampstands.

There are seven stars, which are seven angels. There is a lamb who has seven horns, which are also seven eyes, which are also seven spirits.

Okay? There are seven seals, chapter six. There are seven trumpets. There are seven angels who blow the seven trumpets. There are seven plagues, which are also seven bowls of wrath, which are poured out by seven other angels.

[19:29] Seven, seven, seven. There is a dragon in chapter 12 who has seven heads. seven diadems. Seven, seven, seven.

There is a beast in chapter 13 and also chapter 17 who also has seven heads. It's like seven heads. What the world? Which is also in chapter 17, the seven heads are also seven mountains and it's also seven kings.

All cleared up now? There's also seven thunders in this book. There's also seven times where it says blessed are seven beatitudes, seven blessings.

Why just seven? Why not eight? Why not six? Why seven? Seven, seven, seven. What's that about? Also popular among the numbers is the number 12. In chapter seven, no surprise, there's 12 tribes of Israel.

In chapter 12, there's a woman who wears a crown that has 12 stars. Gee, I wonder who she is. In chapter 21, there's a whole bunch of 12s.

[20:49] In chapter 21, there's 12 gates, which are also 12 pearls, the pearly gates, which are also the 12 tribes, which also have 12 angels at each of the 12 gates, which are 12 pearls, which are 12 tribes.

12, 12, 12. And also in chapter 21, we see 12 foundation stones. Remember, he's describing the new Jerusalem. He's describing the bride, and it has not only 12 gates, but it has 12 foundation stones, which guess what?

Stand for the 12 apostles. Then you go to chapter 22, the very last, and guess what appears again? The tree of life, which is all the way back from Genesis. The tree of life appears, and the tree of life just happens to have 12 kinds of fruit, one for each of the months of the year, which is also 12, right?

12. So what's the deal? What's the significance of 7, 12? There's other numbers too. There's 10, 666, we'll get to that later.

[22:05] So what's the idea? What's the significance of 7, and 12 as well? Well, Old Testament, Old Testament idea of fullness.

Remember the first 7 in the book of Genesis? God created the world in 6 days, and then on the 7th, he rested, he completed.

7 is a complete number. It's a number for fullness. The week is complete. 7 days complete the week. And the Sabbath is the crowning day.

There are 7 lamps in the temple. There's a lampstand with 7 bowls. 7 candles. Like this. Hey, illustration.

Except much bigger, 7 feet, all gold. There are, when the high priest goes in once a year to the Holy of Holies, he brings the blood, and what does he do?

[23 : 14] He sprinkles 7 times on the altar, on the mercy seat. 7 times. Why 7? Why not 6? Why not 3? Why not 12?

Why 7? That's completion. There are 7 days of cleansing. There are 7 days in the feast. 7, 7, 7. There's also lots of 12s.

There's 12 tribes. There's 12 months in a year, which is a full year, a complete year. 12 tribes represent the whole nation. So 7 and 12 have a lot of similarities in terms of they're both about fullness.

They're both about completeness. 7 stones on the, excuse me, 12 stones on the ephod, 12 loaves in the temple, 12 stones of remembrance after they crossed the Jordan, on and on and on.

7 and 12. So what's the significance? Well, it's the idea of fullness and completeness. Why does he pick just 7 churches? Well, because those 7 represent all the churches.

[24 : 21] They're representative. They are literally 7 historical churches. You can see where they were, but they're representative.

And as we will go through them in the weeks ahead, each one has a unique issue. One church is a sleeping church. One church is a dying church. One church is a compromising church.

One church is a lukewarm church. They're all different. They all have different issues to deal with.

And I think we will find both as a church and as individuals, we relate to some of those churches at different times.

That's part of the battle. To him who conquers. The issue of compromise. The issue of sleeping.

There's a sleeping church. Do you mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand?

And the seven golden lampstands. Here's the mystery. The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches. So stars are angels.

[25 : 52] Here, not always, but here, the stars are angels. And the lampstands, you saw the seven lampstands. Those seven lampstands are the seven churches.

churches. So lampstands are a picture of a church because they're light. They're the light. Each one being a light. And Jesus is walking among the lampstands.

He's among his churches. Okay? So the seven churches are representative. Chapter 5, verse 6, he explains one of the other issues.

Between the throne and the four living creatures, and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing.

Here's the picture of the lamb. I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain.

And this lamb had seven horns with seven eyes. What are those eyes? Well, he tells us. The seven eyes are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

[26 : 56] Well, the seven spirits, we saw that in verse 4, chapter 1. I'm going to see it a few times. It's a different picture. And then finally, chapter 17, by the time we get to 17, he explains who this beast is.

There's these strange beasts with seven heads and all this stuff going on. So he explains, chapter 17, verse 9, this calls for a mind of wisdom, which is interesting, not a mind of speculation, mind of wisdom.

So in other words, be careful with this information. Think carefully about this. Wisdom is about how you apply what you know. So this calls for a mind of wisdom.

The seven heads on the beast, those are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. Hmm. They are also seven kings.

Okay, so heads are kings and mountains. He's given us clues. So by the time we get to 17, we'll hopefully figure that out.

[28 : 03] Okay. So numbers count. Numbers are significant. We have to pay attention to numbers, but we are to be careful with them. So there's a next principle we see in verses 5 through 8.

In verse 5, now he begins to talk about Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of the kings of earth, to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us kingdom priests to the God and Father.

See, the worship belongs to Christ. Why? Because he has done something. He has loved us. He has freed us. He has set us free from our sins by his blood.

He has conquered the debt that we owe. So here's the principle. The victory belongs to God and to his Christ.

We're going to see over and over again in this book of Revelation, the lamb is the one who overcomes. The lamb is the one who is worthy to open the seals of the book.

[29 : 09] Why? Because he has overcome. And he will overcome again. And he will overcome again. And he will conquer again. And he will conquer. The book is about the lamb.

It's interesting because in chapter 4 and 5 when he describes Jesus, he calls him first, he's looking for a lion.

The lion of Judah. And then he turns to look and it doesn't look like a lion at all. It looks like a lamb. In fact, a lamb that's been slain. Heavenly vision.

A lamb that's been slain. All bloody. Right? But then it's not just any lamb. It's a lamb that was slain for sinners to set us free from our sins by his own blood.

And then all heaven begins to worship this lamb. In fact, over and over again in this book of Revelation, there are scenes of worship.

[30 : 10] The word worship occurs 24 times in this book. Worship is one of the major themes of the book of Revelation. We see worship right here.

To him who loves us. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. There's one statement of praise and worship. We'll see it again in chapter 4 and 5.

We'll see it again in chapter 7, chapter 11, chapter 15, 16, 19. Outbreaks of praise as the lamb has conquered, as the lamb has shown himself once again worthy.

And so there's outbreaks of worship. In the midst of all the symbols and all the odd things going on, the worship's pretty clear. Oh, praise to him.

Honor and glory to him. He has won. He has judged. He has done what he said he would do. So the victory belongs to God and to his Christ.

[31 : 11] He's described, look at how he's described here in verses 4 and 5, a threefold identity, who he is, a threefold identity. In verse 4, there's, well, there's two identities here, yay three.

There's a threefold identity of the Father. I presume it's the Father in verse 4, where he says, grace to you and peace from him who, what? Who is and who was and who is to come.

Well, who is that? Whose is, was and is to come. Well, it could be Jesus, it could be the Father, okay?

In fact, one of the terms here, who is, is an exact borrowing from Exodus 3, 14, where Moses said to the burning bush, right, who shall I say sent me?

They're going to ask, who sent me? Who do I say? And God's God says, tell them I am sent you.

[32 : 19] And actually, he says, I am who is. Good, good language, isn't it? In the Bible, it's translated, I am who I am. But literally, it's I am who is.

Okay? Who is, who was, who is to come, eternally existent one. I am past, present, future, I am always.

I am alpha, omega, yeah, get it? I'm first and last. So we get that three-fold identity of, I would think, the Father, because then we talk about a seven spirits.

Well, we're going to reserve, I think that's the Holy Spirit, seven meaning the fullness, the completeness, so the seven-fold spirit, perhaps. But we're going to reserve, you know, until we get to the other passages that talk about that, to land on it a little bit more.

But then he says again, verse five, another three-fold description of Jesus. So we have Father, Spirit, Son, perhaps here, from Jesus Christ.

[33 : 24] Again, three-fold description. He's a faithful witness, he's the firstborn from the dead, and he's the ruler of the kings. He was the faithful witness when he came, and was faithful to Christ, witness being the Greek word martyr.

So he was a witness unto death. Then he was the firstborn from the dead, he rose from the dead, and now he is seated at the right hand of the Father. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

He is reigning. So it's a three-fold description of this grace and peace that comes not only from the Father and the Spirit, but from Jesus Christ. Who has what?

So he is, he has, verse 5 at the end, to him who, what has he done? He's loved us, he's freed us from our sins by his blood, and again, we have three, loves us, freed us from our sins, and verse 6, made us a kingdom.

Literally made us kingdom priests, I think is the way it should read. So he's done three things. What has he done? He's loved us.

[34 : 35] That's his motivation. He loves us. God so loved the world that he gave his son, right? He sacrificed for us that whoever believes in him might have eternal life.

The Father loves sinners. Jesus loves sinners. He loves us so much that he would lay down his life for undeserving rebels.

And then he made us to be, so love is the springboard. What he does is loose us, set us free from sin. There's his victory at the cross. And then what do we come out of that?

We're not just forgiven, but now we are, we have a new identity. We're kingdom priests. We're kingdom priests to God and the Father, to his God and Father.

Which priests, we're all priests. Did you know that you're a priest if you're a believer in Christ?

Peter, who was supposed to be the first Pope, he's the one that says we are all priests, by the way.

[35 : 47] We all come to him as priests. So it's not just one tribe, one select group of people who are priests, who come to God, who minister to God, who bring sacrifices to God, who have access to God, but all now because of Christ are priests in that sense.

We don't wear collars and, you know, do whatever you think a priest does. We have access to the Father. We come to him. We bring sacrifices.

Of what? Our lives. Right? So that's what he's made us to be. And we're not just priests, but we're kingdom priests, just like Jesus.

Jesus, a couple weeks ago we did Psalm 110, which speaks about him being the king. And also a priest. He's a king priest. And so he's shared that with us.

So we're king priests. Not kings like him, but kingdom priests. We're in his kingdom. As Paul says in Ephesians, we've been raised with Christ and seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

[36 : 53] Where's he seated? He's seated at the right hand ruling. We're seated ruling with him. If you can grasp that in a spiritual sense.

So that's not all. What has he done? Well, what will he do? Then we come to verse seven. He comes. He's coming. He is coming with the clouds.

What does it mean that he's coming? When I was in seminary, I was taught that this verse meant, well, he's coming with the clouds and every eye will see him. So see, that means it's a visible, physical return of Jesus.

Just like he left in Acts one, right? He ascended up into heaven and every eye saw him. Not every eye, but the disciples saw him, right? And the angel said he's going to come back in the same way, but come back with clouds.

So I was taught that this verse means, well, that's his return. He's coming. Well, if you actually read the Old Testament, that's not what it means. It doesn't mean he's coming to earth.

[37 : 55] It means he's coming to heaven. He's ascending. He's coming to the Father. I'll show you that in just a minute. He comes in different ways. So in Matthew 24, he quotes these same words.

You will see the Son of Man coming with the clouds. And he was talking about coming to the Father, being enthroned in heaven. He will sit at the Father's right hand.

And in the context of Matthew 24, he was also talking about that this temple will be destroyed within one generation. So by 70 AD, in other words, the temple would be destroyed, which it was in fact destroyed in 70 AD.

That was also his coming. He comes to the Father. It's one way he comes. He comes to judge Israel in 70 AD. That's a coming.

And then we read it in this book itself. In chapter 2, verse 5, he says to the church of Ephesus, he says, remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent, and do the works you did first.

[38 : 57] First, if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. That's another way that Jesus comes.

It's not his final coming, but it's a way that he comes. He comes and removes churches, the lampstand from churches. If they are a church that dies and does not repent. You mean there's churches that don't repent?

Yeah, there are a lot of churches that don't repent. They will eventually lose their... So it's one way he comes. He also comes from chapter 6 through chapter 18. He's coming in judgment.

In fact, it's the people on earth who say it's the wrath of the Lamb has come. He comes in wrath. He comes in judgment. The seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven bowls are the wrath of the

Lamb coming upon the people.

So when he says I am coming, present tense, I'm coming now. I'm coming a little later. I'm coming again. I'm coming again. I'm coming again.

[39 : 59] I think he's come over and over and over and over again. He hasn't come finally yet. That's chapter 19. We know he's come for sure, you know, all the way back when he takes the dragon and he takes the beast and he takes Satan and he throws him in the lake of fire and it's done.

Okay. Time you get to chapter 21, 22. We're done. It's good stuff. Now it's the bride. Now it's heaven.

Okay. So the victory belongs to Christ and to God and to his Christ. Last principle. This one's very important.

This book of Revelation only makes sense in light of the Old Testament. It only makes sense in light of the Old Testament. It's absolutely filled with images, pictures, phrases, words from the Old Testament.

Which the first century Christians would know. Because they didn't have the written Bible yet. Their Bible was the Old Testament. So they're hearing all the time from Daniel.

[41 : 11] They're hearing from Isaiah. They're hearing from Ezekiel. They're hearing from Zechariah. They're hearing from Exodus and Genesis. They're hearing the language of the Old Testament. So as they hear this book read, this letter, this came out originally as a letter, as they're reading it, they're hearing, oh, beast, beast, beast.

Oh, Daniel had beasts. Oh, the coming with the clouds. That's in Daniel 2, coming with the clouds. They'll hear these phrases and images that are borrowed from the Old Testament.

So in other words, you can't just pick up this book and start reading and go, I think it means this. On what basis? Well, because that's what I think of when I think of horns. So?

Well, that's what it means to me. Who cares what it means to you? It only matters what it means, what God meant by it. So we're going to walk carefully.

So even in the first eight verses, we see lots of images and words from the Old Testament. So verse one, there is language borrowed from Daniel chapter two, the word revelation, three times in Daniel chapter two, the word to show in Daniel, the word to signify in Daniel, the phrase, what must take place is also in Daniel two, what must be, what must be.

[42 : 40] And in there in Daniel two, it's what must be in the later days. Here, it's the same phrase except what must be soon. A lot of, I think, what we have revealed in Daniel is coming to fulfillment in the book of Revelation.

So we see that, we see God's description. He is, the I am statement coming from Exodus three, the phrase, he made us to be a kingdom of priests.

That's the exact wording from Exodus 19. I will make you a kingdom of priests if you keep my covenant. Israel never kept his covenant, so they never became a kingdom of priests.

But Christians become kingdom priests not because they kept the covenant, because Jesus kept the covenant. And we enter into that by belief.

We enter into that by holding on to him, by trusting in him. I'm so glad I'm under the new covenant. The phrase in chapter, verse 8, I am the alpha and the omega.

[43 : 47] Anybody know what alpha and omega come from? What language that comes from? Greek. Yeah. Yeah, don't say Hebrew like I did the first time. That's Greek. Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet.

Omega, the very last. So I am the first and the last. I'm the alpha and the omega. I'm the beginning and the end. And he's going to use those terms in Revelation as well.

I'm the first and the last. I'm the beginning and the end. I am the one who is, who was, and will come. I am eternal in other words. I'm the bookends.

Of course, I existed before each end of the bookends. See that? That comes from Isaiah 41, 44, and 48. I am the almighty.

Do you remember where God used that term El Shaddai? Who did he reveal his name El Shaddai to? Does anybody know? Back in Genesis. 17.

[44 : 46] Pretty famous guy. Father of nations. Abe. Abraham. To him, he revealed himself as El Shaddai.

The almighty. The sovereign. Almighty over all. In other words, sovereign. Reigning over all. Paul. So, I'll just show you.

That comes from Genesis 17. So, in other words, just in the first eight verses, we had how many references to the Old Testament? So, we're going to get a lot. And, and, I'm not going to bog us down with looking at every little nuance.

I'm going to try to take the bigger pictures and where we need to go to Daniel or to Ezekiel or to, oh gosh, not Ezekiel. But yes, Ezekiel. Right? It's kind of like, okay, you think Revelation is straight. Read Ezekiel. Zechariah. So, that will help us get a grasp on what these things are about.

[45 : 53] Okay? We've got to work in other words. So, let me show you from Daniel 7 just real quick. The phrase in verse 7, he is coming with the clouds. What does that mean? He's coming with the clouds.

Well, this language is directly from Daniel 7, verse 13. Daniel says, I saw in the night vision. So, here's Daniel seeing a vision too. And behold, watch this, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man.

Well, where did he come? Watch carefully. There came one like a son of man and he came, what? To the ancient of days. not to earth.

He came to the ancient of days. We sang about the ancient of days this morning. God eternal. He came up to God and was presented before him and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. What is Daniel talking about? And what is Jesus referring to here in verse 7?

[47 : 11] He's referring to he's coming with the clouds first and foremost up to the Father. It's his enthronement. After he was raised he ascended and what does the New Testament tell us over and over?

In fact, what does Psalm 110 tell us in Psalm 10 111? The Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand. And that's what the New Testament says. That's what Jesus did when he ascended to heaven. He sat down at the right hand and began to rule. That's what Daniel 7 is talking about.

That's what Matthew 24 is talking about. That's what this is talking about in terms of one of his he is coming. That's one of his comings. And then the second phrase in verse 7 where it says okay, this strange saying here, right?

Every eye will see him even those who pierced him and all tribes of the earth could also be all tribes of the land will wail or mourn on account of him. So who's this?

[48 : 14] Who are the eyes seeing? Well, that comes directly from Zechariah 12 10. Wouldn't you know it? Zechariah. Zechariah says, And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace, not judgment, spirit of grace and please for mercy.

Why? So that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him. the eyes who see, him who is pierced, and they mourn.

But here in the context of Zechariah, it's not a sad thing. I think the mourning is one of repentance. Because I'm pouring out a spirit of grace and mercy so that when they look and they see, they grieve, but not a grieve to death, but a grieve to repentance.

As one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first born.

Mourning there, the word means to beat the breast in grief.

That's a picture of repentance. When we see our sin, when we see our Lord, we see that he was pierced for me. We sing, and can it be that thou my God would die for me?

[49 : 40] Me? Amazing love. How can it be be? This is not reasonable.

This is not about fairness. This is about mercy. So I think that's what he's referring to there. So Zechariah gives us a hint as to, okay, what does it mean that he says every eye will see him? Is that about people that, I think that's about he's coming, and he keeps coming, and as he's coming, people see, and they recognize, and they mourn, and they repent, and they come to him. That's why Jesus is delaying his coming, by the way, do you know that? Do you know the only reason he has not come yet? It's because he has more people to save. And that's why there's still evil in this world, why he has not conquered, not conquered, but he has not obliterated evil yet, because there's still people for him to save, for mercy.

So, how you doing? Did I lose half of you already yet? Revelation is not an easy book to understand, so we need to remember these principles, recognize that the symbols and the images

draw heavily from the Old Testament, which means we will need to look back.

[51 : 12] But I want you to also remember, more importantly, I want you to remember that this is a message about an ongoing battle that has already begun. We are already in the battle.

Paul has told us that in Ephesians chapter 6, why we need to put the armor on, because we fight not against flesh and blood, but against invisible spirits who are evil and tremendously organized, which we will see in the pictures of this beast with all these heads that is very organized and very effective, giving pictures behind the scene.

So it's an ongoing battle that's already begun that we're called to conquer, put on our armor, lean on the grace of God. Who will conquer? those who hold fast to Jesus and trust in His word.

Those who hold fast, that's repeated over and over again in Revelation. Who are the ones who have conquered? The ones that have holded on to Jesus. They've held to His testimony, they've held to His word. They conquer by His blood, not theirs.

They may give their blood, but they conquer by His blood. Are you ready? Ready? I see some and some going...

[52 : 40] Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word. Give us grace in the days ahead.

Father, we pray that You would make evident to us, give me the ability to clearly articulate things.

But I pray, Father, that we would see, Lord, the great vision and beauty of our Lord Jesus.

We would see how victorious He is and how we follow in His steps. We are victorious in the same ways. And so grant us grace.

Grant us peace from Him who was and is and is to come, from the seven spirits which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the King of kings.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.