**Revelation**

*Lesson 3 – Major Themes & Characteristics of Revelation*

1. The World to Come
   1. Revelation 21-22 The New Heavens and New Earth
      1. In these 2 chapters, we get a vision for what the world will be like when Christ sets all things right. What does it look like to live in a world that isn’t broken? First, It’s physical. It’s about the New Heavens and New Earth. It’s in essence when Heaven and Earth meet. To be with Christ after death is not the ultimate goal. Heaven w/Christ isn’t an awful scenario but it’s not the end. The Bible is about this new world of the New Heavens and Earth.
   2. Revelation 20-21 Hell and the Lake of Fire
      1. This is the most vivid and descriptive detail of this aspect of the world. Dying and going to hell now is a real reality but that’s really not what Revelation is about. Revelation 20-21 is about what FINAL Judgment will be like. The non-Christian ALSO gets a resurrected body. Everybody gets a resurrected body and it’s a body that will not perish/die. This is good news if you’re in New Heavens and New Earth. This is bad news if you’re in Lake of Fire. It doesn’t perish.
2. This World
   1. Suffering
      1. Revelation 2:3 – “You have…..endured hardships for my name.”
      2. Revelation 2:10a – “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.”
      3. Revelation 6:9-10 – “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”
      4. Revelation 12:17 – “Then the dragon [Satan] became furious with the woman [Israel/Church] and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring [Church], on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”
      5. Revelation 20:4b – “I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God.”
   2. Perseverance [Found Primarily in the Church Letter Sections]
      1. Revelation 2:7 – “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”
      2. Revelation 2:10b – “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
      3. Revelation 2:11b – “The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death [lake of fire].’”
      4. Revelation 2:17b – “To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna…”
      5. Revelation 2:25-26 – “Only hold fast what you have until I come. **26**The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.”
      6. Revelation 3:5a – “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments….”
      7. Revelation 3:12a – “The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God….”
      8. Revelation 3:21a – “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me [Jesus] on my throne….”
      9. The word for “conquer” is a term meaning to triumph in battle. The idea is that the people of God never give up or stop fighting until the very end. And, perseverance is encouraged by God Himself by telling us what He will give to those who persevere.
      10. This future world and God’s future gifts to us, His people, is our motivation to press forward in the midst of the difficulties of this current world.
3. Jesus Christ
   1. The Trinity
      1. Revelation 1:4-5 – “Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come [Father], and from the seven spirits who are before his throne [Holy Spirit], **5**and from Jesus Christ….”
      2. Revelation 1:13-16 – “in the midst of the lampstands [Churches] one like a son of man [Daniel 7:13], clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. **14**The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. [Daniel 7:9 – Ancient of Days] His eyes were like a flame of fire, **15**his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. **16**In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”
   2. “The First and the Last”
      1. Revelation 1:8 – “’I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” [God the Father]
      2. Revelation 1:17-18 – “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, **18**and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” [God the Son]
      3. Revelation 1:5-6a – “And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” **6**And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” [God the Father]
      4. Revelation 22:12-13 – “’Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. **13**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’” [God the Son]
4. Worship
   1. Revelation 1:5b-6 – “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood **6**and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
   2. Revelation 4:6-11
      1. God’s throne is surrounded by 4 living creatures and these creatures are singing a song which echoes Isaiah 6:3. From the OT to today, God is being worshipped as holy.
      2. Notice also that whenever the living creatures worship God, the 24 elders bow down before Him and worship Him and they extol His worthiness to receive all glory and honor and power because He is the Creator and Sovereign God.
      3. This passage right here should inform our theology of worship in the Church. Much of what passes today as worship is mere entertainment and is more focused on us than it is about God. But I also want to say that when we get caught up in the worship wars, many times it’s more about our preferences, so we too can be guilty of making worship about ourselves rather than about God.
   3. Revelation 5:8-14
      1. After Jesus takes the scroll into His hand, the living creatures and 24 elders bow down and sing a song of worship to Jesus. Worship of Jesus appears once more, further showing that Jesus is divine, because only God is worthy of our worship.
      2. And the content of their song is based on Jesus’ worthiness and on His work on the cross and His work of salvation.
      3. To this worship is added the voice of thousands of thousands and to that is added the voice of every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth and in the sea.
      4. There’s 3 worship songs in just this one section of Revelation.
   4. Revelation 7:9-11
      1. The angels and living creatures and elders once more worship God.
   5. Revelation 11:15-18
      1. When the kingdom of God arrives, the 24 elders bow down and worship God and their song is recorded in verses 17-18.
   6. Revelation 14:1-7
      1. A new song is being sung to the Lamb and to God by the 144,000 and the living creatures and the elders.
   7. Revelation 15:2-4
      1. Those who conquer the beast and its image have harps in their hands and they sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb and once more another worship hymn is recorded in Scripture for us.
   8. Revelation 16:5-7
      1. As the third angel pours his bowl into the waters of the earth, he sings a song to God. He’s worshipping as God is judging.
   9. Revelation 19:1-10
      1. 3 different hymns are recorded as being sung because Babylon has been destroyed and now it’s time for the marriage feast of the Lamb.
   10. Revelation 22:3
       1. The throne of God is in the midst of the New Heavens & Earth. There is 1 throne and seated on that throne is both God and the Lamb, again showing the Trinity of God, and the people of God are worshipping Him (singular). The people of God worship 1 God in 3 persons.
   11. “By showing us the marvel of who God is and what He does, Revelation calls us to respond with awe, godly fear, praise, faith, and obedience. Thus, all of Revelation promotes true worship of God.” –Vern Poythress
5. Divine Holiness in Judgment
   1. Revelation 4:8 – God is worshipped as Holy
   2. Revelation 6, 8:1 – God’s judgment is poured out in 7 seal judgments and after the 5th seal (Rev 6:10), God is prayed to and the prayer ascribes holiness and sovereignty to Him.
   3. Revelation 8:6-9:21, 11:15-19 - God’s judgment is poured out in 7 trumpet judgments
   4. Revelation 16 – God’s judgment is poured out in 7 bowl judgments and after the 3rd bowl (Rev 16:4), God is worshipped as the “Holy One”
   5. “As seven is the number of completeness, in some sense each series completes God’s judgment on the unrighteous world. The seventh of each series portrays the final act of judgment in which evil is destroyed and God’s kingdom arrives.” --Richard Bauckham
   6. Additionally, the lightnings, rumblings, and thunder that appears in these various judgments (Rev 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18-21) also represent manifestations of God’s holiness.
   7. So what we have is the holiness of God on display in the judgment not only upon evil but upon evil people who are following the beast and false prophet.
   8. Revelation 19:20 – The beast and false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire.
   9. Revelation 20:10 – The devil is thrown into the lake of fire
   10. Revelation 20:11-15 – The Great White Throne Judgment where Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire as well as those who were not part of God’s elect (“name not found written in the book of life”).