

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Friends, I thought I'd begin our little series on Revelation, or our large series, I suppose, on Revelation. In a strange place, I want to show you some political cartoons. So they'll come up in a little while, not quite yet. But since I'm on dangerous ground, I decided that I should be even-handed.

The first one comes from the previous Labor government. Julia Gillard at the time was Prime Minister. It's a take-off of those stickers that have been appearing on cars, on the back windows of family cars in recent years, you know.

And this one's called My Dysfunctional Family. There's Julia, Wayne Swan, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Greens, the Independents, the Speaker in Parliament, and then, of course, last but not least, well, he looks least, but it is, of course, Kevin Rudd.

Now, the next one comes from Tony Abbott's government. And mind you, I had no problems finding cartoons with Tony Abbott in them, let me tell you. But I need to tell you that there are some very good ones out there, and I just chose one.

I'm tempted to spend five minutes showing you the rest of the ones I found, but I won't. I'll just show you this one. It concerns that moment in Tony Abbott's career that left millions of Australians just sort of shaking their heads.

[1 : 1 6] Perhaps you experienced that day. It was his awarding of Australia Day Honours to the Queen's husband, Prince Philip. I woke up, I heard it on the news, and I shook my head.

I thought, I wonder what is going on. Now, I just want to give you a moment to soak this cartoon in. It's very clever, isn't it? And it is sharp, and it's caustic, and there's not a word said.

There is simply a picture. Now, friends, it is now considered that cartoons are one of the most important weapons in a newspaper's armoury of political analysis.

Thanks, we might get rid of that. You see, unlike a long article, a sharp cartoon has the capacity to almost instantaneously dissect a political issue or a politician's career.

It can often have more potent veracity and insight than hundreds or even thousands of words. You can just cut all through it and just expose things.

[2 : 1 5] Political cartoons and caricatures have a very long history. They have a long history of being a devastating tool in cutting the powerful and the proud down to size.

Now, in my view, the Bible's equivalent to the political cartoon is another equally potent form of literature. That literature is called apocalyptic. And like the cartoon, it paints pictures.

Not with a brush, but with a pen that writes words. Words that paint pictures. Words that are, to some extent, caricatures.

But to another extent, are deep and timeless truths. And tonight, we are going to begin a series of sermons, Bible talks, on the longest piece of apocalyptic in the Bible.

It's the book of Revelation. And as we look at it, I'm going to offer you what I think some cartoonists do offer. That is, I'm going to take you on this guided tour and I'm going to give you some headings and some tips so that you can understand what the pictures are and how they function and what they are saying.

[3 : 22] And thereby hear the message. Because it is a potent message, let me tell you. The message of Revelation is very strong. It is potent. And it is greatly encouraging to the people of God.

So let's get started. Now, I need to say that the book of Revelation is regarded by many as a mysterious book. Perhaps you regard it that way. Some of the greatest commentators in Scripture have shied clear of it.

One of my great heroes, John Calvin, is among them. He wrote commentaries on most of Scripture. But search high and low and you will not find one on the book of Revelation by John Calvin.

I don't know why he avoided it. However, plenty of people have speculated. However, he did avoid it. I wonder if you think it's mysterious as well. Maybe you're just frightened of it.

Maybe you haven't read it yourself. However, I wonder if you have actually steered clear of it. Of course, there's a whole group of people, a whole group of Christians for whom Revelation is perhaps the only book they read in the Bible.

[4 : 24] Not quite, but almost that. You know what I mean? That is, it seems to be the one that they have memorised the most and the one that they quote most readily. But my impression is these days that most people simply don't know what to do with Revelation.

They simply avoid it. They don't let it function in their lives like the rest of the New Testament. And if that is you, then let me say that I think your Christian life will be all the poorer if that is what you do.

If you never read the book of Revelation, you are missing out on some great truths from a great God about his great son and all that has been accomplished through him.

So my hope is that in the coming month, you will begin to understand the book and have a handle on it. My prayer is that it will become an open book for you, not a closed one, and a book that enriches your understanding of God and his ways in his world.

A book that renews and refreshes your love for Jesus and a book that encourages you in your service of the gospel of God's son. That's my wish. That's my prayer for what we're going to do in these next few weeks.

[5 : 27] So let's stop and let's pray for a moment that God will indeed hear and answer my prayer and this prayer that we're going to pray. Let's pray. Now, God and Father, we do thank you so much for the book of Revelation.

And we pray that in the days ahead, you will be at work in us through your spirit as we study this book. We pray that you will reveal your son to us. Please reveal to us your ways in your world.

Please help us to hear well. Please encourage and inform us. Please transform us. And please cause your word to do what you have caused it to be written for. We pray this in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Now, friends, let's now get underway. And I could speculate on the setting of the book. That is when it was written and what era and so on. But I think the best thing is to just get stuck into it.

You can read all that stuff in commentaries if you like. So let's look at the first three verses because they introduced the book. Now, if you're going to really grasp all of this, you need to have your Bibles open. So easy to find the last book of the Bible.

[6 : 29] Just flip back to chapter one. So first three verses, they introduced the book and set the scene for it. Let's look at the opening words. Literally, they read this way. The apocalypse of Jesus Christ.

The word apocalypse literally means an unveiling, a disclosure, a revelation. But it's also the word that was used for a particular brand of literature that appeared at this time in this part of the world.

Actually, it had been around for a few hundred years and so on. That brand of literature had various characteristics. It was largely characterized by revelations that often came in the shape of dreams.

Persons were often portrayed in the guise of animals. Historical events were portrayed as natural phenomenon. Colors and numbers had secret meanings.

Apocalyptic is a sort of style of writing often set in times of persecution. I think it's a sort of a way of talking to people in a way that's a little underhanded in one sense, but revelatory in the other.

[7 : 28] It's designed to comfort, to encourage, and even to speak to people in a dramatic way, in such a way as to bring them comfort and encouragement amidst persecution. So an apocalypse is a particular style of writing that is designed to help people in times when they are tempted to be overwhelmed.

That is, when they're tempted to feel as though, no, I can't survive in this world. However, it is not designed, let me tell you, to be mysterious. No, it was designed to live up to its name.

That is, it was an apocalypse, a revealing, a revelation, something made known, opened up, uncovered, something disclosed. Look at verse 1 again.

Our pew Bibles say the revelation from Jesus Christ, actually a more literal translation would be the revelation or a revelation of Jesus Christ. Now, that could mean what our translation says.

It could mean it comes from Jesus Christ, or it could mean the revelation about Jesus Christ. That is, the revelation about him. My guess is we should stick with the ambiguity that's there in the original.

[8 : 36] That is, this book is a revelation of Jesus Christ. It may, it originates from him. It has its source in him.

It is about him. It is both things. It is a revelation from Jesus Christ and a revelation about Jesus Christ. It reveals him to us. So that's the very first thing about this book that we're looking at over this month.

It is a revelation of Jesus Christ. However, did you notice the chain involved in this revelation? Can you see it there? This revelation is a revelation that God gave to Jesus.

That is, God the Father is the origin of this revelation. He gives it to Jesus, the Son. That's made clear by God's angel.

That angel brings it to, so we've got three now, the angel. That angel brings it to God's servant, John. That's number four. But that's not the end. There are other servants who are the end goal.

[9 : 38] God gave this revelation to Jesus who passed it on to his servant, John, so that other servants like John might know what must happen very soon. That's a five-fold revelation. Five people involved in the chain.

And how is this going to happen? Well, it's going to happen by there being a public reading of it. In the first century, reading happened. Usually there was one person who knew how to read, and they read it out loud to others.

Dickens' works were communicated that way because of a similar problem. Not many people could actually read themselves. And so what you do is you have drawing room sittings. And someone who could read would read you the next little excerpt that came out of Dickens' book, and then you'd wait until a week or two, a month or two or whatever, until he wrote the next bit, and then you'd sit around and read it to each other.

And it would be a public reading. It was largely designed to be read that way, and so it is with the book of Revelation. It is designed to be read out loud. That is, it's designed to be listened to.

That's why you should come tomorrow night, because what is happening tomorrow night is what is meant to happen. You're meant to have a public reading, and there's a blessing associated with having that sort of reading.

[10 : 51] So people didn't read privately and in silence. No, they read out loud and often to an audience who listened. So, again, come along tomorrow night. God the Father, to God the Son, to an angel, to John, and to you, the servants of Jesus Christ.

If you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, then this is also for you, for you are a servant of Jesus. So you're involved in the chain. Now, look at verse 3.

If you come along to that reading tomorrow night, you are going to be blessed. That's what it says here, doesn't it? You hearers will be blessed as you hear it and obey it. By the way, I should tell you that this is the first of seven blessings in the book of Revelation.

Now, seven is really good in Revelation. Over and over again, you get seven, and there's seven blessings. See if you can find them. Listen for them tomorrow night if you come along. So we have a revelation. We have a chain involved in receiving and passing on that revelation.

But that's not all we have. Look at verse 2. John speaks of testifying as well. I take it that John is telling us the content that he receives will be passed on to him.

[12 : 00] He will testify about it. And he summarizes it in three ways. It is what he saw. It is what he and what he saw was the word of God.

And what he saw was also the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, what do you think that John meant by the term the word of God? What do you think he meant?

I think because of our background, most of us think that the term word of God refers to the scriptures, don't we? But actually, in the New Testament, the term the word of God really means the scriptures. I can think of two, maybe at the most three places where the word of God actually means the scriptures in the New Testament.

Mostly, it means the gospel. That is the message of Jesus Christ. So when you say the word of God in the New Testament, say the ministry of the word of God, you're talking about the ministry of the gospel.

And sometimes it means the person of Jesus, such as in the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was God, John. But I think mostly it means the gospel.

[13 : 04] So and you can see it there. The word of God is paralleled to the testimony of Jesus. Both amount to the gospel. What John is saying is that this revelation he has been given and is passing on has a central focus to it.

And the central focus is what? The gospel. The great news about what God has done in his son. That is what John saw. He saw Jesus.

And he saw what God had done through Jesus. And he is now passing it on. Verse 3 says he's passing it on so that those who will read it and hear it will take it to heart.

So friends, what should you be looking for as you read John's work? What should you be listening for? You should be looking for and listening for the great news about Jesus.

Not for some future thing that is going to happen. But you should be listening for the great news of Jesus. And how it will affect the world.

[14 : 06] What it will do in the world. You should be looking for the gospel because the gospel is at the very heart of the book of Revelation. Oh, it might be presented in a different form. But that's what it's about.

That is what is at its heart. The gospel. God's word. The testimony of Jesus. That is what John saw. And that's what we need to see as well as we read this book. And as I said earlier on, if you don't see it, you've missed the boat.

By the way, notice something else. Notice that what John is going to say is not only a revelation and it's not only a testimony. It's also a prophecy. Can you see it there? Verse 3. John says, blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy.

And blessed are those who hear it and take it to heart and take to heart what is written in it. Because the time is near. Now, I want to explain the term prophecy. You see, some of us regard prophecy as being something future oriented.

But that is not the case. You see, prophecy can be about predictions of the future. But that's not its main meaning. The main meaning of the term prophecy is a proclamation from God that is addressed to a particular situation and context and designed to console, encourage, instruct or even rebuke.

[15 : 22] So how would you respond to a prophecy? Well, verse 3 tells us. Our version tells us that those who hear it should take it to heart.

However, the words that are literally used here are to keep it. Okay. To keep it. In other words, what God says here is don't just listen to this. No, keep it. It is to be kept.

That is, it is to have attention paid to it. You to shelter it in your mind and your heart. You are to keep it. And it is to guide you and instruct you. But we don't even finish there.

You see, so far, what have we had? We've had it's a revelation. That's meant to be disclosed. And that's meant to be disclosed. It's a testimony. That's designed to be passed on. It's a prophecy. That's meant to be read and kept.

And lastly, we have a letter. You see, in my view, we are still in the introduction to the whole book in verses 4 to 8. And what we're doing is we're looking over the shoulder of John as he writes to a group of seven churches.

[16 : 24] And verse 4 literally says this. John, to the seven churches in Asia. Now, that's not what we know of Asia. That's not our Asia.

It's not that stretch of, you know, a continent. That's, you know, it's not that part of the world that stretches from somewhere around about India or all the way across to China or whatever.

No. No, it's the province of Asia in the Roman world. And so then comes a traditional Christian greeting such as that which begins the letters of Paul.

Can you see it there? Grace and peace to you. You see, he's starting off his letter. Friends, I think that verses 4 to 8 function as a sort of second preface to his work. And it tells us that this work is a letter and should be read as a letter.

Now, friends, that is striking. Because what I'm telling you is this should be read like you read the epistles of Paul. Okay. It's very different, isn't it?

[17 : 23] Very different indeed. Although Paul sometimes gets a bit like this, like second Thessalonians in parts and so on. But what this book is doing, what Revelation is doing is it's addressing a particular group of people in a particular time at a particular place and will therefore address their needs to some extent.

But we are, like with all other letters, looking over the shoulder of those original readers and we're eavesdropping on their correspondence and seeing what we can learn as well.

Therefore, it's a letter that, and by the way, it only ends in chapter 22. Flip over to the end of chapter 22 and you'll see it ends with a benediction like Paul's epistles do.

John says to the people, very last words of this apocalypse that is being written as a letter. He says, the grace of our Lord Jesus be with God's people.

Amen. It just sounds like a typical ending of a letter, doesn't it? Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with God's people. Amen. I've written my letter. You know, you can imagine him sending it off.

[18 : 30] There it is. Friends, that is how we are to read Revelation. We're to read it as a revelation. Not something that has hidden things in it. Things that has revelations in it. As a gospel-centered testimony.

As a prophecy. And as a letter to a set of churches bound in history. Understanding Revelation as all of these things will help us not misunderstand it, you see. It's not as though John penned it with a view to only people in the very last, you know, 10 years, 20 years, 30 years of history would read and understand.

No, he wrote it for that group of churches and for us who look over their shoulder. So, friends, there's the big picture of what we're dealing with here. Now, I need to say that time's marching on.

And let me tell you what I'm going to do from here tonight. First, I just want to take a quick skim through the rest of chapter 1. And I want to show you what I think the big idea of this chapter is.

And if we accomplish that tonight, I think we will have done well. Okay? Let's take a quick skim through the rest of the chapter. Follow it with me. Look at the contents of John's initial address to his readers in verses 4 to 8.

[19 : 39] First, in my view, in verses 4 and 5, he speaks of the three persons of the Trinity. Then halfway through verse 5 and into verse 6, he speaks of the work of Christ and as a result bursts into praise.

Then in verse 7, he speaks of the coming of Jesus with the clouds and of humanity's reaction to that revelation. And throughout these verses, there are quotations, allusions and echoes of Old Testament passages.

And finally, in verse 8, the voice of God is recorded. Can you see it there? I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come. By the way, look in this chapter for those three terms or echoes of them.

Something that is, something that was, something that is to come. Now, let's move to verses 9 to 20 quickly. John continues to write to his people.

And in verse 9, he identifies with the people to whom he writes. You see, he identifies himself as their brother and companion in the suffering and the kingdom and the patient endurance that belongs to being in Jesus.

[20 : 48] Then he tells us why he was in Patmos. He was in Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Now, that's that term we saw way back in verse, what was it, 2?

And we've already identified what he meant by it. It is a reference to the gospel. So he was in Patmos because of the gospel. Now, basically, I think that John is saying that he was either in Patmos to do the ministry of the gospel, so to preach, or he was in Patmos because he had already preached and perhaps been in prison for it.

Since Patmos was a small, rocky, mountainous island used by the Romans as a place of political banishment, it could be that he was some sort of prisoner there. We don't quite know. We sort of assume.

We do know that it's gospel ministry that caused him to be there. He is there because of gospel ministry, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Anyway, in verses 10 to 11, he tells us that he had a spiritual experience and a voice told him to write it down on the scroll and to write on the scroll what he saw.

He was then to send it to seven churches. John then turns to see the source of the voice in verse 12. And it's a remarkable thing, isn't it?

[22 : 07] He sees someone like a son of man. That is someone who looks like a human being. He's clothed in royal garb. It's clearly Jesus.

And the message is clear. Jesus is not an absentee landlord in his churches. Rather, he's in the midst of his churches, supporting them in their trials and their persecutions.

Again, there are a whole host of illusions. In fact, I don't know that I could count them. Illusions and echoes of the Old Testament here. And John falls down before the living Christ.

He encourages who encourages John by saying he's the first and the last, the living one. He was dead. However, he's now alive forever and ever. And moreover, he holds the keys of death and Hades.

He also holds the seven stars, which are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands that are the seven churches. That is, he's got them in his grip.

[23 : 07] Now, there is the briefest sketch of the second half of the chapter. Now, what I want you to do is notice two key things. First, and the things I want you to notice are these first.

Did you notice the multiple references to the gospel? The reference to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The references to key elements of the gospel message.

Things like the death and resurrection of Jesus. Or being freed from sin through the death of Jesus. Or being made a kingdom and priests. Or the second coming of Jesus. Jesus, this is the very first thing to notice.

You see, this is full of gospel, this chapter. It is full of gospel. But there's a second thing. This chapter is also full of Old Testament. The key message is that what God has done in Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

It's part of the eternal plan and purposes of God. And to really understand those plans and purposes, you really need to know your Old Testament. This is the Old Testament lecturer speaking. You do.

[24 : 07] And if you know your Old Testament well, you will hear what is being said by God through the Lord Jesus. Now, I want to dig just a bit deeper.

What I'm going to do is, it's a fairly, I'm just going to skim in one sense. But I'm going to show you some key passages that sit, just one set of key passages that sit underneath this chapter.

Now, there are lots of them, let me tell you. The key ones are Zechariah 12. You can write these down, read them later on. Zechariah 12.

Daniel 2. Daniel 7. And Daniel 10. Okay, Zechariah 12. Daniel 2. Daniel 7.

Daniel 10. Daniel 7. Now, I'm just going to look at one, but I think they undergird the theology of this whole chapter. I want to show you, just like I said, just one of them.

[25 : 05] And I want to give you a feel for what is going on here in the Revelation of John. So in your Bibles, I want you to turn to Daniel 7. It's page 890 in your Bibles.

We read it earlier on. I'm just going to give you a moment to find it. And we're just then going to skim through it. So Daniel chapter 7. Now, I want you to remember what we've just read in Revelation 1.

Okay. And I want you to see what crops up in Daniel 7. Of course, they would have read it the other way around, but we're more familiar with Revelation than we are with Daniel.

So let's do it this way. First, the focus of the chapter is Daniel and a dream in Daniel 7, isn't it? He dreams of these four great and chaotic kingdoms represented by great beasts.

It is terrifying, friends. These are terrifying beasts. The first three are bad. Number four is awful. Overwhelming in its horridness, as it were.

[26 : 03] And the last beast looks out of control and speaks arrogantly against God. And into that context, you remember, comes the peaceful solitude of a courtroom.

So you've been watching these beasts. They come out of the sea, which to an Israelite is coming out of chaos. They arise out of the water. They come up onto the land. They act arrogantly.

But the final one is the worst. And then, instead of the chaos of sea, there comes a courtroom with peace and serenity.

And in it, the Ancient of Days casually, as it were, takes his seat. It's clearly a picture of God. He's not put out by these chaotic monsters, by these rulers of the world.

No, he's in control. His clothing is as white as snow. His hair, the hair of his head, is white like wool. The court is seated.

[27 : 04] And he opens up the books. Coolly and calmly. Not chaotically, but peacefully. And he judges. We're now at verse 11 in Daniel 7.

And the beast continues to be boastful. Then something special happens in verse 13. Can you see it? One like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven. And he approaches.

He, as it were, marches up to the Ancient of Days. And he's led into his presence. And he's given authority and glory and sovereign power. And all peoples, all nations, every language, worship him.

That is, worship one like a son of man. And his dominion will be an everlasting dominion. And his kingdom will never be destroyed. Anyway, in verse 15, Daniel is troubled.

He asks for an interpretation. And it comes in verse 17. And we're told the four great beasts are four kings. And their kingdom will be given to who?

[28 : 09] Have a look. Verse 17. Who is it given to? We heard earlier on it was given to the son of man. But no. Not to the son of man this time. Instead, it will be given to the holy people of the most high.

They will receive the kingdom and possess it forever. And that same note is picked up again in verses 25 to 27. There's what belongs to the son of man belongs to the people of God.

Can you see what's going on? They are with him, as it were. Now, friends, go back to Revelation 1 now. Revelation 1. And imagine you know Daniel. You probably know it better than my little skirt through it, as it were.

Skim through it. You know Daniel. Where do you hear Daniel 7 in Revelation 1? 9 through to 20.

Or 7 through to 20. Have a look at 7. Look at the language of coming on the clouds of heaven. Daniel 7. That's Daniel 7 verse 13.

[29 : 14] Scan down a bit further. Look at verse 13. One walking among the churches is one like a son of man. That's Daniel 7 verse 13 again.

Now look at verse 14 in Revelation 1. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow. But what's the problem here? In Daniel 7, it was the hair on the Ancient of Days, wasn't it?

But now it's the hair and the clothes of the Son of Man. He is being made equal with the Ancient of Days. That's what I think is happening. It's a claim to his divinity.

It's absolutely remarkable if you understand it. Then there are references to fire again, associated with the Ancient of Days.

Can you see what is going on here? I've just given you some glimpses. I could show you references back to Daniel 2, to Daniel 10, to Zechariah, and to many other places. This book is saturated with it.

[30 : 22] It's something like 50% of the verses, or maybe it's even more. I'll give you the stats later on. Of the verses in the book of Revelation either contain allusions or references to the Old Testament.

That is phenomenal. This man is soaked in the Old Testament and God's revelation to him, picks up the Old Testament, and just rams it home and says, This gospel, this came from, not out of the blue, it came from my purposes in my world which you've heard of before.

What I want to ask is, what is the purpose in doing this? What is God doing with John? Well, I think that he has a message for us who know our Old Testaments and who read it, and it is a message that is mind-blowing.

He is telling us that what has happened in and through Jesus is that he has overcome, overthrown evil and conquered through Jesus, and he has given authority to his Son.

And his Son is divine like he. Jesus has conquered the devil. He is the first and the last. He is the living one who once was dead but now is alive forever.

[31 : 40] He stands in God's place and he will conquer as he conquered on the cross. At the same time, the message is that the church is in the world.

So here is Christ in the midst of his church, but where is the church? The church is in the world. But the message God is giving John, through the Old Testament quotations, is don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Don't be overawed at this world. Don't be overawed at the spiritual forces that seem to be arrayed against the people of God and the church of God.

No. Rather, let me tell you who to be overawed at. Be overawed at he who walks among the churches. For he is God.

And he walks among his people through his son. Metaphorically, he puts his hand on our shoulders, as he did to John as we read this. And he says to those fearful, in the same way as John, he says, Don't be afraid.

[32 : 51] I am the first and the last. I am the living one. I was dead. And now look, I'm alive forever and ever.

And I, I hold the keys of death and Hades. Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later.

And it's all mapped out. Nothing to be fearful of. Write, you can write it down. No surprises. Friends, the danger as we look at our world, and particularly in our day, as we see Christian faith crumbling in our country and around the world, the risk is, unless we see the threats of the godless, unless we hear of the persecution of the saints, even as we read the book of Revelation, the danger is we become overwhelmed, isn't it?

We say, where can we go? God, have you lost the plot? Are things slipping away from you?

The danger is we become overwhelmed. But don't be overwhelmed, friends. And that is what I think this message of this first chapter is. Don't be overwhelmed. Hear the words of the Lord to John.

[34 : 17] Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Now, I'm the first and the last. The living one. I was dead, and now look. I'm alive.

And where am I? I'm walking through my church. And walking through my world. I was dead. And now look. I am alive forever and ever.

And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Not anyone else. I hold the keys of death and Hades. Friends, he is coming soon.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Let us pray. Our Father, as we look at the world around us, we are tempted to feel, as perhaps John did, fearful.

We think particularly in our contemporary world, where the things that look so sure, that is, Christian faith was thriving and healthy, at least for parts in our history.

[35 : 24] But now it's not. And we look at a world that is turning against you. We look at a world where people have views about God, that we can't go anywhere near, as it were.

And we look at growing atheism and militant atheism. And we are tempted to be afraid, as John was. So, Father, we hear the words of your son here.

I am the first and the last, the living one. I was dead and now look, I am alive forever. And I hold the keys of death and Hades. And, Father, we put our trust in you.

As we look through this book, please help us to remember these words. And as we look at our world, please help us to remember these words. these words. And, Father, we thank you for the words of your, that you give us at the end of this book.

He is coming soon. And we say, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.