

Encounter With Jesus, Part 3

CHRISTUS VICTOR! The Revelation Of Jesus Christ

As I was praying and contemplating sharing with you this morning I felt the Lord impress two words in my spirit "Preach Jesus!" I wonder how many sermons have been preached on Jesus over the past 2,000 years and in how many different languages or dialects. I wonder how many books have been written about Jesus over the past 2,000 years. I wonder how many songs about Jesus have been written and sung over the past 2,000 years. Jesus has generated more verbal, written and sung communication than any other person in human history. So, I will make my small contribution this morning.

After the instruction to "Preach Jesus!" I then felt my attention directed to the Book of Revelation, the entire Book, preached in one sermon! That seems like a daunting task, but I had a good idea of where the Lord wanted to take us this morning because He had given the prayer room a specific verse in the Book of Revelation in January 2023 that became the theme verse for the year. The verse was Revelation 5:5 which in the NLT reads:

"But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, 'Stop weeping! [John] Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, **has won the victory**. He [Jesus] is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals."

This verse made me think of the Latin *Christus Victor* or "Christ the Conqueror" or "Christ is victorious" which became my prayer mantra for the year and is now part of my prayer arsenal.

This one verse in Revelation 5 (together with two other verses I will share momentarily) is going to be the lens through which I want us to review and interpret all 22 chapters of the apocalypse this morning.

Often believers are unsure how to handle Revelation or they become engrossed interpreting the symbols and creating timelines. Prior to 2023 I had spent minimal amount of time in Revelation except for the first 5 chapters which are very understandable, inspiring, and even beautiful. Many worship songs have been written out of the content in Chapters 4 and 5. My thoughts today are not concerning the hidden meanings, or symbols, or numerology, or timelines included in this apocalypse but the overall purpose of the book and how 1st century believers were supposed to feel after reading or hearing the book.

John writes that God gave this revelation to Jesus, who communicated it by His angels to John. Now, indeed the first verse of the book indicates the revelation was given to reveal "the things which must shortly take place" to the bondservants or believers in Jesus. There is the passage of time and a flow of events in chapters 6 through 22, but did the omniscient Alpha and Omega want to give these 1st century readers a clear road map for their lives and the next several years of human history? God seldom does this, otherwise we would walk by sight and not by faith, not in moment by moment dependency on Him.

I also doubt seriously if 1st century saints believed we would be reading and still trying to figure out The Revelation in 2024. The Father, Jesus, and John must have had a purpose and meaning for giving this apocalypse to the 1st century churches of Asia Minor. There must have been an application for their day or a takeaway they were to embrace. I think it unlikely that they started creating 3-foot long Revelation timelines and End-Time charts and deciphering numerology when they received the book. I do believe the 1st century church was often persecuted by the Romans or the Jews and they needed encouragement concerning Christus Victor and His ultimate, complete, and final victory over all evil. They need assurance and strength to persevere. And, brothers and sisters, we need that same assurance and perseverance in our contemporary cultural milieu.

My prayer is that the outline that you were given this morning and my words help you access The Revelation in a more practical and useful way. Rather than single chapters or single events I want to focus on the scope of the entire 22 chapters of The Revelation. Hopefully, the tables presented in the outline will become a resource you can go back to for encouragement again and again in the future.

In January 2023 the prayer team began praying Christus Victor from Revelation 5:5. This was a theme we returned to often in 2023. There were three main passages in Revelation that caught my attention at the time and they answer three main questions for the reader of Revelation:

Who is worthy to open the scroll or administrate the end of human history?

Why is He worthy to open the scroll or administrate the end of human history?

When will these events take place?

Who? – The Lion & The Lamb:

After the completion of the seven letters to the churches, John starts Chapter 4 by telling us He hears the voice of Jesus and is ushered by the Spirit through a door into the heavenlies. Here similar to the OT prophets, John sees the exalted throne of God, the four living creatures, and the 24 elders worshipping Him who sits on the throne. But then John sees a scroll in God's right hand and a strong angel proclaims, "Who is worthy to open or look into the book [scroll] and to break its seals?" Who is worthy to unleash and administrate the end of human history? But alas, no one is found in heaven (living creatures, elders, angels), or on the earth (no politician, philosopher, scientist, academic, businessman, religionist, or theologian in Moscow or Beijing or Washington, D.C. or the Middle East), or under the earth (no demonic entity). The lack of qualification is seriously disheartening and impacts John deeply causing him to "weep bitterly." Eventually one of the 24 elders commands John to stop weeping....

"But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, 'Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, **has won the victory**. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.'" (NLT)

"and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, **has overcome** so as to open the book and its seven seals.'" (NASB)

Who?....Only Jesus! The Lion of Judah and the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world is the only one found worthy. Jesus is telling the first century believer through John, take courage in the midst of your struggles and persecutions because Jesus has won the victory, has overcome everything, and is worthy of the worship of heaven and of earth. Twenty-first century believer, you can also take courage in the midst of your struggles and growing persecutions that you will overcome and be victorious because He has overcome and is victorious.

Why? – Christus Victor:

Because of Jesus' victorious life and passion on the cross He is completely and comprehensively victorious and is qualified to take the scroll and administrate the fulfillment of human history ... including the "best pathway" for your life and my life.

The Greek *enikesen* in Rev. 5:5 is from *nikao* from *nike* – to conquer, overcome, prevail, be victorious
Wuest – "to carry off the victory, come off victorious. The verb implies a battle."

Forms of *nike* occur in 28 NT passages, but 14 of these occurrences are found in Revelation

Various translated in NT as "has overcome" (NASB), "hath prevailed" (KJV), "He has conquered" (TPT), "He is able" (NIV)

Preface to Revelation in my NLT Bible - "To encourage believers to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and to give them hope that they will ultimately be victorious."

Why?....Christ is victorious! He never lost a battle. He is the ultimate winner. He bats 1,000%. His won/lost ratio is infinity to zero. He wins every game. He knew what to do or not do in every circumstance and every situation. He defeated every temptation and demon and Satan himself. He knew how to handle every encounter. How to answer every question. How to heal every infirmity. He knew what to do on the sea in a potentially deadly storm or in the desert without any food. He knew what to say to the brokenhearted, what to answer to the Pharisee, and how to parlay with Pilate. He was never tripped up or caught off guard. Jesus is victorious! He overcame everything and there is nothing left to conquer. "It is finished!" Now we are on the winning side and we fight *from* victory not *for* victory, declaring and demonstrating His victory.

Jesus triumphs completely and emphatically over Satan who is mentioned eight times in Revelation. Satan is also referred to as the “devil” (2:10, 12:9, 12:12, 20:2, 20:10), the “great red dragon” (12:3, 12:9, 20:2), the “serpent of old” (12:9, 20:2), the “accuser of the brethren” (12:10), and the one who deceives (7x). These passages from Revelation coupled with the Temptation of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus and the apostles and Paul, Peter’s and Judas’ succumbing to the devil, help me conclude that Satan or the devil is not an impersonal evil earthly force/influence or humanity simply misbehaving but an actual created rebelling malevolent spiritual being that Jesus triumphed over.

But do not fear him follower of Christ. Christ was decisively victorious over him.

Martin Luther:

“Although sin makes itself felt, death bares its teeth, and the devil frightens us, still there is far more grace to prevail over all sin, far more life to prevail over death, and far more God to prevail over all devils. In this kingdom – sin, death and the devil are nothing more than the black clouds of the material heaven. For a time they may well conceal heaven, but they cannot prevail. They must stay beneath the heavens and suffer it to remain, prevail, and rule over them; and at last they must pass away. Therefore although sin bites us, death frightens us, and the devil throws his weight around with temptation, these are still only clouds. The heaven of grace prevails and rules; in the end they must remain below and surrender.”

When? – Exactly According To God’s Predetermined Plan:

The following two verses in Revelation helped me immensely in 2023 concerning the timing of final things:

Revelation 4:1, NLT

“Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what **must** happen after this.” ”

This is the voice of Jesus declaring this certainty. Because Christ is victorious, everything written after 4:1 **must** take place.

Revelation 9:15, NLT

“Then the four angels who had been prepared for this **hour** and **day** and **month** and **year** were turned loose to kill one-third of all the people on earth.”

The final consummation of the events described in Revelation must take place and it will follow God’s timing to the year, month, day, hour. Do you think it would be otherwise? God, the Alpha and Omega, has planned out every nanosecond of human history.

Jesus Revealed in The Revelation:

The following is my simple Jesus focused outline of Revelation:

Chapter 1 – John encounters the victorious Christ! (Wow!)

Chapter 2 & 3 – the 7 churches encounter the victorious Christ (Practical life and community instruction)

Chapters 4 & 5 – A glimpse into the worship occurring in heaven because Christ is victorious (true reality)

Chapters 6 to 19 – The manifestation of what must take place because Christ already won the victory (the bulk of the material in Revelation, the flow of events, but events directed by Jesus)

Chapters 20 to 22 – The end of all things because Christ is victorious (Consummation!)

Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*

Vision 1: Christ In The Church (1:9-3:22)

Vision 2: Christ In The Cosmos (4:1-16:21)

Vision 3: Christ In Conquest (17:1-21:8)

Vision 4: Christ in Consummation (21:9-22:5)

The Epilogue: Christ Challenging (22:6-21)

The table below provides a summary of the essentially chapter by chapter revelation of Jesus in The Revelation:

Chapter 1	Vision of the glorified Jesus
Chapters 2-3	Jesus is the Lord of the churches (and is in the midst of the churches)
Chapter 4	Jesus has the authority to call John up to heaven and show John the things which “must take place” in the future
Chapter 5	Only Jesus! ... is worthy to take the scroll (“worthy” 5x in Chapter 5)
Chapter 6	Only Jesus! ... is the one worthy to break the seven seals to open the scroll
Chapter 7	God’s people worship the Lamb (Jesus) (Lion is found only 1 time in the book while Lamb occurs 29 times)
Chapter 8	Jesus breaks the seventh seal
Chapter 11	“The kingdom of the world has become <i>the kingdom</i> of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”
Chapter 12	“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come...”
Chapter 13	The Book of Life belongs to Jesus (5x in Revelation – 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27)
Chapter 14	Lamb stands on Mt. Zion with the 144,000 (again Immanuel with His people)
Chapter 14	Jesus “harvests” the earth with a sickle (Only Jesus! ... has the right and power)
Chapter 15	Overcomers sing the Song of the Lamb (Song of Jesus!)
Chapter 17	The Lamb defeats all His enemies (All!)
Chapter 19	Wedding feast of the Lamb (Jesus desires deep intimacy with you)
Chapter 19	Only Jesus is the Faithful and True, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords
Chapter 21	The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of the New Jerusalem
Chapter 21	The Lamb illuminates (lights) New Jerusalem
Chapter 22	The water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb
Chapter 22	Jesus is “coming soon”, the Alpha and Omega, First and Last, Beginning and End, both the source of David and the heir to his throne, Bright Morning Star

We should not see charts and timelines and maps and be confused and wondering – we should be in awe of God and of the Lamb....Jesus!

The Names/Identifiers Of Jesus In Revelation:

By my reading there are at least 28 names/identifiers of Jesus in the Revelation and at least 14 of them are spoken by Jesus Himself (identified by "(Jesus)" in the table below), but also by John, elders, and angels:

1:5	Faithful Witness (John)
1:5	First-Born of the Dead (John)
1:5	Ruler of the Kings of the Earth (John)
1:17	First and the Last (Jesus)
1:18	The Living One (Jesus)
2:18	The Son of God (Jesus)
3:7	Holy (Jesus)
3:7	True (Jesus)
3:7	Key of David (Jesus)
3:14	The Amen (Jesus)
3:14	The Faithful and True Witness (Jesus)
3:14	The Beginning of the Creation of God (Jesus)
5:5	The Lion from the tribe of Judah (elder)
5:5	The Root of David (elder)
5:6	Lamb (John)
11:15	His [God's] Christ (angel)
15:3	O Lord God, the Almighty (in the song of the Lamb)
15:3	King of the nations (in the song of the Lamb)
16:5	O Holy One (angel)
17:14	Lord of lords and King of kings (John)
19:11	Faithful and True (John)
19:13	The Word of God (John)
19:16	King of kings and Lord of lords (John)
22:13	Alpha and Omega (Jesus)
22:13	First and Last (Jesus)
22:13	Beginning and End (Jesus)
22:16	Root and Offspring of David (Jesus)
22:16	Bright Morning Star (Jesus)

The Revelation contains seven beatitudes and seven benefits for the believer:

The Seven Blessings/Beatitudes In Revelation:

Most believers are familiar with the beatitudes spoken by Jesus in the gospels of Matthew (8) and Luke (4), but are you aware of the seven blessings or beatitudes recorded in Revelation:

1:3	Blessed are those who read, listen, and obey the Revelation
14:13	Blessed are those who die in the Lord, they rest from their hard labor
16:15	Blessed are those who are watching and ready (Jesus)
19:9	Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb
20:6	Blessed are those who share in the 1 st resurrection, they will reign 1,000 years
22:7	Blessed are those who are obedient (Jesus)
22:14	Blessed are those who have washed their robes for they will eat of the tree of life

The Seven Benefits Accruing to an Overcomer:

In Chapters 2 & 3 of The Revelation – All seven churches addressed by Jesus are called to overcome or be victorious, but great promises follow to those who do overcome:

Ephesus	“To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God” – 2:7
Smyrna	“Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death” – 2:17
Pergamum	“To everyone who is victorious I will give some of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven” – 2:11
Thyatira	“To everyone who is victorious, who obey me to the very end, to them I will give authority over all the nations” – 2:26
Sardis	“All who are victorious will be clothed in white” – 3:5
Philadelphia	“All who are victorious will become pillars in the temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it” – 3:12
Laodicea	“Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne” – 3:21

After I completed my outline, I found the following confirmatory quote from Dr. Merrill Tenney (professor emeritus of theological studies at Wheaton College, and dean of the Wheaton College Graduate School from 1947 to 1971) in his book *Interpreting Revelation*:

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF REVELATION

The very name of the book of Revelation means that its content is intended to be a disclosure of the person of Christ. He is not incidental to its action; He is its chief subject. Even in these chapters where signs and symbols seem uppermost, and where the cataclysmic judgments of God eclipse all other interests, the person of Christ is still central.

The Christological character of the book is closely related to the structure. In each of the four main visions there is a portrait of Christ. The first vision presents Him as Lord of the church, walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (1:12-17). The second vision reveals the Lamb on the throne, into whose authority has been committed the judgment and rulership of all the world (5:1-14). In the third vision He is the Word of God, the invincible conqueror riding His horse to victory over the nations as a Roman general conducted a triumph (19:11-16). The final vision does not contain a separate descriptive paragraph about Him, but it places Him at the very center of the new creation, the city of God.

This Christological emphasis is one of the most important keys to Revelation. By beginning with the Person as the chief interpretative factor, fruitless debate over detail can be minimized, and the main purpose of the book can be kept constantly in sight. The thread of continuity in its thought may be followed more easily, and the initial interpretation can be non-controversial. Whatever one's eschatological scheme may be, he must agree at the outset that the person of Christ is supremely important. All evangelical schools of interpretation would accept this concept as a point of departure....

For the Christian the future is not measured in terms of *what*, but in terms of *whom*. Time, events, and trends are all secondary to the disclosure of the Person who is the Son of God, the king of men, and the Redeemer of all creation.