

THE DAILY QUIET TIME REFLECTIONS SERIES

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

Reflections on the Book of Revelation

Eugene Han

Worthy Is the Lamb: Reflections on the Book of Revelation

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The Introduction draws on the introductory notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable, used with gratitude for his lay-accessible scholarship on the text of Scripture.

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How to Use This Book

Reading, Reflecting, Together

This book was not written to be read in a single sitting. It follows the same daily rhythm as every volume in this series: one reading, one reflection, one day at a time. The chapters draw on the Bible Reading Plan included as an appendix, though the correspondence is not always one chapter per reading day — a single day's passage sometimes unfolds across several chapters here when the text asks for it, as is often the case in Revelation. The very first day's reading in this volume, Revelation 1–3, is treated across eight chapters, since each of the seven letters to the churches carries its own distinct message worth sitting with individually.

Each chapter grew out of years of daily reflections shared by fellow readers working through the same passage on the same day, together with notes drawn from Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in Dallas. What you are holding, then, is not a technical commentary but a companion for your own reading — written by fellow travelers, not experts, who have simply tried to sit with the text long enough to let it speak.

We encourage you to read the day's passage first, in your own Bible, before turning to the corresponding chapter or chapters here. Let Scripture have the first word — the reading plan, not the chapter count, is what sets the pace. Then, as you have time, read as much of the commentary as serves you: a full chapter, a few paragraphs, or just enough to sit with one idea a little longer.

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Introduction

We come now to the last book of the Bible, and in many ways the strangest. No book of Scripture has been more argued over, more allegorized, more feared, and more neglected than the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Yet the book itself insists that it is not meant to intimidate but to unveil — that is what the word “revelation” means. It was written to be understood, read aloud in the churches, and obeyed, with a blessing promised to those who do (1:3).

The book identifies its author simply as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8), and from the earliest generations of the church this has been understood as the apostle John, the same John who wrote the fourth Gospel and the three epistles that bear his name. The differences in style between Revelation and John’s other writings are real, but they are differences of genre, not of hand — a man writing an apocalyptic vision does not sound like a man writing a pastoral letter. John received this revelation while exiled on Patmos, a small island off the coast of Asia Minor, banished there for his testimony about Jesus during a wave of persecution under the emperor Domitian near the end of the first century.

Revelation is, by its own description, three kinds of literature at once: it is a letter, addressed to seven real churches with real struggles; it is prophecy, claiming to disclose what must soon take place; and it is apocalyptic, drawing on a rich vein of symbolic vision that runs back through Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Isaiah. Nearly every image in the book has Old Testament roots. This matters for how we read it — Revelation was not written to give the church a private code to crack, but to complete a story that had already been unfolding for two thousand years.

Christians have read this book four different ways across church history. Some treat it as pure allegory, a picture of the timeless struggle between good and evil with no historical referent at all. Others read it as already fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem or the first centuries of the church. Others trace it loosely across all of church history. We will read it the way we have read every other book in this series — expecting it to mean what it says, with its many symbols explained by the text itself and by the rest of Scripture, and its outstanding prophecies (the tribulation judgments, the return of Christ, the millennial kingdom, and the new creation) still ahead of us rather than behind us. This is sometimes called the futurist reading, and it is the approach shared by nearly everyone whose reflections have shaped this series so far.

More than anything, Revelation is a book about Jesus Christ — not a book about the antichrist, or the timing of the rapture, or which nation is which in the headlines. Its very title says so: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). It unveils who He is, what power He holds, and how His purposes will finally, unstoppably, be accomplished. Every hard image in this book exists to answer one question for a suffering church: who is really on the throne? The answer the book gives, from its first chapter to its last, is that Jesus is.

PART ONE — THE PREPARATION OF THE PROPHET

Chapter One — Behold, He Is Coming

Revelation 1

Revelation opens by telling us plainly what kind of book this is and where it came from. It is a revelation from Jesus Christ and about Jesus Christ, given to make known “what must soon take place” — not because every reader would live to see it fulfilled, but because it has always been urgently near for every generation of believers who have read it since. When we meet expressions like “the time is near” (1:3) or “I am coming quickly” (22:20), we should resist the temptation to treat these as failed predictions if a particular generation didn’t see them fulfilled. The apostles wrote as men who considered the coming of the Lord always imminent — near enough that any generation might be the one — while leaving the day and hour to God. What Scripture asks of us is not that we calculate a date, but that we live ready, since none of us is given more time to prepare than the years we are actually given (Hebrews 9:27).

John identifies himself not as an apostle pulling rank, but as a brother who shares in the suffering, the kingdom, and the patient endurance that belong to Christ (1:9). He was on Patmos for the same reason his readers were under pressure in their own cities: for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. That matters for how we hear what follows. This is not a message handed down from someone above the fray: it comes from someone in it with us.

Then comes the vision. The Jesus who appears to John in chapter 1 is not the itinerant teacher of the Gospels or the suffering servant of Isaiah’s prophecy. He is robed, sashed in gold, His hair white, His eyes like fire, His feet like glowing bronze, His voice like rushing water, His

face shining like the sun in full strength. He holds seven stars in His right hand and walks among seven golden lampstands. Every detail speaks of majesty, holiness, and unshakable authority — this is the glorified Christ, the one who died and is now alive forever, holding the keys of death and Hades itself (1:18). John’s response is the only sane response to such a vision: he falls at Christ’s feet as though dead. And Christ’s response to John is the same tenderness He has always shown those who are overwhelmed by Him: “Do not be afraid.”

The stars and lampstands are given their own explanation within the text itself — the lampstands are the seven churches, the stars are their messengers (1:20). This is worth noticing as a pattern for the whole book: Revelation regularly interprets its own symbols rather than leaving us to guess. And the picture itself is a comfort before it is anything else. Whatever else Revelation will go on to say about judgment and tribulation, its very first vision shows us Christ walking among His churches, not at a distance from them.

The chapter closes by anchoring everything that follows in a single, staggering fact: this Christ, who ascended into the clouds, will return the same way, and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him” (1:7). Friend and enemy alike will see Him. All the peoples of the earth will mourn — not merely from fear of judgment, but from the horror of recognizing, too late, exactly whom they crucified. That verse is the theme of the entire book compressed into a single sentence: Jesus is coming, He will be seen by all, and every knee, willing or not, will finally acknowledge who He is.

PART TWO — THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Chapter Two — I Have Left My First Love

Revelation 2:1–7

Ephesus was, by the church’s own admission, doing almost everything right. They had worked to the point of exhaustion, endured hardship without giving up, and refused to tolerate false teachers — testing men who called themselves apostles and exposing them as frauds. This was no small thing. Ephesus sat at a crossroads of trade and travel, and its size made it a magnet for the kind of religious hucksters Paul himself had warned the Ephesian elders about years earlier: “savage wolves will come among you” (Acts 20:29). They came, and Ephesus caught them.

And yet Christ’s verdict is severe: “You have forsaken the love you had at first.” This verse is often preached as though the Ephesians had grown cold toward Christ Himself, but that reading doesn’t fit what’s actually commended in the letter — their doctrine was sound, their labor was real. What they had lost was something else: the patient, merciful love they once had for one another. In their zeal for truth, they had let their vigilance curdle into harshness. Sound doctrine defended without love isn’t a lesser sin than heresy — Christ threatens to remove their lampstand over it. A church can be entirely correct and entirely dark at the same time, because the light was never the doctrine itself; it was the love behind it.

Chapter Three — Be Faithful Unto Death

Revelation 2:8–11

Smyrna receives no rebuke at all — only commendation and a warning of what is coming. This was a city that had built its identity on loyalty to Rome for two centuries, and Christians there paid for their refusal to burn incense to Caesar. Their poverty was not incidental to their faith; a Smyrnaean Christian's material poverty and social exclusion were often the direct cost of the confession Christ commends here. Decades later, the aged bishop Polycarp would be burned alive in this same city rather than say the words “Caesar is Lord” — a fulfillment, almost, of the very promise given here.

Notice what Christ does not say. He does not promise Smyrna deliverance from suffering. He promises them a crown, and He tells them plainly that some of them will die. “Be faithful unto death” is not a warm platitude when the death in question is not metaphorical. But the promise attached to it is total: those who die faithful “will not be hurt at all by the second death.” Whatever Rome could take from Smyrna, it could not touch the one thing that actually mattered.

Chapter Four — Where Satan's Throne Is

Revelation 2:12-17

Pergamum held the unusual distinction, among the seven cities, of being granted the power of capital punishment by Rome — hence Christ's introduction of Himself here as the one who wields “the sharp, double-edged sword.” It was also a center of pagan worship, dominated by a massive altar to Zeus set on a hill overlooking the city, which may be why Christ names it, starkly, the place “where Satan has his throne.”

Pergamum's failure wasn't apostasy in the open; it was tolerance in the quiet. Some in the church had followed a group Christ compares to Balaam — the prophet who, unable to curse Israel directly, taught Israel's enemies how to seduce them into compromise instead (Numbers 25, 31). The lesson is uncomfortable: a church surrounded by hostility can sometimes hold its ground against outright persecution and still lose the battle from the inside, one small accommodation at a time. Christ's counsel is simply “repent” — because where He is concerned, He Himself, not the compromise, is sufficient for whatever pressure the city applies.

Chapter Five — I Know Your Deeds, Your Love and Faith

Revelation 2:18–29

Thyatira and Ephesus are almost mirror images of each other. Ephesus had doctrine but had lost its love; Thyatira had love, service, faith, and perseverance in abundance — “and that your deeds of late are greater than at first” — but had grown dangerously permissive toward a teacher Christ calls Jezebel, who was leading the congregation into sexual immorality and idol worship. A church can fail in either direction: cold correctness or warm compromise. Neither is safe by itself.

What’s striking is how much Christ commends before He corrects — this is not a church in crisis so much as a church with one untreated wound. His patience with Jezebel herself (“I have given her time to repent”) shows a God who is not eager to judge, but the judgment, when it finally falls, is severe precisely because the warning was so clearly given and so long ignored. For those who hold fast, the promise is authority to reign with Christ — a fitting reward for a church whose weakness was tolerating another kingdom’s rule within its own walls.

Chapter Six — I Will Never Blot Out His Name

Revelation 3:1–6

“You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.” Nothing is said against Sardis’s doctrine or its morals — the problem is deeper than either. Sardis was a city that had twice been conquered because its soldiers, confident in their fortress on the hill, failed to keep watch. Christ’s charge to “wake up” and “be watchful” borrows directly from the city’s own history: a reputation for security is not the same thing as security.

Verse 5 has troubled readers for centuries: does the promise never to “blot out” a name imply that some names once written are later erased? We don’t think so, and neither did the Sardians who first heard it — a citizen’s name was removed from the city register at death or for serious crime, so the promise here is a comfort spoken in the form of a denial: to the one who overcomes, Christ will never do what Sardis’s own registrars sometimes did. It is a promise of permanence, not a warning of possible loss. The overcomer’s security rests in Christ’s declaration, not in his own vigilance — though vigilance, as Sardis learned twice over, still matters.

Chapter Seven — An Open Door No One Can Shut

Revelation 3:7-13

Philadelphia, like Smyrna, receives no rebuke — only commendation for keeping Christ’s word despite having “little strength.” This was a city that had lived for generations with the memory of catastrophic earthquakes, and its citizens knew what it meant to have their footing taken away without warning. Against that backdrop, Christ’s promise that the overcomer will become “a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never leave it again” is not a generic image of stability — it is the specific, aching hope of people who had watched their own city shaken to pieces.

The open door Christ sets before this small, weak congregation is one “no one can shut.” Philadelphia had little influence in its own city, but Christ’s opinion of their strength and Rome’s assessment of it were not the same measurement. This is the quiet argument the seven letters keep making: worldly weakness and spiritual strength are not opposites. Sometimes they are the very same church.

Chapter Eight — Because You Are Lukewarm

Revelation 3:14–22

Laodicea is the only church given no commendation at all — and the only one addressed by Christ under a name, “the Amen, the faithful and true witness,” that pointedly answers the church’s own unfaithfulness. Laodicea’s water came by aqueduct from two sources: scalding hot springs at Hierapolis and cold, clean water at Colossae. By the time either reached Laodicea, it arrived lukewarm — good for nothing, and famously nauseating to drink. Christ’s image is drawn straight from the plumbing His readers dealt with daily: neither refreshing like the cold water nor useful like the hot, Laodicea’s faith had become spiritually undrinkable.

Their self-assessment (“I am rich, I have acquired wealth”) mirrors the city’s actual pride — Laodicea was wealthy enough to refuse imperial disaster relief after an earthquake. Christ’s counter-assessment could not cut deeper: “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” And yet the letter ends, astonishingly, not in rejection but in an invitation to intimacy — Christ standing at the door, knocking, asking only to be let back in to eat with them. Even to the church that has nothing right, the door is not yet shut. That may be the most Laodicea-shaped mercy in the whole book.

PART THREE — THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Chapter Nine — Worthy Is the Lamb

Revelation 4–5

After the seven letters, John is called up through an open door into heaven itself, and the visions that will occupy the rest of the book begin from here: the throne room of God. Everything about the scene speaks of brilliance, majesty, and unceasing worship — a rainbow like an emerald encircling the throne, flashes of lightning and peals of thunder rolling out from it, four living creatures and twenty-four elders giving glory without pause to the One who sits there. Their song fixes on a single truth: God is worthy of worship simply because He created all things, and all things exist because He willed them to. We were not made to serve our own interests, or even humanity’s interests in some general sense — we were made, as all creation was made, for God’s own pleasure and glory. Before Revelation shows us a single judgment, it wants us to see the throne first. Whatever comes next in this book, it comes from here.

Then the scene turns, and the drama sharpens. A scroll sealed with seven seals rests in God’s right hand, and a mighty angel asks a question that echoes through every corner of the universe: “Who is worthy to open the scroll?” Silence answers him. John weeps, apparently grasping that if no one is found worthy, there may be no resolution to history’s long conflict between good and evil — no vindication for the martyrs, no end to the reign of evil, no answer at all.

Then comes the reversal that gives the whole book its center of gravity. John is told to look for a Lion — the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the long-promised Root of David — and what he sees instead is a Lamb, looking as though it had been slain. There is no contradiction here, only the

deepest truth about who Jesus is: the Lion's authority to judge and the Lamb's willingness to be slain are the same qualification. He did not earn the right to open the scroll by strength alone, but by first laying His life down for people from every tribe, language, people, and nation. And when He steps forward to take the scroll from His Father's hand, the elders and living creatures fall down before Him in worship — no longer directed only to the Father, but now, without any diminishment, to the Lamb as well. Every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth joins the chorus. If we have ever wondered whether devotion to Jesus and worship of God the Father are somehow different acts, this scene answers that question permanently. He who was slain is worthy to receive the same praise as the One who sits on the throne, "because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation" (5:9).

Chapter Ten — Who Is Able to Stand?

Revelation 6–7

The seals begin to open, and the pattern that unfolds is one Jesus Himself had already given His disciples on the Mount of Olives: false messiahs, war, famine, and death sweep across the earth in the first four seals, matching almost point for point what He described as “the beginning of birth pains” in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Whatever era eventually fulfills these seals, readers in every generation have found their own history uncomfortably reflected in these four riders — a reminder that conquest, war, scarcity, and death have never needed an appointed hour to appear; the Tribulation will simply be these familiar horrors intensified and unleashed without restraint. The fifth seal takes us somewhere different: not to earth, but under the altar in heaven, where the souls of martyred believers cry out, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” They are told to wait — their vindication is certain, but not yet. The sixth seal answers with cosmic upheaval so severe that the mightiest rulers on earth try to hide themselves in caves, begging mountains to fall on them rather than face “the wrath of the Lamb.” That last phrase deserves a second look: the Lamb who was slain in mercy is the same Lamb whose wrath the unrepentant world cannot survive.

Chapter 7 pauses the sequence before the seventh seal is opened — the first of several such interludes in this book, each one giving us a fuller picture of what God is doing for His people even as judgment falls on those who reject Him. Four angels are poised to harm the earth, but they are held back until 144,000 are sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel, a specific and numbered group, distinct from the “great multitude that

no one could count” who appear next: believers “from every nation, tribe, people and language,” wearing white robes and holding palm branches, who have come out of the great tribulation — the elder tells John plainly that they “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” We are given more mystery here than explanation, and that may be the point. When the elder asks whether John knows who these are, John’s answer is the wisest one available to any of us reading this book: “Sir, you know.” What is certain is what awaits them — they will never hunger, never thirst, never be scorched again, for the Lamb Himself will shepherd them to springs of living water, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes (7:15–17). That promise, given here in the middle of judgment, is repeated almost word for word in the very last chapters of the book. Revelation is not shy about telling us where its story ends before it finishes telling us how we get there.

Chapter Eleven — No More Delay

Revelation 8–11

When the Lamb breaks the seventh seal, it doesn't end the judgments — it releases the next series. Seven angels appear with seven trumpets, and John tells us plainly where these judgments originate: an angel takes fire from the altar and hurls it to the earth in direct response to the prayers of God's people (8:3–5) — very likely the same prayer we heard rising from under the altar in the fifth seal, the martyrs' cry, "How long, Sovereign Lord, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" These are not judgments delayed from some earlier age; they are God's answer to the suffering of believers living through this very period. The first four trumpets strike the natural order — a third of the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the heavenly lights are struck in succession — severe, but still partial. Then an eagle flies through midheaven crying a threefold "Woe" over what remains: the last three trumpets will not use nature as their instrument. They will use the demonic.

The fifth trumpet unleashes a plague of locusts from the abyss, tormenting for five months everyone who does not bear God's seal — so severe that "people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them" (9:6). The sixth releases an army of two hundred million that kills a third of humanity. And after all of this, the survivors still do not repent (9:20–21) — the same pattern we saw in Egypt, where each new plague hardened Pharaoh's heart rather than softening it. Escalating judgment, on its own, does not produce repentance. It only exposes how deep the refusal already runs.

Chapter 10 pulls back from the horror briefly to show us a mighty angel — robed in cloud, a rainbow over his head, his face like the sun — holding a scroll and standing with one foot on the sea and one on the land, a picture of authority over every realm. He swears that there will be “no more delay”: whatever remains of God’s mystery will be finished when the seventh trumpet sounds. Seven thunders speak, and John is about to write down what he hears — but for the only time in this entire book, he is told to seal it up instead. Some things, even in a book called Revelation, are not for us to know. Then John is told to eat the scroll he’s been given: sweet in his mouth, bitter in his stomach — the word of God is always sweet to receive, even when what it contains, as here, is judgment rather than blessing.

Chapter 11 gives us the last interlude before the seventh trumpet: two witnesses, given power like Moses and Elijah, prophesy for 1,260 days, protected and untouchable until their testimony is finished. Their ministry, death, and resurrection trace the shape of Christ’s own — killed by the beast from the abyss, their bodies publicly displayed for three and a half days while the world celebrates, and then, astonishingly, brought back to life and called up to heaven in a cloud before the eyes of their enemies. What follows is the only moment in the entire book where fear seems to turn, even briefly, into faith: after a great earthquake, the survivors in Jerusalem “were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven” (11:13). Everywhere else in Revelation, judgment hardens hearts. Here, just once, it seems to break one open.

The seventh trumpet finally sounds, and heaven itself announces the outcome in advance: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (11:15). Before we see a single scene of the actual consummation, we are told how the story ends. And in the same breath, we’re given a

glimpse we won't fully understand until much later — God's temple in heaven opened, the ark of His covenant visible within it (11:19). It is a small, early flash of the very thing this whole book is moving toward: God dwelling openly, unhiddenly, with His people.

Chapter Twelve — The Dragon and the Two Beasts

Revelation 12–13

Chapter 12 gives us the clearest picture in Scripture of the war behind the war. A woman appears, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, twelve stars crowning her head — the plainest reading is Israel, through whom the Messiah would come, echoing Joseph’s own dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing before him (Genesis 37:9). She gives birth to a son “who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter,” and a great red dragon waits to devour him the moment he is born — the whole bloody history of Herod’s slaughter of the infants compressed into a single image. The child is caught up to God and His throne, and the dragon, thwarted, turns his fury elsewhere. John tells us plainly who this dragon is: “that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (12:9) — the first time anywhere in Scripture that the serpent of Eden is named outright as Satan himself. War breaks out in heaven, Michael and his angels prevail, and Satan is hurled down to the earth. A voice in heaven — very possibly one of the martyrs we heard crying out from under the altar back in the fifth seal — announces that salvation, power, and the kingdom of God have finally come, “for the accuser of our brothers and sisters... has been hurled down” (12:10). Unable to reach the woman, who is kept safe for three and a half years, the dragon turns instead to make war “against the rest of her offspring — those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (12:17).

Chapter 13 shows us where that war goes next. Two beasts appear — one from the sea, one from the earth — and the parallel to the true Godhead is impossible to miss and clearly intentional. As the Father

gave all authority to the Son, the dragon gives his throne and authority to the first beast. As Christ was slain and rose again, the first beast suffers a fatal wound and is healed, and the world marvels and worships. As the Spirit bears witness to the Son through miraculous signs, the second beast — later called the false prophet — performs wonders that turn the world's worship toward the first. It is a counterfeit trinity, built to imitate every feature of the true one, right down to the mark placed on those who submit, standing in deliberate opposition to the seal God places on His own (7:3; 14:1). Everything these beasts do, notice, is done by permission: “it was given to him... it was given to him” (13:5, 7, 14, 15) — this is not authority God has granted, but authority Satan exercises until the day he is finally bound.

To God's people caught in the middle of this, the counsel is not rescue but endurance: “This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people” (13:10). There is no promise here that believers will escape captivity or death — only the assurance that whatever comes, their names were written in the Lamb's book of life “from the creation of the world” (13:8), a security fixed before either beast ever drew breath. The call to persevere in this chapter is the same call given to Smyrna at the very start of the book: be faithful, even to the point of death, and receive the crown of life.

Chapter Thirteen — The Harvest and the Wrath

Revelation 14–16

After the horror of chapter 13, chapter 14 turns our eyes back to solid ground: the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000, singing a song no one else can learn. Three angels follow in succession — one proclaiming the eternal gospel to every nation, one announcing in advance the fall of “Babylon the Great,” and one warning, in the starkest terms in the entire book, against taking the mark of the beast. And then comes one of the quietest, most overlooked promises in Revelation: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on... they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them” (14:13). It is worth pausing on a beatitude pronounced over death itself — not death as tragedy, but death as rest, for those who belong to Christ, however severe the age they die in.

The chapter closes with two harvests, side by side: one who looks “like a son of man” reaps a harvest of grain with a sickle, and an angel gathers grapes from the earth’s vine and throws them into “the great winepress of God’s wrath.” Jesus’ own parable of the wheat and the weeds seems to stand behind both images (Matthew 13:24–30) — the righteous gathered in, the unrepentant gathered for judgment. Chapter 15 pauses briefly before the final series begins: God’s temple in heaven fills with smoke from His glory, so overwhelming that “no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues... were completed” (15:8) — the same thing that happened when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle under Moses, and again when it filled Solomon’s temple. Some things about God’s presence have never changed: when His glory is fully unveiled, no one can simply walk into it.

Then come the bowls, and with them the last and worst of the three judgment cycles. Where the seals and trumpets struck a fourth or a third of the earth, the bowls hold nothing back: every living thing in the sea dies, every river and spring turns to blood, the sun scorches with fire, the beast's kingdom is plunged into darkness. And still — even now — people “gnawed their tongues in agony... and cursed the God of heaven... but they refused to repent” (16:10–11). This has been the grim pattern since the trumpets began: escalating judgment does not soften hardened hearts, it only reveals how set they already were. When the seventh angel pours out the last bowl, a voice from the throne itself declares, “It is done” — the same finality we heard announced when the seventh trumpet sounded — accompanied by the worst earthquake in human history and hailstones of unimaginable weight. Babylon the Great, the world system that has stood behind every one of these judgments, is named at last and found already fallen.

Chapter Fourteen — Come Out of Her, My People

Revelation 17–18

If Revelation 12–13 showed us who stands behind the world’s rebellion, chapters 17–18 show us its final form: a city, pictured as a great prostitute, drunk on the blood of the saints, riding a scarlet beast and adorned with everything the world calls wealth. She is named plainly — “Babylon the Great” — and interpreters have long disagreed over whether John means Rome, a symbolic stand-in for every proud city that has ever exploited the nations, or a literal, rebuilt Babylon still future to us. We find the last of these most persuasive, not least because Jeremiah’s ancient prophecies of Babylon’s total, permanent desolation (Jeremiah 50–51) have never actually come to pass in history — the city was conquered and diminished, but never wiped from the map in the absolute way those prophecies describe. Whatever we make of her identity, though, her character is not in dispute: she is extravagant, idolatrous, and murderous toward God’s people, and her end is total.

That end comes with a speed that stuns everyone who profited from her. The kings and merchants of the earth, who grew rich trading in her luxuries — down to the chilling final item in the cargo list, “human beings sold as slaves” (18:13) — stand at a distance and weep, not from grief for her but from fear for themselves, watching the smoke of her burning and crying, “In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!” (18:17). It is a picture of everything the world builds its confidence on, gone in the time it takes a fire to burn. And in the middle of that judgment comes a call meant not for the mourners but for God’s own people still caught inside her walls: “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins” (18:4) — the same appeal, almost word for word, that Jeremiah gave Israel about the first Babylon

centuries earlier (Jeremiah 51:45). Every generation, it seems, needs to hear this same warning: whatever system currently defines wealth, comfort, and status is not a safe place to plant our loyalty.

One detail worth pausing on: those who worship the beast in these final chapters are described as people “whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world” (17:8). This isn’t incidental language — the same phrase appears earlier of the redeemed (13:8) and later of those spared the lake of fire (20:15; 21:27). Names fixed before the world began, on both sides of the ledger, is a hard truth to sit with, but it is meant as comfort rather than anxiety for believers: our security was never dependent on our own steadiness. It was settled before there was a world to be unsteady in.

As severe as Babylon’s judgment is, it is still only a shadow of what’s coming next. Everything in these two chapters — the smoke, the mourning, the finality — is a preview, on a civic scale, of the lake of fire that awaits the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, and everyone who took their mark. Babylon falls in an hour. What follows her is forever. And for those who belong to Christ, John gives us the only answer that actually matters here: “Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

PART FOUR — THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS

Chapter Fifteen — The Rider on the White Horse

Revelation 19

Where the mourners in chapter 18 watched Babylon burn in shock, heaven responds to the same event with unrestrained praise: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments” (19:1–2). The martyrs whose cry for vindication we first heard from beneath the altar in the fifth seal finally get their answer — God has avenged their blood. Into that celebration comes an announcement of “the wedding supper of the Lamb,” and His bride, “given fine linen, bright and clean,” which John tells us plainly represents “the righteous acts of God’s holy people” (19:8). The bride here is not the church in some vague sense, but — as Revelation itself will clarify two chapters later — the New Jerusalem, the city coming down from heaven. Israel and the church alike are guests at that supper, not competitors for the title; the invitation is simply “blessed are those who are invited” (19:9), with no distinction of nation or era among those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book.

Overwhelmed by all he has seen, John falls at the feet of the angel showing him these things — and is stopped immediately: “Don’t do that! Worship God!” (19:10). It is a small moment easily passed over, but it says something large: even the most magnificent created being in this book, however dazzling its appearance, is only a fellow servant. Worship belongs to God alone, and John, to his credit, needed the correction only once — later, in the final chapter, he nearly makes the same mistake again (22:8–9), a reminder that even an apostle caught up in visions of heaven can momentarily lose track of who deserves his worship.

Then heaven opens, and Christ Himself appears — not as the Lamb who was slain, but as the rider on the white horse, eyes like blazing fire, many crowns on His head, robe dipped in blood, His name “the Word of God.” Every detail recalls the glorified figure of chapter 1, now riding out to finish what that first vision promised. He is followed by the armies of heaven, and He needs no help doing what comes next: the beast and the false prophet are seized and thrown alive into the lake of burning sulfur, and their armies are struck down by the sword from His mouth alone. There is, notably, barely a battle. Whatever forces the world assembles against the King of kings, this is not a contest of strength — it never was.

Chapter Sixteen — Bound for a Thousand Years

Revelation 20

An angel — not Christ Himself, simply an angel with a key and a chain — seizes “the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan,” and binds him in the abyss for a thousand years, sealed in so that he can deceive the nations no longer. Some read this binding as already underway, a present, partial restraint being worked out through the church age. We find that reading hard to square with the language actually used here — not merely bound, but locked and sealed, explicitly to stop him from deceiving the nations, a total silencing rather than a partial one. It reads more naturally as a future event, still ahead of us, and with it, a still-future thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth.

During that reign, John sees thrones, and those seated on them — resurrected believers who refused the mark of the beast even at the cost of their lives — reign with Christ as priests, sharing in what Revelation calls “the first resurrection.” The rest of the dead do not rise until the thousand years are complete. When they finally end, Satan is released once more, and — in a detail that should sober anyone tempted toward optimism about human nature — he has no trouble at all finding an army willing to follow him, “as numerous as the sands of the seashore,” after a thousand years living under Christ’s own visible reign. It is a stark verdict on what unbelief actually is: not simply ignorance of the truth, but active resistance to it, impervious even to thousand-year proximity to the King Himself. God ends the rebellion the same way He ended Elijah’s contest with the prophets of Baal — fire from heaven — and Satan finally joins the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire, “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (20:10).

Then comes the last judgment: a great white throne, so overwhelming that heaven and earth themselves flee from it. Every remaining soul who has ever died stands before it, judged by books recording their own deeds — and every one of them found wanting, because that was never going to be enough. The only question that finally matters is the one asked of every name: is it “found written in the book of life” (20:15)? Those recorded there are secure not because their deeds passed inspection, but because they never needed to. Everyone else joins death and Hades themselves in the lake of fire — a second death, John calls it, for those who never accepted the first and only remedy for the first one.

Chapter Seventeen — Behold, I Am Making Everything New

Revelation 21

Once the old order flees from God’s throne, John sees what replaces it: “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (21:1). And with it, a new Jerusalem descending like a bride prepared for her husband — the same bride we met at the wedding supper in chapter 19, now finally arriving. God’s own voice announces what has changed: “He will dwell with them... and he will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (21:3–4). The very thing every believer since Eden has waited for — an unbroken, unhidden nearness to God — finally arrives, and it arrives permanently.

The city itself is described with almost extravagant detail: twelve gates bearing the names of Israel’s tribes, twelve foundations bearing the names of the apostles — Israel and the church both represented, neither erased in favor of the other. It is a perfect cube, walls of jasper, streets of gold clear as glass, gates each a single pearl. There is no temple in it, “because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (21:22) — the entire city has become, in effect, the holy of holies, the place of God’s unveiled presence, open to everyone whose name is written in the Lamb’s book of life. And there is no night, because there is no longer any need for the sun: “the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (21:23). Every image in this chapter answers a wound from earlier in Scripture — the closed garden of Eden, the veiled holy of holies, the long darkness of exile — with its permanent undoing.

Chapter Eighteen — Come, Lord Jesus

Revelation 22

The last chapter opens with a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God, lined by a tree of life bearing fruit every month, its leaves “for the healing of the nations” (22:2) — Eden’s tree, planted once at the beginning of everything and denied to Adam and Eve after the fall, finally accessible again, without a flaming sword barring the way. “No longer will there be any curse” (22:3). The whole book, and in a real sense the whole Bible, has been moving toward this undoing of that first, ancient loss.

What follows are warnings — against worshipping any messenger short of God Himself, against adding to or taking away from the words of this prophecy — and a repeated promise that what has been shown is trustworthy and near: “Behold, I am coming soon” (22:7, 12, 20). We said at the start of this book that these timing words should not be read as a failed date-setting exercise. Now, at the very close, we can say why they matter: John was not given this revelation to satisfy curiosity about a calendar. He was given it so that every generation of readers since could hold the same hope he held — that the one who says “I am coming soon” means exactly what He says, whether that day is near to us by the calendar or not.

The book’s final invitation is thrown open as wide as it can go: “Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life” (22:17). No requirement, no fine print — only an open door and a standing invitation, all the way to the last page of Scripture. And so the whole Bible, which began with God walking in a garden with the man and woman He had made, closes with His people gathered

around a river and a tree, in a city where He dwells with them openly and forever. John's last recorded words are the only fitting response to everything this book has shown us: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

Conclusion

Revelation does not end the way most readers expect a book about judgment to end. It ends with an invitation, open to anyone thirsty enough to walk through the door. The dragon is bound, the beasts are destroyed, Babylon has fallen — but the last word given to the reader is not a warning. It is a welcome.

That has been the shape of this whole book from its first chapter to its last: fearsome vision after fearsome vision, and in the middle of every one of them, a God who is still reaching for His people. The seven churches, however flawed, are never abandoned. The martyrs, however forgotten by the world, are never overlooked by heaven. The nations, however set in their rebellion, are still offered the eternal gospel before the end comes. Revelation is a hard book, but it was never written to leave us afraid. It was written, as its very first verse says, to unveil Jesus Christ — and everything unveiled about Him in these pages points the same direction: He is worthy, He is coming, and He will not fail to finish what He has begun.

A Final Word to Close This Series

This volume completes a project that began with a single word: “In the beginning.” Across twenty-seven volumes and every book of the Bible, we have tried to do one thing consistently — sit with the text long enough to let it speak, book by book, one daily passage at a time, the same way this series began as daily Quiet Time reflections shared among friends and Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in Dallas, long before it was ever a series of books at all.

We have not tried to answer every hard question these sixty-six books raise. We have tried, instead, to model what it looks like to keep reading anyway — through genealogies and lament, through law and prophecy, through the puzzling and the plain, all the way to this last, strange, hope-filled book. If this series has done anything worth doing, it is this: it has walked the whole way from the garden that was lost to the city that will never be shaken, and it has tried to show, one volume at a time, that the same God who opened this story is the one who closes it.

Thank you for reading this far — whether you began with us in Genesis or joined us somewhere along the way. Come, Lord Jesus.

Appendix — Daily Bible Reading Plan

This reading plan is reprinted in every volume of the series. This volume's six reading days are shaded below.

January

1/10 Genesis 1-3	1/11 Genesis 4-7
1/12 Genesis 8-11	1/13 Genesis 12-15
1/14 Genesis 16-18	1/15 Genesis 19-21
1/16 Genesis 22-24	1/17 Genesis 25-26
1/18 Genesis 27-29	1/19 Genesis 30-31
1/20 Genesis 32-34	1/21 Genesis 35-37
1/22 Genesis 38-40	1/23 Genesis 41-42
1/24 Genesis 43-45	1/25 Genesis 46-47
1/26 Genesis 48-50	1/27 Exodus 1-3
1/28 Exodus 4-6	1/29 Exodus 7-9
1/30 Exodus 10-12	1/31 Exodus 13-15

February

2/1 Exodus 16-18	2/2 Exodus 19-21
2/3 Exodus 22-24	2/4 Exodus 25-27
2/5 Exodus 28-29	2/6 Exodus 30-32
2/7 Exodus 33-35	2/8 Exodus 36-38
2/9 Exodus 39-40	2/10 Leviticus 1-4
2/11 Leviticus 5-7	2/12 Leviticus 8-10
2/13 Leviticus 11-13	2/14 Leviticus 14-15
2/15 Leviticus 16-18	2/16 Leviticus 19-21
2/17 Leviticus 22-23	2/18 Leviticus 24-25
2/19 Leviticus 26-27	2/20 Numbers 1-2
2/21 Numbers 3-4	2/22 Numbers 5-6
2/23 Numbers 7	2/24 Numbers 8-10
2/25 Numbers 11-13	2/26 Numbers 14-15
2/27 Numbers 16-17	2/28 Numbers 18-20

March

3/1 Numbers 21-22	3/2 Numbers 23-25
3/3 Numbers 26-27	3/4 Numbers 28-30
3/5 Numbers 31-32	3/6 Numbers 33-34
3/7 Numbers 35-36	3/8 Deuteronomy 1-2
3/9 Deuteronomy 3-4	3/10 Deuteronomy 5-7

3/11 Deuteronomy 8-10	3/12 Deuteronomy 11-13
3/13 Deuteronomy 14-16	3/14 Deuteronomy 17-20
3/15 Deuteronomy 21-23	3/16 Deuteronomy 24-27
3/17 Deuteronomy 28-29	3/18 Deuteronomy 30-31
3/19 Deuteronomy 32-34	3/20 Joshua 1-4
3/21 Joshua 5-8	3/22 Joshua 9-11
3/23 Joshua 12-15	3/24 Joshua 16-18
3/25 Joshua 19-21	3/26 Joshua 22-24
3/27 Judges 1-2	3/28 Judges 3-5
3/29 Judges 6-7	3/30 Judges 8-9
3/31 Judges 10-12	

April

4/1 Judges 13-15	4/2 Judges 16-18
4/3 Judges 19-21	4/4 Ruth 1-4
4/5 1 Samuel 1-3	4/6 1 Samuel 4-8
4/7 1 Samuel 9-12	4/8 1 Samuel 13-14
4/9 1 Samuel 15-17	4/10 1 Samuel 18-20
4/11 1 Samuel 21-24	4/12 1 Samuel 25-27
4/13 1 Samuel 28-31	4/14 2 Samuel 1-3
4/15 2 Samuel 4-7	4/16 2 Samuel 8-12
4/17 2 Samuel 13-15	4/18 2 Samuel 16-18
4/19 2 Samuel 19-21	4/20 2 Samuel 22-24
4/21 1 Kings 1-2	4/22 1 Kings 3-5
4/23 1 Kings 6-7	4/24 1 Kings 8-9
4/25 1 Kings 10-11	4/26 1 Kings 12-14
4/27 1 Kings 15-17	4/28 1 Kings 18-20
4/29 1 Kings 21-22	4/30 2 Kings 1-3

May

5/1 2 Kings 4-5	5/2 2 Kings 6-8
5/3 2 Kings 9-11	5/4 2 Kings 12-14
5/5 2 Kings 15-17	5/6 2 Kings 18-19
5/7 2 Kings 20-22	5/8 2 Kings 23-25
5/9 1 Chronicles 1-2	5/10 1 Chronicles 3-5
5/11 1 Chronicles 6	5/12 1 Chronicles 7-8
5/13 1 Chronicles 9-11	5/14 1 Chronicles 12-14
5/15 1 Chronicles 15-17	5/16 1 Chronicles 18-21
5/17 1 Chronicles 22-24	5/18 1 Chronicles 25-27
5/19 1 Chronicles 28-2 Chronicles 1	5/20 2 Chronicles 2-5
5/21 2 Chronicles 6-8	5/22 2 Chronicles 9-12

5/23 2 Chronicles 13-17	5/24 2 Chronicles 18-20
5/25 2 Chronicles 21-24	5/26 2 Chronicles 25-27
5/27 2 Chronicles 28-31	5/28 2 Chronicles 32-34
5/29 2 Chronicles 35-36	5/30 Ezra 1-3
5/31 Ezra 4-7	

June

6/1 Ezra 8-10	6/2 Nehemiah 1-3
6/3 Nehemiah 4-6	6/4 Nehemiah 7
6/5 Nehemiah 8-9	6/6 Nehemiah 10-11
6/7 Nehemiah 12-13	6/8 Esther 1-5
6/9 Esther 6-10	6/10 Job 1-4
6/11 Job 5-7	6/12 Job 8-10
6/13 Job 11-13	6/14 Job 14-16
6/15 Job 17-20	6/16 Job 21-23
6/17 Job 24-28	6/18 Job 29-31
6/19 Job 32-34	6/20 Job 35-37
6/21 Job 38-39	6/22 Job 40-42
6/23 Psalms 1-8	6/24 Psalms 9-16
6/25 Psalms 17-20	6/26 Psalms 21-25
6/27 Psalms 26-31	6/28 Psalms 32-35
6/29 Psalms 36-39	6/30 Psalms 40-45

July

7/1 Psalms 46-50	7/2 Psalms 51-57
7/3 Psalms 58-65	7/4 Psalms 66-69
7/5 Psalms 70-73	7/6 Psalms 74-77
7/7 Psalms 78-79	7/8 Psalms 80-85
7/9 Psalms 86-89	7/10 Psalms 90-95
7/11 Psalms 96-102	7/12 Psalms 103-105
7/13 Psalms 106-107	7/14 Psalms 108-114
7/15 Psalms 115-118	7/16 Psalms 119:1-88
7/17 Psalms 119:89-176	7/18 Psalms 120-132
7/19 Psalms 133-139	7/20 Psalms 140-145
7/21 Psalms 146-150	7/22 Proverbs 1-3
7/23 Proverbs 4-6	7/24 Proverbs 7-9
7/25 Proverbs 10-12	7/26 Proverbs 13-15
7/27 Proverbs 16-18	7/28 Proverbs 19-21
7/29 Proverbs 22-23	7/30 Proverbs 24-26
7/31 Proverbs 27-29	

August

8/1 Proverbs 30-31	8/2 Ecclesiastes 1-4
8/3 Ecclesiastes 5-8	8/4 Ecclesiastes 9-12
8/5 Song of Songs 1-8	8/6 Isaiah 1-4
8/7 Isaiah 5-8	8/8 Isaiah 9-12
8/9 Isaiah 13-17	8/10 Isaiah 18-22
8/11 Isaiah 23-27	8/12 Isaiah 28-30
8/13 Isaiah 31-35	8/14 Isaiah 36-41
8/15 Isaiah 42-44	8/16 Isaiah 45-48
8/17 Isaiah 49-53	8/18 Isaiah 54-58
8/19 Isaiah 59-63	8/20 Isaiah 64-66
8/21 Jeremiah 1-3	8/22 Jeremiah 4-6
8/23 Jeremiah 7-9	8/24 Jeremiah 10-13
8/25 Jeremiah 14-17	8/26 Jeremiah 18-22
8/27 Jeremiah 23-25	8/28 Jeremiah 26-29
8/29 Jeremiah 30-31	8/30 Jeremiah 32-34
8/31 Jeremiah 35-37	

September

9/1 Jeremiah 38-41	9/2 Jeremiah 42-45
9/3 Jeremiah 46-48	9/4 Jeremiah 49-50
9/5 Jeremiah 51-52	9/6 Lamentations 1:1-3:36
9/7 Lamentations 3:37-5:22	9/8 Ezekiel 1-4
9/9 Ezekiel 5-8	9/10 Ezekiel 9-12
9/11 Ezekiel 13-15	9/12 Ezekiel 16-17
9/13 Ezekiel 18-20	9/14 Ezekiel 21-22
9/15 Ezekiel 23-24	9/16 Ezekiel 25-27
9/17 Ezekiel 28-30	9/18 Ezekiel 31-33
9/19 Ezekiel 34-36	9/20 Ezekiel 37-39
9/21 Ezekiel 40-42	9/22 Ezekiel 43-45
9/23 Ezekiel 46-48	9/24 Daniel 1-3
9/25 Daniel 4-6	9/26 Daniel 7-9
9/27 Daniel 10-12	9/28 Hosea 1-7
9/29 Hosea 8-14	9/30 Joel 1-3

October

10/1 Amos 1-5	10/2 Amos 6-9
10/3 Obadiah 1, Jonah 1-4	10/4 Micah 1-7
10/5 Nahum 1-3	10/6 Habakkuk 1-3, Zephaniah 1-3
10/7 Haggai 1-2	10/8 Zechariah 1-7

10/9 Zechariah 8-14	10/10 Malachi 1-4
10/11 Matthew 1-4	10/12 Matthew 5-6
10/13 Matthew 7-8	10/14 Matthew 9-10
10/15 Matthew 11-12	10/16 Matthew 13-14
10/17 Matthew 15-17	10/18 Matthew 18-19
10/19 Matthew 20-21	10/20 Matthew 22-23
10/21 Matthew 24-25	10/22 Matthew 26
10/23 Matthew 27-28	10/24 Mark 1-3
10/25 Mark 4-5	10/26 Mark 6-7
10/27 Mark 8-9	10/28 Mark 10-11
10/29 Mark 12-13	10/30 Mark 14
10/31 Mark 15-16	

November

11/1 Luke 1	11/2 Luke 2-3
11/3 Luke 4-5	11/4 Luke 6-7
11/5 Luke 8-9	11/6 Luke 10-11
11/7 Luke 12-13	11/8 Luke 14-16
11/9 Luke 17-18	11/10 Luke 19-20
11/11 Luke 21-22	11/12 Luke 23-24
11/13 John 1-2	11/14 John 3-4
11/15 John 5-6	11/16 John 7-8
11/17 John 9-10	11/18 John 11-12
11/19 John 13-15	11/20 John 16-18
11/21 John 19-21	11/22 Acts 1-3
11/23 Acts 4-6	11/24 Acts 7-8
11/25 Acts 9-10	11/26 Acts 11-13
11/27 Acts 14-15	11/28 Acts 16-17
11/29 Acts 18-20	11/30 Acts 21-23

December

12/1 Acts 24-26	12/2 Acts 27-28
12/3 Romans 1-3	12/4 Romans 4-7
12/5 Romans 8-10	12/6 Romans 11-13
12/7 Romans 14-16	12/8 1 Corinthians 1-4
12/9 1 Corinthians 5-8	12/10 1 Corinthians 9-11
12/11 1 Corinthians 12-14	12/12 1 Corinthians 15-16
12/13 2 Corinthians 1-4	12/14 2 Corinthians 5-9
12/15 2 Corinthians 10-13	12/16 Galatians 1-3
12/17 Galatians 4-6	12/18 Ephesians 1-3
12/19 Ephesians 4-6	12/20 Philippians 1-4
12/21 Colossians 1-4	12/22 1 Thessalonians 1-5

12/23 2 Thessalonians 1-3	12/24 1 Timothy 1-6
12/25 2 Timothy 1-4	12/26 Titus 1-3, Philemon 1
12/27 Hebrews 1-6	12/28 Hebrews 7-10
12/29 Hebrews 11-13	12/30 James 1-5
12/31 1 Peter 1-5	

January

1/1 2 Peter 1-3	1/2 1 John 1-5
1/3 2 John 1, 3 John 1, Jude 1	1/4 Revelation 1-3
1/5 Revelation 4-8	1/6 Revelation 9-12
1/7 Revelation 13-16	1/8 Revelation 17-19
1/9 Revelation 20-22	