

EFC

November 21, 2023

Big Story. Bigger God. "All Things New"

Revelation

Good morning, English Fellowship Church. My name is Jeremy, and I'm one of the Pastors here. This morning we will conclude our series, "Big Story. Bigger God." by looking at how the book of Revelation brings the entire story to its culmination. Let me begin by giving some context in Revelation 1:1-5a,

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth."

This tells us a lot about this letter:

- The essence: the revelation of Jesus Christ
- The timeframe: what must soon take place
- The source: an angel sent by Jesus to reveal to John
- The human author: the Apostle John, one of Jesus' original Disciples
- The recipients: seven churches in existence in John's day (but also to all churches everywhere)

We also know that Revelation is a special type of Scripture called "apocalyptic literature", which means that it uses images and teachings to symbolically reveal things about the end times. Revelation is also a prophetic book, expressing to us God's will regarding current day and future realities.

Pray.

Headlines from the news:

- Police Verify a Possible Bomb Threat in the North Judicial Complex
- At Least 18 People have been Murdered in Five Massacres Committed in Colombia in 48 Hours
- Hostages deal raises hopes and fears for families
- Russian actress killed in strike while performing to troops
- Radical political change in Argentina's uncertain future

Human struggles

- Loneliness
- Criticalness and judgmentlessness
- Deteriorating physical health
- Interpersonal struggles

Self-bent hearts full of sin.

- Selfishness
- Always think of ourselves first
- Pride and arrogance
- Bitterness and unforgiveness

The cause of all this suffering, hardship, heartache, brokenness: our sin-broken relationship with God and the corruption that inevitably comes as a result.

We were created for life-giving relationship with God, created to enjoy Him and His goodness forever. But sin came in, bringing with it death and destruction and darkness of every kind. Every bad thing around and within that we have experienced; every good thing we have lost. The impact of the fall of humanity into sin is staggering.

It is into this darkness, this brokenness, this death that God promised to send a Rescuer to save us from our sin and all its consequences. He first promised this in Genesis 3:15, **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”** The seed of the woman would one day destroy the devil.

The story of the Rescuer is the central storyline of the Biblical narrative, and we have been following that storyline throughout. Revelation helps us understand just how complete and just how astoundingly majestic this restoration is.

In Revelation 21:5, God says: **“Behold, I am making all things new.”** As the story of God and His redeeming work drives to God’s intended and inevitable culmination, the view is breathtaking. Like standing on top of a towering mountain peak and looking out in wonder at the beauty of God’s creation, Revelation takes us up so we can see. And God’s renewing work is astounding indeed!

Here are some of the aspects of renewal we see when we compare Genesis 1-3 with Revelation 21-22:

- a. Heaven and earth (1:1) / New heaven and new earth (21:1)
- b. Home for man given (2:8) and lost (3:22-24) / New home given (21:9-11)
  - i. See Revelation 21-22 for an Edenlike description of the new home.
- c. The Tree of Life accessible (2:9) then out of reach (3:22-24) / Tree of Life readily accessible to God’s people (22:2, 14)
- d. The serpent comes (3:1) / The serpent is eternally removed (20:10)
- e. The serpent brings lies (3:1) / Lies will never be part of God’s kingdom (21:27)
- f. Pain and sorrow enter our experience (3:8) / Pain and sorrow removed (21:4)
- g. The curse comes upon human existence (3:16-19) / the curse is removed (22:3-4)
- h. Death enters (3:19) / Death is destroyed (20:14-15)
- i. The Redeemer is promised (3:15) / The victorious Redeemer reigns (20:1-6, 21:22-27, 22:3-5)
- j. God dwells with man (3:8), then not any longer (Genesis 3:23-24, Isaiah 59:2) / God again dwells with man (21:3)
- k. Man is driven from before the face of God (3:23, 4:16) / Man sees God’s face in glory (22:4)
- l. Adam and Eve in the first wedding (2:18-15) / Christ and the Church and the wedding feast of the Lamb (21:1-9)

- m. The first Adam reigns on earth (1:26) / The last Adam (Christ) reigns in glory (21:5)
- n. To summarize: God says, "Behold, I am making all things new." All the horrible consequences and effects of sin will be done away with and healed in the new heavens and new earth. All of the good things we lost – in our circumstances, relationships, hearts, and above all in our relationship with God, will be restored.
  - i. Pause to think about your own life.

This raises a question that we must consider: *How* does God make all things new? Because this is the storyline of all the chapters between Genesis 3 and Revelation 20. How does God make all things new?

- II. He already made new in Christ!
  - a. John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"
  - b. He took away our sin when He died on the cross. Colossians 2:13-14 "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."
  - c. He conquered death. 2 Timothy 1:10 "...our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel..."
  - d. Jesus conquered the devil: Hebrews 2:14 "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil..."
  - e. And all who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord are made new:
    - i. 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
    - ii. We have been brought from darkness to light (1 Peter 2:10), and from death to life (Ephesians 2:4-5). And God has removed our heart of stone and replaced it with a living heart, alive to Him (Ezekiel 36:26).
  - f. So, remember, brothers and sisters in Christ:
    - i. It has been finished, and you have been made new!
    - ii. The Holy Spirit is the downpayment – you are not alone, left to your own resources or strength or wisdom; God lives in you, and is at work!
    - iii. The good work God has begun, He will surely finish. (Philippians 1:6)

God has made new in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection!

- III. And, He will make *all* things new for those in Christ!
  - i. Revelation 5:9-10 "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.'"
    - ii. Revelation 19:11-16 "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a

rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

- b. Hope
  - i. Certain hope, no matter what, because it is hope in Jesus Christ, not in this world or in humanity or in yourself.
    - 1. Does this characterize your life, my brother, my sister? It is yours for the receiving. Hope, for the Lamb has overcome! Hope, for the Lamb will overcome.
  - ii. Hope is a testimony of salvation in Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 3:15 “...but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” In a world that has lost all hope, and is disappointed to find the objects of their hope to be dust in the wind or withering grass, let your hope point to the only One who can give solid hope.
  - iii. And in that solid hope in Christ, stand firm. Over and over again, Revelation repeats that it is those who remain faithful to Christ that overcome and enter into the newness of God’s eternal kingdom.
- c. For those without Christ, His return will be the darkest of days, for He will conquer all His enemies in the full wrath of God. He will judge in absolute justice, and every thought and motive of the heart will be laid bare before Him. Revelation 6:16-17 tell us that God’s enemies will call “to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’” But they will not be able to escape. Jesus is the certain, infallible, perfect hope for life, to all who love God and trust in Jesus. But He is the fiercest, wrath filled avenger of God’s holiness upon all who reject God. Today is the day of salvation! Go back to what we talked about at the beginning. All the worst headlines, all the worst personal maladies, all the worst that our own sin and the broken world and the devil have heaped upon us will be nothing compared to the hell that awaits those who reject God and choose life apart from Him. The invitation is clear: come to Jesus, He is the only Savior, and in Him is abundant life with God. This is His call to you this morning: “Come, before it’s too late.” It is an invitation. But it is not like a birthday party invitation: it is of utmost urgency. Jesus is coming soon; I plead with you, be ready! Come to Jesus, He is the only hope of the world.