

# Revelation

A COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS



The book of Revelation stirs up mixed emotions in most believers—a bit of curiosity, a little fear, and maybe some excitement. It talks about spiritual things we long to understand, like: Is there life after death? What is heaven like? How will we know when Jesus comes again? Are we in the End Times now?

Revelation records an extended heavenly vision the apostle John received from God while exiled on the island of Patmos: a revelation of things unseen through visions, symbols, promises, and warnings. But God did not give John this vision to make him afraid; *God gave John this vision to comfort him and provide assurance for his faith.*

We'll discover that same comfort and assurance for our faith as we study the book of Revelation together in this *Groundwork* podcast series, "Revelation: A Comfort for Believers." Hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney diligently examine the recurring themes of Revelation. They'll trace how Revelation reveals God's perspective, giving us a cosmic view of the chaos, injustice, evil, and pain we see in the world and then discuss the wisdom of its warnings to live faithfully in the midst of our world. Together, we'll discover the hope Revelation holds for Christians and the church today.

This six-part audio Bible study series that examines John's heavenly visions and the messages he received from Jesus Christ. We'll discuss the context of Revelation and important details that help us properly interpret and understand what we read. This accompanying ebook features a study guide for each episode, with commentary and questions for individual or group reflection, and prayerful response.

- ▶ [Seeing Jesus Christ in Heaven - Revelation 1](#)
- ▶ [Learning from the Seven Churches of Revelation - Revelation 2-3](#)
- ▶ [Worshiping Christ, the Lamb Who is Worthy - Revelation 4-5](#)
- ▶ [Heavenly Visions to Encourage Our Faith - Revelation 7-14](#)
- ▶ [A Look at the New Heaven and Earth - Revelation 21](#)
- ▶ [Encouragement as We Wait for Christ's Return - Revelation 22](#)

As believers, we wait for justice, peace, and for God's kingdom to come. Sometimes, this waiting feels fruitless and unending. At times, we might even be tempted to give up or give in to the pressures of this world. John knew what this kind of waiting felt like, and he knew what it felt like to watch evil, grief, injustice, and pain at work in the world. If you want to know what heaven will be like or find comfort in your life right now, I invite you to discover eternal hope and encouragement for faithful living in this powerful series.

*Courtney Jacob*  
Senior Producer, *Groundwork*

# Seeing Jesus Christ in Heaven

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 1](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ What comes to mind when you hear the word “apocalypse”?
- ▶ How do you feel about the book of Revelation or talking about the End Times? Are you curious? Intimidated? Frightened? Confused? How about, comforted?

In the opening of Revelation, John describes an image of Jesus Christ enthroned in heaven. It is a beautiful vision that communicates comforting truths and provides reassurance for all believers, both then and now.

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“Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega—the first letter and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Jesus is our A to Z.”

- Scott Hoezee

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

- ▶ Reflect on Scott Hoezee’s definition of *apocalypse* and the content of Revelation: “The Greek title of this book is *apokalupsis*, and...*apokalupsis* just means *revealing*—the revelation. That is why we call it Revelation in English. Apocalyptic things are not scary things. God is going to reveal good things.” Does this explanation change how you understand or feel about the book of Revelation? Why or why not?
- ▶ Reread [Revelation 1:4-8](#). Why do you think it is so important to *first* remember who God is, what he has done for us, and who we are *before* receiving the revelation John has to share with us?
- ▶ Reread [Revelation 1:17-20](#). Darrell observes that in this passage we see “the transcendence of God” and “the eminence and the intimacy of him.” Are these natures of God a common emphasis as we learn about Revelation?
- ▶ Consider Scott’s statement in segment 3 about John’s encounter with Jesus in Revelation 1:17-20: “That is just the Jesus we know and we love. All the resplendence doesn’t take away his gentleness and his grace.” Why does Jesus first want to reassure John that he is the *same Jesus* we met in the gospels, before he reveals more of himself and heaven to us?

## Related Passages for further study:

[Psalm 2](#), [Philippians 2:1-7](#), [Ezekiel 1](#), [Matthew 17:1-8](#), [John 1:4](#), [Psalm 37](#)

## Conclusion:

Through a heavenly vision, God assures John that: 1) Jesus is still the same Jesus he knew before, and 2) that Jesus is alive on the throne in heaven, and 3) that God’s kingdom is now and will be forevermore.

These truths offer us profound hope and reassure our faith, especially in the dark nights of our lives. Which of the three truths resonates most with you right now? How does picturing Jesus Christ in heaven comfort you and encourage you in this moment?

# Learning from the Seven Churches of Revelation

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 2-3](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ What do you already know about the seven churches addressed in [Revelation 2-3](#)?
- ▶ Do you think living out your Christian faith in secular culture is easy or hard? Why?

Living our Christian faith in a secular culture always demands discernment. We frequently find it difficult to discern the right course of action from the wrong one. As we'll discover in John's messages to the seven churches of Revelation, even the very first Christians struggled to get it right. Together, we'll study the heart of these messages and what they still have to say to the church today.

Listen Now ▶

“The seven letters of Revelation were written to Christians who wanted to be Jesus' followers, but were compromising their faith in order to fit in with their society.”

- Dr. Jeff Weima

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

- ▶ In what ways do you think Christians today compromise their faith in order to fit into our culture? Is there an area of your life in which you feel you may have compromised your faith this way?
- ▶ Not many of us live in a culture that sacrifices meat to idols, but the lessons on idolatry in these chapters still apply. In what ways might a Christian, or even a church, today be guilty of idolatrous compromise?
- ▶ Reflect on the “heart” of each of the messages to the seven churches, as summarized by Dr. Jeff Weima (He calls the church of Ephesus, “the church of loveless orthodoxy”; the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira, “the church of idolatrous compromise”; of Smyrna and Philadelphia, “the church of the persevering persecuted”; of Sardis, “the church of deadly complacency”; and of Laodicea, “the church of vomit and vanity”) and consider the following questions:
  - Do you feel a twinge of conviction when you reflect on any of Jesus' descriptions? Does the experience of any particular church resonate with you? Why do you think that is?
  - Which message would most closely address the current situation in your local church? Why? What do you think a sermon like this would say to your church today?

## Related Passages for further study:

[1 Corinthians 8](#), [1 Corinthians 12](#), [1 John 4:7-21](#), [Acts 15:22-35](#)

## Conclusion:

As you studied these letters to the seven churches, what encouraged you? What concerns or warnings do you take to heart? Pray through your responses to these questions and the reflections above. As you close, hear Jesus' note of grace from Revelation 3:20 again, “I am knocking at the door; I want to come in and have dinner with you.”

# Worshiping Christ, the Lamb Who is Worthy

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 4-5](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ What are your favorite literary genres? What about them speaks to you?
- ▶ What is worship? Why do we do it?

With all the news about turmoil and troubles in our world, it's easy to get discouraged. But as Christians, even in the darkest times, we can find encouragement in John's vision of heaven found in [Revelation 4-5](#). At first glance, John's visions might seem scary or fantastical, but when we look more closely, we see that John is describing heavenly worship, a reality that can comfort and assure people of faith who believe in Jesus Christ.

Listen Now ▶

"In his human nature, John has a very hard time trying to explain what is happening...God is blowing his mind with this vision."

- Darrell Delaney

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

- ▶ Have you ever been at a loss for words when you tried to describe something you saw or experienced? How did that feel? Does it help you relate to John's efforts to describe what he saw of heaven in [Revelation 4:1-11](#)?
- ▶ Reflect on Scott Hoezee's statement from segment 2, "When we read Revelation 4 and 5, we think that John is seeing the future; but it is pretty clear that he is seeing the worship in the throne room of God that is happening right now...when we worship God, we are participating in something that is already going on in heaven." What does it mean to you that when we worship we're also joining in the worship of heaven happening now?
- ▶ While reflecting on what is occurring in [Revelation 5:11-14](#), Darrell Delaney describes worship as "the appropriate response for those who remember who God is and what God has done." Does Darrell's insight change your perspective or impact your understanding of your own worship?
- ▶ Reread Scott's words from segment 3: "God is always in control. When we encounter difficult days and seasons of loss and tragedy; seasons when the powers that be in this world seem to be preeminent, we can remember: The Lamb is on the throne. Right now; that is who is really in charge of the universe." Which situations in your life does this truth give you hope for?

## Related Passages for further study:

[Philippians 1:20-21](#), [John 11:25](#), [Ephesians 6:10-18](#)

## Conclusion:

What battles in your life do you need to keep in perspective? Read [Ephesians 6:10-18](#). Which piece of spiritual armor could you put on to help you? Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and help you. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you that the Lamb is on the throne and that Christ has already won the victory. Then find a psalm, hymn, or worship song and join the heavenly beings in worship.

# Heavenly Visions to Encourage Our Faith

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 7-14](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ Have you ever received spiritual encouragement from an unexpected source? If so, when and how?
- ▶ When you hear the phrase “spiritual battle,” what comes to mind?

The middle chapters of Revelation describe John’s heavenly visions of worship and salvation. These visions are definitely otherworldly and can be intimidating and difficult to understand at first glance. But, by taking the time to study these visions, we see a perfect illustration of God’s cosmic perspective. When we face spiritual battles in our lives, this cosmic perspective in John’s visions help us see our place in the larger narrative of God’s battle against evil, a battle he has already won through Jesus Christ.

[Listen Now ▶](#)

“The people who are in God’s new creation are from every tribe, language, and nation. John piles up every word he can find in the Greek language to refer to a diversity of people.”

- Scott Hoezee

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

- ▶ Reflect on Scott Hoezee’s statement from segment 1: “The good things of this world are not going to be scrapped; so all the ethnicities with all their distinctive and wonderful characteristics are all going to be part of God’s new people.” Do you find this comforting, why or why not? What does it mean to you that the various markers of culture, like language, food, clothing, and customs will be redeemed and still present “around the throne worshipping God”? What cultural experiences would you be glad to still see in heaven?
- ▶ Do you find the heavenly perspective of Christ’s birth and God’s battle with evil in [Revelation 12:1-9](#) comforting or encouraging? Why or why not?
- ▶ What is your testimony? What is your contribution to the song sung by those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb ([Revelation 14:3](#))?
- ▶ In segment 3, Darrell Delaney explains, “Good trouble is what happens when you stand up for righteousness; good trouble is what happens when you stand up for truth; when you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly.” Can you think of other examples of “good trouble”? In your daily life, how do you practice “doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God”?

### Related Passages for further study:

[Genesis 3:14-15](#), [Luke 2:1-21](#), [Luke 10:17-20](#), [Ephesians 6:10-17](#), [John 16:33](#), [Philippians 1:21](#), [Micah 6:8](#), [Matthew 5:1-11](#)

### Conclusion:

What spiritual battles have you fought in your life? Reflect on these battles in light of the three visions we’ve studied in this episode: the Great Multitude in [Revelation 7](#), the Woman and the Dragon in [Revelation 12](#), and the Lamb and the 144,000 in [Revelation 14](#). How do you think these particular visions encouraged John, exiled to Patmos for his faith? How might these visions encourage us today?

# A Look at the New Heaven and Earth

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 21](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ How do you picture heaven? Where do you think your knowledge and ideas about heaven come from?
- ▶ How is heaven usually depicted in the larger culture?

The idea of heaven piques the interest of Christians and non-Christians alike. We're curious about what happens after death, but sometimes the unknown about the afterlife leads to uncertainty and fear. Thankfully, John's visions give us a glimpse of the new heaven and earth, and what we have to look forward to. His words offer Christians today eternal hope and encouragement for faithfully living our lives right now.

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“God is hitting the refresh button. He is revitalizing. He is not...scraping the old heaven and earth...no, he is actually going to redeem and restore the heaven and earth we have now.”

- Darrell Delaney

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

- ▶ Describe the difference between making *new things* and making *all things* new like Jesus says he will do in [Revelation 21:5](#). Do you have relationships you want to see renewed in heaven?
- ▶ In segment 2, Scott Hoeszee and Darrell Delaney discuss the symbolism of [Revelation 21:1](#) and [Revelation 21:25](#). Like the sea and the night produced chaos, sin, and fear for the ancient Israelites because they threatened their ability to flourish, what threats to human flourishing exist in your life or culture? How do you feel when you hear the message of Revelation 21, that these threats will one day no longer exist in the new heaven and earth?
- ▶ In segment 3, Scott and Darrell discuss what the truths of Revelation 21 mean for how we live now. What does it mean to you that the way you live now has the potential to live on eternally as part of God's kingdom?
- ▶ In what ways do you think you are called to be a minister of reconciliation and an agent of transformation, bringing about God's kingdom in the here and now?

### Related Passages for further study:

[Genesis 1:1](#), [Genesis 3:22-24](#), [1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#), [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#), [John 1:14](#), [John 2:20-22](#), [1 Peter 2:4-10](#), [2 Peter 3:10-14](#)

### Conclusion:

Scott and Darrell identified five truths [Revelation 21](#) communicates to us about the new heaven and new earth: 1) Heaven comes down. 2) God will renew the way we interact with each other. 3) There will be no more cause for sorrow and sadness; things that threaten human flourishing won't exist. 4) God will dwell among us. Everything, everywhere, will be the temple, where God meets his people. 5) Things our generations and cultures create will be redeemed and part of the splendor recorded in [verse 24](#). What we do now has the potential to live on eternally in God's kingdom.

Did any of the five truths surprise you? Comfort you? What do you look forward to in heaven?

# Encouragement as We Wait for Christ's Return

Primary Scripture Texts: [Revelation 22](#)

## Awareness:

Before listening, reflect:

- ▶ Do you find it easy or hard to wait for Christ's return? Why?
- ▶ What are you most looking forward to when Christ returns?

As believers, we wait for justice, peace, and for God's kingdom to come. Sometimes, that waiting can feel fruitless and unending. John knew what this kind of waiting felt like and he closes Revelation with a vision of encouragement for the faithful. His vision of heaven reminds us that God is still in control and that Christ has already won the final victory. Our job is to simply remain faithful and continue doing the work to which God calls us.

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“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ”

- Revelation 22:20

## Reflection:

After listening, consider:

▶ In segment 1, Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee discuss the parallels between [Revelation 22:1-7](#) and [Genesis 2:8-14](#). Why are these connections meaningful? What do they teach us about God's character?

▶ Reflecting on [Revelation 22:12-15](#), Scott says, “What should you be doing when Jesus comes back? Your duty...Being faithful to your call.” What does it mean for you to be faithful to your call? How should you be filling your time now on earth?

▶ Read [Revelation 22](#) again. This closing chapter of the Bible once again emphasizes God's engagement with his creation, that God is in control and giving hope to believers. How does this knowledge help you remain faithful when you face situations or circumstances that seem hopeless? How might this knowledge affect the way you act or the things you prioritize this week?

### Related Passages for further study:

[Genesis 2:8-14](#), [Romans 8:18-25](#), [Psalm 37](#), [Matthew 24](#), [Hebrews 1:1-3](#), [Matthew 16:24-27](#), [Hebrews 10:19-39](#)

### Conclusion:

Review the four ways the book of Revelation encourages and strengthens our faith that Scott and Darrell discussed in this episode.

- The way the world is now is not how it will ultimately be; there will be a new heaven and a new earth.
- God calls us to persevere in our faith and not give up on doing good, but to continue to be faithful.
- Christ has already won the victory. We're waiting for the fullness of his *shalom*.
- Heavenly worship will be diverse and beautiful, and it is our natural response to eternal life in God's presence.

What points from Scott and Darrell's review of Revelation are particularly encouraging to your faith right now? Why? How might John's visions help you wait faithfully for the fullness of God's kingdom?



# Recommended Resources for Further Study

## Books

Nathan L. K. Bierma, *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth: Connecting This Life to the Next*, P & R Publishing, 2005.

Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *The Sermons to the Seven Churches of Revelation: A Commentary and Guide*, Baker Academic, 2021.

## Bible Study

*Discover Revelation 1-3* and *Discover Revelation 4-22*, an in-depth, group Bible study published by Global Coffee Break.

## Resources from Reframe Ministries

*Encountering Jesus*, a 30-day devotional series from *Today* by Jim Poelman.

*The 4 Last Things*, a Bible teaching podcast series from *Groundwork*.

*1 Peter & Christian Suffering*, a Bible teaching podcast series from *Groundwork*.



# GROUNDWORK

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*GroundworkOnline.com*

*Groundwork* is a production of:



**ReFrame  
Ministries**

*God's Story. Today's Media.*

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© 2023

Published by ReFrame Media

Content by Courtney Jacob  
Edited by Christopher Hunt and Rachel Syens  
Design and Layout by Five Q

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