



The Real Thing: A Series in Revelation 1/11

John Bodily – 14th June 2026 ([watch talk here](#))

John kicked off our series of Revelation with an overview of the book as a whole. He addressed some questions like:

Who?	Revelation is widely believed to have been written by Jesus' disciple, John.
Where?	Written on Patmos where John was believed to have been exiled.
When?	End of the first century during persecution of church in the reign of Domitian

A couple of key ideas John mentioned included:

- The words 'apocalypse' and 'revelation' are very closely linked; the word revelation being a translation of the Greek word 'apokalypsis' which doesn't mean '*the end of the world*' but means '*to reveal or uncover*'.
- He likened the book of Revelation to a restaurant with an open kitchen allowing us to see behind the scenes 'into the kitchen'. In a similar way Revelation opens the shutters and gives us a glimpse of the spiritual realm – of what is REAL revealing or uncovering the invisible spiritual REALITIES parallel to the physical world and life that we experience.

John presented five principles to guide us as we journey through Revelation:

1. It's all about Jesus

- Revelation 1:1 tells us this book is first and foremost a revelation of Jesus, depicted several times in the text as the slain lamb - vulnerable, fragile, physically weak, yet able to overcome and victorious (Revelation 5). We are encouraged to read the text through this lens and see Jesus overcoming through sacrifice as a model for how we as believers are called to live and can overcome adversity.
- 'Apart from his role in the final battle, the only way Christ appears from here on in the narrative is as the slain Lamb; this is how his followers are expected to triumph as well.' (Gordon Fee/Douglas Stewart)

2. The symbols are symbols

- Revelation (and other parts of the Bible) are written in an apocalyptic style that would have been familiar to its original readers as a common style at the time.
- Many of the symbols were taken from the Old Testament (e.g. the Lamb slain, the Lion of Judah, the rider on the white horse).
- These symbols are viewed as referring both to **the past** (the time when it is written) and the **future** (beyond then).
- Also, many scholars view the symbols as being both specific and generic:
 - **Specific** to events of the time (e.g. the Beast at the time referring to Rome when the emperor Domitian demanded worship from the people of the empire); and
 - **Generic** – pointing beyond a specific event of the time towards future times (e.g. the Beast as representing future oppressive regimes that demand allegiance and suppress Christians).



3. Written for us, but not to us

- Revelation was written primarily as a letter to 1st century Christians who were enduring persecution using language that was immediately meaningful to them.
- However, the symbolism does on some level reflect the circumstances we experience in this current age and helps us to see the spiritual dynamic going on around us throughout history.

4. Zoom out / Zoom in / Press in

As with the rest of the Bible, Revelation should be read in context. Revelation can be particularly tricky and is best read chunk by chunk rather than line by line.

As we work through Revelation each week, we will

- **Zoom out** – to see how a passage fits in with the overarching thrust of Revelation and God's plan
 - **Zoom in** – examine the passage and ask:
 - What is the specific thing going on?
 - What would this have said to the original audience?
 - What was the insight/warning/exhortation within it?
 - **Press in** – What challenge or encouragement does the passage offer us today?
5. **Be encouraged** – Ultimately this book reveals a battle between God and Satan where there really is no competition. Jesus wins. We can take encouragement that Jesus, the lamb, has already and will overcome again!

Reflect and discuss

1. Share your personal experience of Revelation e.g. is it intriguing or intimidating, encouraging or scary?
2. Do any of the five principles offer you a new way of looking at Revelation?
3. What are you hoping to gain from this series?

Share and pray

Consider the invisible spiritual reality that Revelation points us to. What do you need Jesus, the victorious one, to help you overcome in your present life? Spend some time praying for one another.