1.This is the last in our 6 session broad brush stroke through the book of Revelation.

2. Q

3. The big theme:

4. The layout:

5. In chapter 17-18 the John speaks about the prostitute deceiving people. It is a clear reference to the goddess Roma who is pictured on Roman coins sitting on the 7 hills of Rome. It is a clear condemnation of the materialism of the Empire and of Asia minor. Using people and loving things.

Then in Chapter 19 we have the clearest of victory visions. Jesus returning to Earth to do battle with the dragon and his enemies. But he does battle the same way he is pictured as doing battle every other time: as the slaughtered lamb. Through sacrificial love. He is wearing a rope dipped in his own blood. His only weapon the sword in his mouth. He wins the victory through truth and love.

Yes celebration; worship of the lamb upon the throne; hope that one day the enemies of God and people will be defeated.

**6-9 Chapter 20**

10. Now we get to chapter 20. Plenty of debate about what all this means:

11. 3 quick positions and questions each has to answer.

Pre-millennial – will happen after Jesus return. Peace prosperity. No more demonic influence. Litteral 1000 years.

Q – Why do premillennialists not believe that the devil is defeated at the cross? Why do they take a whole range of promised reserved for New Heaven and apply them to the millennium? Is there anywhere else in scripture that describes a resurrection only for martyrs?

Post- millennial – has and is happening. 1000 years is symbolic of a long time. Believe the world is getting better and better until Jesus returns.

Q. Why do bad things continue to happen? Why does it not appear the devil is locked up?

Was popular pre WW1.

Amillennial – We are in the symbolic 1000 years. The purpose of the devil being locked away is so that he cannot deceive the nations. They take this to mean that the nations are gentiles. Acts: the gospel spread to Jews, Samaritans then on to gentiles.

Amillennials would argue that the martyrs are not resurrected but ruling with Christ from heaven. The first resurrection they argue is the resurrection of Jesus. This is in part at least describing a heavenly reality.

Q – Why take a symbolic view of 1000years? Why is it then placed after Revelation 19 if it is not meant to be for after Jesus returns?

You can place it wherever you wish if you are trying to figure it all out but here is the important thing. God wins! I don’t really know why the devil is released again “for a week” literal of meaning a short time or a maybe it means for a limited amount. Just maybe it is in case anyone held any vestige of sympathy for the dragon.

No! he is evil and unredeemable.

He will go to destruction.

And so it seems will people who have followed in his ways and who refuse to repent.

12. Now this of course leads us to conversations about hell and judgement. Again 3 basic positions:

1. Humans are like rocks with nerve ending who are supernaturally kept alive to be tormented forever because they have done evil and not repented. Hell is a torture chamber.

Q. Does this sound like a loving God? What is your biblical evidence? Does tormented forever mean kept alive to be tormented or the consequences are eternal? Hell is a body and soul crematorium.

2. Humans are like straw that burns up and is extinguished.

Maybe there is a point where some people have become so beast like, so inhuman, so unrepentant that they are consigned to an extinguishing fire?

Q. What to do with passages that describe gnashing of teeth etc.?

3. Humans are like gold and the fire is there to purify them. Hell is real but ultimately empty. God so loved the whole world….more than 76 verses that describe God saving the whole world.

Q. What is your evidence to discount the first two?

Again you have to look at the evidence and decide for yourself.

13. Importantly there is no coming back for the dragon and the beast. The beastly abusive empires and demonic being behind them have been extinguished from existence.

14. Chapter 20 contains the 5th of the 7 beatitudes in Revelation.

*Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection; the second death has no power over them but they will be priests of God and of Christ and reign with Him for a thousand years*. [the first death is one’s physical death; the second death is the failure to win eternal life.]

**15-19 Chapter 21**

20. I present to you the New Heaven and New Earth. This is the culmination of all of history.

In the first 2 chapters of the Bible we have a paradise in a garden. In the last 2 chapters of the Bible we have paradise restored, this time a city in a garden.

There are some really important passages here: God’s dwelling place is with his people. This is the whole of redemptive history. God wanting to dwell with his people; in Eden; in the tabernacle; in the temple; in the hearts of the faithful; here on earth.

God coming to earth. Yes people go to heaven when the die. But here we have a description of life after life after death. This is the resurrection and new resurrected bodies that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15.

21. No more tears; no more pain; no more suffering. There’s plenty of room for everyone; it is the most beautiful place ever imaginable; it is completely sustained by God and his presence.

There is no ocean because the ocean is understood as the place of chaos and evil monsters.

And either the evil have come to a place where there is so little humanity left that they go to the lake of fire or those with ill intent find themselves locked out, maybe only until they repent?

Verse 24 the Kings of the nations bring their splendour into it? Are these the same kings who went to war with the lamb? Did they repent????

**22-26 Chapter 22**

27. And there the sustaining the everlasting life is the tree of life itself. A new crop every month. An eternal spring of living water.

The curse is broken! – Joy to the World

So it is with excitement. It is with anticipation that I can pray, ‘Come Lord Jesus!” Come put the world right. Come deal with sickness and pain, Come live with your people.

Beatitudes 6 and 7 say

28. I am coming soon! Blessed are those who keep the prophetic message of this book.

And

29. Blessed are those who will have washed their robes clean, so that they will have the right to feed on the tree of life and can come through the gates into the city.

Blessed are those who have been washed clean by Jesus blood.

So here is our take:

30. The book of Revelation is a 1st Century revelation of Jesus; against the Roman Empire; to the church(es); for the purpose of worship; encouragement and hope.

It is written to a church under persecution.

So let me encourage you the church of Jesus:

This is the same Jesus we see revealed in the gospels. Not a different sort.

Though this world is full of pain and violence and natural and supernatural disasters and wars and diseases.

He wins the victory of evil by self-sacrificing love. We are to recognise that God is God and far above the things of this world and worthy of our worship.

We are encouraged to stay true to him; not be seduced by the money or materialism of this age; or engage in the power, control or violence of this age, or the illicit sex and pleasures of this age. We are to remain faithful by abstaining from worship (or any practices) that use people and love things. Even when the Empire itself puts incredible pressure on us.

Instead, we are to follow the example of Christ, the lamb in sacrificial love. Overcoming the enemy by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.

We are to recognise that behind the evil governments of this world is spiritual evil, a dragon. That dragon and the beastly governments will eventually be defeated and thrown into the lake of fire, destroyed forever.

So hold on, because Jesus is coming back to claim his throne and live with his people on this re-created earth with no more tears, no more pain. Everlasting life!

That is why Jesus came at Christmas. That is why the angels proclaim good news – peace on earth good news to all!

So hold when it is painful.

Lift your hearts in worship.

Be encouraged God has a plan.

There is hope he is coming back again!

31. Reflect