

# REVELATION

Seeing, Knowing and Serving Jesus Christ  
Today at the Edge of History

Volume 0, Number 1

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.  
- Jesus (Revelation 3:20)

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## An Invitation to The Party

What a privilege it is to be pastor of a church that has put such a high priority on teaching, knowing, sharing and growing in God's Word.

This year, leading up to and out of Easter 2015, we are going to be studying and meditating together through one of the most challenging books of the bible: Revelation. My

continuing preparation for this series of messages, personal reflections and group studies has been exhilarating, and I believe our Lord has many important things to say to us through this part of His Word. I'm glad you are considering being a part of this adventure here at Covenant.

Perhaps the most well known verse in the Book of Revelation is 3:20 (see above). Many people have used these verses effectively to help encourage yet-to-believe friends to respond to Jesus Christ in faith, open the door of their hearts and let Jesus come into their lives with His saving love and power. This is wonderful, but it is interesting to note that these words are part of a letter written to a CHURCH, to BELIEVERS in the city of Laodicea. The implication is that even a church full of Christians can leave the Risen Savior on the outside of its day to day activities and decisions. How about

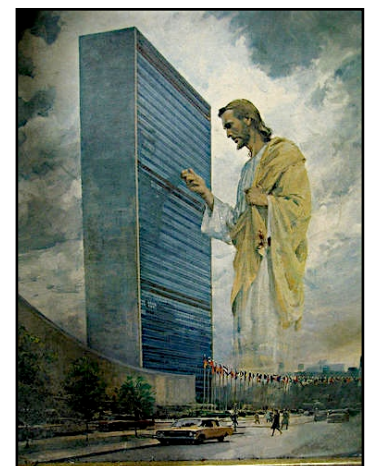
us? And what does Jesus do then. Break down the door? No. He knocks gently and invites us to hear and to let Him back in so the real party can begin! Funny isn't it? The one outside is knocking to invite those inside to their own party!

This is not simply an invitation to attend another Bible Study: It is an invitation to something much more challenging (even than a Bible Study in the book of Revelation!). It is an invitation to deeper

intimacy with, and greater rest in, Jesus Christ our Savior because of what He has accomplished for us. It is an invitation to greater effort in following Jesus Christ our Lord because of who He is--yesterday, today and forever. And the invitation comes not merely from a church, or a pastor: The invitation is

The invitation  
comes from the  
Savior Himself!

from the Savior Himself! It's an invitation to Christian Discipleship. And Christian discipleship--knowing and following Jesus--I have come to see is what the Book of Revelation, the Bible's last book, is all about. It's a party. And we're invited.

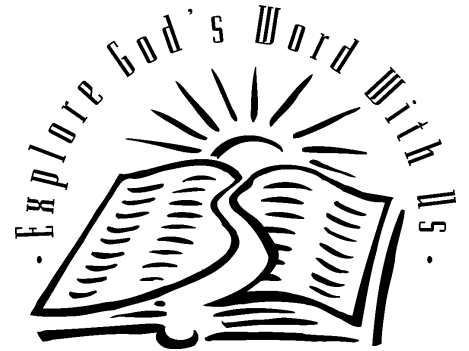


# The Bible, Plain & Simple

## Three Assumptions:

### 1. The Bible is rooted in reality.

- **The Bible is firmly planted in real geography.** The fertile crescent, forming a land bridge linking Europe, Asia and Africa, is the geographic setting of the Bible. In this place God established His people and sent His Son into the world. It is no accident that the land itself plays a major role in God's covenant with Israel and in His plan for redemption.
- **The Bible emerges from real history.** Setting out to redeem humanity, God carries out His plan on the stage of history. The Bible must be read and understood against the backdrop of historical peoples, nations and events spanning thousands of years.



### 2. The Bible is a unified literary whole.

- **The Bible contains a diversity of forms and styles.** The Bible was written over 1,500 years by at least 45 different authors. It is important to consider literary forms in order best to understand what the Bible says.
- **The Bible presents a unified message.** Every part of Scripture is best studied and understood in light of the whole. Through its many forms and styles, the Bible, in its final form, is a unified literary work. It is linear in structure, its protagonist is God, its conflict is sin and its theme is redemption.

### 3. The Bible is the inspired Word of God

- **The Bible is the Word of God.** "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16), by which we understand that the Bible is inspired in the highest sense of that word, and that its human authors "... were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21) to write the very words of Scripture, all the while employing their own talents and abilities to do so.

*(\*With thanks to Rev. Tom Brewer & Dr. Bill Creasy of Logos Ministries, Los Angeles)*

# Revelation

## *Seeing, Knowing and Serving Jesus Christ Today at the Edge of History*

January	11	-	Welcome to the New World	Revelation 1-22
	18	-	Introduction to the Book of Revelation	Revelation 1-22
	25	-	Prologue: Look! Jesus Is Coming!	Revelation 1:1-8
February	1	-	Look! Know! Serve!: The Cosmic Jesus	1:9-20
	8	-	The 1 <sup>st</sup> Letter: To the Church at Ephesus	2:1-7
	15	-	The 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Letters: Smyrna & Philadelphia	2:8-11; 3:7-13
	22	-	The 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Letters: Pergamum & Sardis	2:12-17; 3:1-6
March	1	-	The 4 <sup>th</sup> Letter: To the Church at Thyatira	2:18-29
	8	-	[State of the Church – Letter to Covenant I]	
	15	-	[State of the Church – Letter to Covenant II]	
	22	-	The 7 <sup>th</sup> Letter: To the Church Laodicea	3:14-21
	29	-	[Palm Sunday] Look! A Throne!	Revelation 4
April	5	-	[Easter Sunday] Look! A Lamb!	5
	12		The Seven Seals & the Cry that Moves History	6; 8:1-5
	19	-	Interlude I: Look! A Multitude Sealed for Reward	7
	26	-	The Seven Trumpets & The Grace the World Ignores	8-11
May	3	-	Interlude II: The Best Thing We Can Do	10-11:14
	10	-	The Center of the Book, The Way We Overcome	12
	17	-	Look! The Two Beasts	13
	24	-	The Lamb's People & The Harvest of the Lord	14
	31	-	TBD	
June	7	-	It Is Done!: The Seven Bowls of Wrath	15-16
	14	-	Look! Babylon Is Falling!	17-18
	21	-	Hallelujah!	19
	28	-	The Millennium & The Book of Life	20
July	5	-	Look! Know! Serve!: Jesus makes Everything New!	21-22:5
	12	-	Epilogue: Look! Jesus Is Coming!	22:6-21

Covenant  
Presbyterian  
Church

### Your Smallest (and Most Important) Group

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Here at Covenant we have been encouraging all our people to get involved with a "Covenant Group." This too is an invitation to Christian Discipleship. And we encourage all our "Covenant Group" small groups to commit themselves to five essential activities: **1.Fellowship/Sharing, 2.Prayer, 3.Worship, 4.Service/Mission and 5.Bible Study.** Are you in a Covenant Group yet?

I am convinced that a Bible Study in Revelation, much more than helping us know the future of the world, will help us today with these "five essential activities" of Christian Discipleship. So, yes, I am inviting you again to join us in this adventure in **personal Bible Study** and **small group fellowship** as we work our way together through this **Book of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ,"** but not as an end in itself but as a significant aid to our **continuing growth as Followers of Jesus.**

This is an invitation to the smallest and most important group you will ever be a member of--a group of two consisting of you and The Lord. Let us commit ourselves, individually, anew and afresh this year, to spending time each day in **fellowship** with God, sharing with Him in **prayer, worshipping** Him with thoughts and words of praise and thanksgiving in the quiet of our own hearts. Let us each find a personal **mission**, a task-in-love God calls each of us uniquely to accomplish, something we can do, big or small, for the sake of others and so in honor of Him. And let us discipline ourselves, more than ever, to be reading and thinking about **God's Word, the Bible,** on our own and with others.

Sister Mary Benedict worked at the UCLA Medical Center when I was a summer chaplaincy intern there many years ago. She came in every day to work with children and their families, children who were dying.

#### Sister Mary's Praying

1. Sister Mary, mother for God's children who long to be playing.  
Ah, their sickness lays them down.  
Mary keeps them all in her praying.
2. Sister Mary, child of God, touches the little ones crying  
With her tender hand of love,  
In their living and their dying.  
  
Chorus:       Ubi caritas et amor, et amor.  
                  Deus ibi est. Deus ibi est.
3. Sister Mary, sister to me, showing the way of Christ our King.  
"Let the children come unto me,  
For My kingdom's made of such as these."  
  
Chorus:       Where there is love, God is there. God is there.  
                  Where there is love, God is there. God is there.
4. Sister Mary, saying her prayers. Five fingers reaching for heaven.  
See! The nail-scarred hand has come down,  
And now entwines with hers in her praying.

One of the ways in which Sister Mary was unique was the fact that she only had one arm. She had lost the other in a train accident in London where she lived as a child. She was also an artist who made sculptures from articles she gathered at the ocean. When I left the Med Center, she gave me a gift--a rock sculpture that says "Peace." Today it sits on the desk in my office. I gave her a gift too--a song that you can find on this page.

I think the image of sister Mary's one hand reaching upward in prayer is a good one to keep in mind as we commit ourselves to the "**five essential activities**"--**one for each finger.** We reach up, and our Lord reaches down. And He helps us reach for Him. And He gets a hold of us. And He will never let us go.

Study Revelation with us, won't you? And let's keep reaching for Him together.