

Key Truths for Life from the Book of Revelation

(Rev. Dr. V. Smith, 9/2021)

These statements are true for Christians living in all times and places, regardless of how they interpret the book. While parts of Revelation are unclear, the essential messages and life applications are perfectly clear!

1. The God of the Bible wins! And He shares His victory and glory with His people.
2. God is awesome and beyond all that we can imagine. Any reasonable response to the Holy Triune God includes worship, surrender, trust, and obedience.
3. Jesus is fully God. Revelation takes many things that were said of the Father in the Old Testament and applies them to Christ.
4. Jesus and His sacrifice (as the Lamb) accomplishes salvation; all people do is trust Him, obey Him, follow Him, and cling to Him.
5. Leading people to repentance is a primary purpose of many of the judgments pictured in Revelation; yet God tells us that many people will refuse to repent.
6. In the end, evil will not go unpunished. God will judge those who choose the ways of the God-rejecting world, and God will richly reward those who live God's way.
7. Humans do not bring the Kingdom; God does.
8. Proclaiming Christ / witnessing is the Christian's primary job in this life. It will bring trouble, but it's worth it. *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..."* (2 Tim. 3.12, NIV). If Christians are not suffering for their faith—even if it's the minor suffering of rejection and ridicule—then those Christians are probably not faithfully living the Christian life!
9. Worshipping God and contemplating our future is great medicine for what ails us, including self-pity.
10. Jesus is worth dying for! Denying Him means the Lake of Fire. *"But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"* (Mt. 10.33, KJV).
11. According to Revelation, if people belong to Jesus, then they have NOTHING to fear!
12. God's saved people will include people from every race, nation, etc.; consequently, racism and denominationalism have no place among God's people.

13. While God is absolutely sovereign and can save anyone God wants to save, the New Testament clearly says that salvation is exclusively through the blood of the Lamb. Consequently, the idea that all religions lead to God also has no place among Christians.
14. Do not conform to or compromise with the un-Christian system of this world. Be conformed to Christ! (Rom. 8.29; 12.1-2).
15. What people do in this life matters for eternity! Jesus will reward His grace-saved people for what they do with their time on earth. (Rev. 22.12; 2 Cor. 5.10; 1 Cor. 3).
16. Jesus will return to judge the world and to gather His people. We can and should yearn for the return of Jesus.
17. Revelation repeatedly demonstrates that *singing to God*, especially singing praises about God's character and deeds, is an essential ingredient in worship! When people sing to God, God listens more to their *hearts* than to their singing ability.
18. "... Revelation does not merely concern the unfolding of future events but uses present events, understood in a symbolic manner, to speak both a warning and an encouragement to believers to persevere in their commitment to Christ and to divorce themselves from any allegiance to the world system, which expresses the rule of the kingdom of darkness. The visions of chapters 4–21 are about the present, not just the future" (G.K. Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*, 17). In other words, "Revelation, however, does not offer a review of history but instead, as we will see, leads readers through overlapping cycles of visions that do not fall into a clear chronological sequence. The result is that Revelation does not disclose future events in a linear fashion, but gives alternating messages of warning and encouragement that are designed to promote faithful endurance" (C. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 30). "John writes for a world in which it is easier to accommodate the beast [and the world] than to resist it, a world in which faithfulness to the Lamb sets people uncomfortably apart from others in society. The warnings startle people out of an easy acceptance of the ways of the beast [and the world], while the promises attract them to the ways of the Lamb" (*Ibid.*, 180).

Notes on Interpretation

- "The unfortunate reality is that almost all of the popular stuff written on Revelation... has scarcely a shred of exegetical basis to it. Such interpreters usually begin with a previously worked out eschatological scheme that they bring to the text, a scheme into which they then spend an extraordinary amount of energy trying to make everything in the text fit, and which they then attempt to defend, but with very little success" (G. Fee, *New Covenant Commentary Series, Revelation*, xx).
- "Of the 404 verses that comprise the 22 chapters of the book of Revelation, 278 verses contain one or more allusions to an Old Testament passage. Therefore, in attempting to understand John's symbolism, we must consider not only the book itself, but also his use of the Old Testament" (B. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*, 13).