

1. The Revelation—It is all about the Lamb (first, it is not plural! But it is an amazing book that too often gets lost in its literary style. It abounds with incredible images; fantastic beasts; heavenly warfare; streets of gold; all kinds of numbers and symbols. These are NOT the message of the book. It is not some type of secret code to be unlocked possessing hidden knowledge of God. It is letter—just like other NT letters—sent to a particular people at a particular time dealing with their particular challenges. John wrote it primarily for the then and there (1:1—“what must soon take place.”). And the then and there was full of hardship—persecution by an oppressive, aggressive nation—an enemy of God’s people who quite simply wanted to eliminate the Christian presence in their empire. The letter was to be circulated in the seven churches identified in chapters 2-3. The overall message is definitely one of ultimate victory over the oppressors—but one that came with a price—the price already paid by the Lamb, Jesus, but also the price they too would pay with their own blood—unfortunately martyrdom. All of the highly symbolized writing is a literary style known as apocryphal—a style John’s readers were familiar and a style chosen to hide the message from the oppressors. So as we root the Revelation in its context---we discover that from the start is all about the Lamb)
2. The Lamb is Worthy—Revelation 4-5 (the throne scene which sets up the rest of this story within The Story. John sees the Father with a scroll sealed and ready to be open—this represents the message of the Revelation, but no one can approach God to open—no one is worthy enough—except the slain Lamb—he is worthy to open the seals. He is worthy to unleash God’s will—**VS 12!** From here the Revelation unfolds and here is what we learn)
3. Reason from Revelation
 - a. There is a war going on—7-11 (it is raging as God’s forces engage the forces of our enemies—see Ephesians 6: 10-18.
 - b. The world is full of beasts—12-13 (allies of Satan; the dragon; the accuser who are livid that their time is short and are focused on taking out God’s people—represented by the image of a woman with child. Certainly John had the Roman empire in mind as he spoke to his day; Now as the war continues others beasts emerge to ally with the dragon—John’s message speaks across the generations—not as a code to unlock, but as God’s truth—arrogance, hatred, corruption, power, accusations, are all continued to be used our enemy, Satan, in his relentless attempt to destroy God’s people—the world remains full of beasts)
 - c. But they are all conquered by the Lamb—19:11-18 (presented also as a powerful rider on a white horse—coming to battle and to rescue, but notice he is already covered in blood before the battle—it is his blood already shed that delivers the victory. Now this is central to the message John is sharing with his readers. Yes, there is a battle raging. Yes, the enemies will use any harsh tactic available to crush anyone in their way, but victory will not come through countering them with these kinds of maneuvers. No eye for eye or tooth for tooth. Rather it is turn the other cheek time. It is not the mighty warrior riding into battle to slay the beasts with a light saber. It is the slain Lamb and the sword of his Word—living and speaking it into the battle; meek and humble; gentle and mild; Faithful and True—with justice he judges and makes war. And so do his followers)
 - d. Overcome by the blood and the power of our testimony—12:11 (here it is—John’s message to his people. It is not through bullets, ballots, swords, patriotism, global super powered nations, tanks, jets, whatever—that the beasts will be slain; that Christians will gain the victory—it is thru the blood of the Lamb and the power of speaking his testimony by his people—who will do so even if it kills them—*they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death*. It is all consistent with the message of the Lamb from the get-go!)
 - e. The Lamb is Coming—21:1-27 (This is the end game—the final victory which John ends the book and the Bible with—the time when everything is made new—new heavens and earth in which God’s people who’ve overcome will dwell with the Father and the Lamb at the center of it all in New Jerusalem. No pain, no tears, no oppression, no beasts, no enemies—the war is over. The victory is won.)
4. (and where is the Spirit in this picture? Standing by the bride—the church—inviting us all to come join the party) “The Spirit and the Bride say “come!” 22:12 (thirsty—come drink of the everlasting water. To answer those who asked, how long, Jesus says—I am coming soon—so come—whoever wishes and join the victory parade of the Worthy Lamb that was slain!)