

ROOTED is an invitation to see Christ's redemptive work throughout the entire arc of Scripture by reading through the Bible as a community. In Rooted Act VIII, we will study the last book of the Bible, Revelation.

Revelation is a complex book. In response to its complexity, you will find five diverse ways scholars have interpreted Revelation. Each voice maintains Christ as the center of the story and provides unique perspectives to consider as we find hope in this book. As you read Revelation, pay attention to the themes and observations that each scholar highlights. May each perspective enrich your own reading of Revelation!

Over the next five weeks, if you miss a day, just pick up where you left off or skip ahead. Keep going! It is good to be on this journey together.

The point isn't to accomplish a task; the point is to spend meaningful time in Scripture.

The Bible is the living word of God, meant to shape us as we read it. Full of thought-provoking and life-changing material, the redemptive arc of the Bible points to the core message: that a man, Jesus, who was fully God, came to live among us, die on our behalf, and rise in a cosmic act of love and redemption so that we can have a restored relationship with God and others. We believe He will return to bring the culmination of His hope for His people and creation. The Church around the world lives this hope together in community.

Find out how to go deeper in your faith this season:



CHURCHBCC.ORG/ROOTED

Framing Statement

REVELATION 1:1 - THIS IS A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST...

Among all the ways that Revelation has been interpreted, from the very beginning of the book, we're told that first and foremost this book is about Jesus! Every word, image, and passage reveals Jesus in timeless, transcendent, and transformative ways.

As a **timeless** book, Revelation speaks from a first-century context to our present context with an enduring message that will resonate into the future.

As a **transcendent** book, Revelation engages our imagination to be able to grasp the significance of Jesus.

As a **transformative** book, Revelation challenges us to find ourselves in the pages of Scripture.

And as a **timeless, transcendent** and **transformative** book, Revelation invites us to embody the mysteries of faith and participate in the redemption of all creation.

As we bring our year-long Rooted series to an end, Revelation calls us to embrace a fresh start—yielding fruit that blesses all creation as we root ourselves in Scripture and allow it to deepen our connection to God.

ROOTED ACT VIII

Use of Allusion

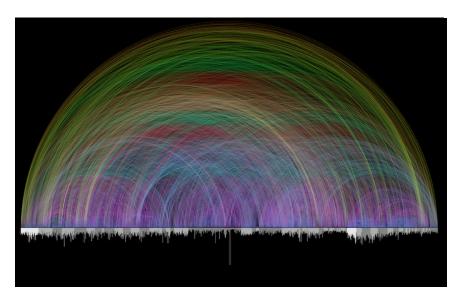
A note before this section: While it's important to understand scriptural concepts, remember to sit back and **BEHOLD. This book is BEAUTIFUL.**

It's an overwhelming and confounding piece of literary work. A masterpiece. We can behold its beauty without grasping its full meaning. In this "Revelation of Jesus Christ," as the author writes, the complexity in this text mirrors the complexity of looking to Jesus, as He is now in full glory.

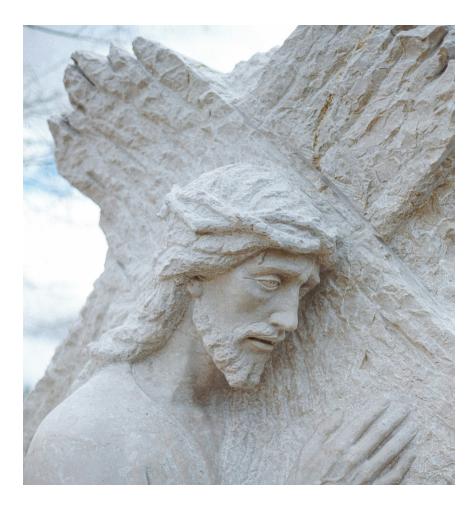
There are many characters in the book of Revelation, including humans, angels, demons, monsters, nations, and more. While each one of these characters has a specific meaning and purpose, it will be most important for you to notice Christ's role as the center of our focus. There are 36 NAMES FOR CHRIS'T that you will encounter, and each name is a reference to another section of the Bible or a cultural allusion at the time of this book's conception.

These references and allusions create layers of meaning for the reader similar to how we gather meaning in art and culture. Although one piece of work may have many layers of interpretation, this does not mean it can be interpreted however the reader wishes. There are specific allusions within many works of art. For example, think about when we might say something is our "kryptonite." In order to gather meaning from that reference, it's important to know that kryptonite is Superman's only weakness and it puts him in danger. In this circumstance, if the hearer knows the reference, they will interpret "kryptonite" as a weakness that should be avoided. It has a specific interpretation, but the exact meaning changes in particular contexts. We create meaning from the allusion as it relates to a moment or story.

The Hebrew Bible layers meaning at an overwhelming rate and complexity, and there are over 1,000 REFERENCES to other parts of the Bible in the book of Revelation.* As our knowledge of the Bible deepens, so does our ability to pull meaning from these allusions. It is a lifelong journey.



*Above, you'll see a graph representing the Bible. The gray blocks at the bottom represent books of the Bible and the colorful lines represent allusions made throughout the text. From Genesis as the starting point on the left, to Revelation as the final book of the Bible at the end on the right.



The Key Person

This complexity is why we will turn our attention to the main character, Jesus, as the primary source for meaning. Instead of describing every key character, here you'll find 36 names used for Christ in the text. Jesus is in His full Glory, center stage—the Risen Savior as He can be pictured NOW after His resurrection. These names offer a meaning-filled dimension for us to understand Christ's transcendent position as the center of the story.

THESE NAMES HAPPEN IN THE NIV TRANSLATION AS FOLLOWS:

- **1. Jesus Christ** | Revelation 1:1
- **2. Faithful Witness** | *Revelation 1:5*.
- **3. First Born from the Dead** | *Revelation 1:5*
- **4. Ruler of the Kings of the Earth** | *Revelation 1:5*
- **5. Alpha and Omega** | Revelation 1:8-13
- **6. First and Last** | Revelation 1:8, 11, 13
- **7. Son of Man** | Revelation 1:13
- **8. The Living One** | *Revelation 1:13, 18*
- 9. Him Who Holds the Seven Stars | Revelation 2:1
- 10. (He Who) Walks Among the Golden Lampstands | Revelation 2:1
- 11. He Who Has the Sharp, Double-Edged Sword | Revelation 2:12
- **12. Son of God** | Revelation 2:18
- 13. He Who Searches Hearts and Minds | Revelation 2:23
- 14. Him Who Holds the Seven Spirits of God | Revelation 3:1
- **15. Him Who Holds the Seven Stars** | *Revelation 3:1*
- **16. Him Who Is Holy and True** | *Revelation 3:7*
- 17. Who Holds the Key of David | Revelation 3:7
- 18. (He Who) Opens and No One Can Shut | Revelation 3:7
- 19. (He Who) Shuts and No One Can Open | Revelation 3:7
- **20. The Amen** | Revelation 3:14
- 21. The Faithful and True Witness | Revelation 3:14
- **22.** The Ruler of God's Creation | Revelation 3:14
- **23. Lord** | *Revelation 4:11*
- **24.** Lion of the Tribe of Judah | Revelation 5:5, 9
- **25.** The Root of David | Revelation 5:5, 9
- 26. A Lamb As If It Had Been Slain | Revelation 5:6-7
- **27. The Lamb** | Revelation 5:8-9
- 28. Lord of Lords | Revelation 17:14
- 29. King of Kings | Revelation 17:14
- **30. Faithful and True** | Revelation 19:11
- **31. Rider of the White Horse** | *Revelation 19:11* (This name may be unique
- to Revelation, found nowhere else in Scripture.)
- **32. The Word of God** | *Revelation 19:13*
- 33. Christ | Revelation 20:4
- **34.** The Lord God Who Inspires the Prophets | Revelation 22:6
- **35. Beginning and the End** | Revelation 22:13
- **36. The Bright Morning Star** | Revelation 22:16

Daily Reading Guide

week 1



week $m{4}$

July 14	Sunday Worship	
July 15	Revelation 16	The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath
July 16	Revelation 17	Babylon, the Prostitute on the Beast
July 17	Revelation 18:1-8	The Fall of Babylon
July 18	Revelation 18:9-24	Lament Over Fallen Babylon
July 19	Revelation 19:1-10	Rejoicing in Heaven
July 20	Revelation 19:11-21	The Rider on the White Horse

WEEK 4

ш	June 30	Sunday Worship	
	July 1	Revelation 5	The Scroll and the Lamb
	July 2	Revelation 6	The Seven Seals
	July 3	Revelation 7	The 144,000 Sealed
	July 4	Revelation 8	The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer
	July 5	Revelation 9	The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets
П	July 6	Revelation 10	The Angel and the Little Scroll

week 5

July 21	Sunday Worship	
July 22	Revelation 20:1-10	The Thousand Years
July 23	Revelation 20:11-15	The Judgment of the Dead
July 24	Revelation 21:1-8	A New Heaven and a New Earth
July 25	Revelation 21:9-27	The New Jerusalem
July 26	Revelation 22:1-5	The River of Life
July 27	Revelation 22:6-21	Jesus Is Coming

week 3

July 7	Sunday Worship	
July 8	Revelation 11	The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet
July 9	Revelation 12	The Woman and the Dragon
July 10	Revelation 13	The Two Beasts
July 11	Revelation 14:1-13	The Lamb and the 144,000, Three Angels
July 12	Revelation 14:14-20	Harvesting the Earth and Trampling the Winepress
July 13	Revelation 15	Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT & DISCUSSION STARTERS

In this final Act of Rooted, we encourage you to explore the scholars below (one each week). Though these scholars represent various theological backgrounds and cultural contexts, they collectively approach Revelation with a focus on its spiritual, pastoral, and imaginative dimensions rather than a solely apocalyptic standpoint. By paying attention to what each scholar brings to the conversation, we can weave their insights into our own discovery in Revelation.

June 29

Amos Yong

Revelation: Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible



ACTIVE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD:

Yong emphasizes the core message of Revelation as the active sovereignty of God in a hostile world. He argues that this message has historically provided courage and comfort to believers, affirming that God is in control despite the apparent chaos and opposition they face.

READING IN THE SPIRIT:

Yong focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in interpreting and understanding Revelation. He highlights how the Spirit guides believers in discerning the meaning and implications of the apocalyptic visions, making the text relevant for us today.

AN ASIAN AMERICAN READING:

As Yong reflects on Revelation which is written, "to the Seven churches that are in Asia" (Rev 1:4), his experiences as a "foreigner" resonates with John who is writing as someone caught between different worlds. At the same time, Yong also shows us how the labels and categories used in the Bible change over time, reminding us that we should all consider how our own particular stories shape how Revelation can read us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Revelation 1–4 illustrates God's active and responsive sovereignty through the witness of John the Revelator. Can you recall instances in your own life where you recognized God's sovereignty during challenging circumstances?
- The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in guiding John's understanding and interpretation of the apocalyptic visions in Revelation 1–4. Similarly, Yong underscores the role of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Revelation. How can we cultivate a Spirit-led approach to reading and interpreting Scripture in our own lives?
- Yong's perspective as an Asian American reading Revelation prompts us to consider how cultural and personal backgrounds influence our interpretation of biblical texts. How can we appreciate the diversity of cultural perspectives and personal stories that shape our understanding of Revelation? What particularities shape how you understand Revelation?

July 6___ Robyn Whitaker

Revelation for Normal People: A Guide to the Strangest and Most Dangerous Book in the Bible



HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS:

Whitaker emphasizes understanding Revelation within its historical and cultural context. She explores how the text was written for early Christian communities under Roman rule, addressing their experiences of oppression and persecution.

SYMBOLISM AND IMAGERY:

Whitaker looks closely at the pictures and symbols in Revelation. Through studying the descriptive poetry of Revelation, Whitaker illuminates how the pictures in the book are meant to evoke and provoke us to feel hope in the midst of chaos.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE:

Whitaker addresses the contemporary relevance of Revelation, exploring how the text can be interpreted in modern contexts—particularly in relation to issues of justice and oppression. She encourages readers to consider their own positions in society and how they might be complicit in systems of power and injustice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Considering Whitaker's emphasis on historical and contextual analysis, how does the understanding that Revelation was written in an oppressive climate—under Roman rule—deepen our interpretation of Revelation 5–10? Can you identify parallels between the early church's experiences of oppression and persecution and contemporary issues of injustice?
- How does Whitaker's approach help us understand the intended emotional impact of Revelation 5–10's vivid imagery? Can you think of a symbol or image from these chapters that particularly impacts you?

How might the themes of justice and oppression in Revelation 5–10

speak to current societal issues? What actions can individuals take to

confront systems of power and injustice in their own communities?

July 13

Melissa Archer

I Was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day: A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse



WORSHIP IN REVELATION:

When we think of Revelation, our attention may be drawn to the vivid imagery and apocalyptic nature of the book. However, worship is a central theme and trajectory that is foundational to the book. Archer's work explores how worship is depicted throughout the text, emphasizing its centrality to the apocalyptic narrative.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Archer emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in Revelation, particularly in the context of worship. As a Pentecostal scholar, she examines how the Spirit facilitates the visionary experiences of John and the worship practices of the early Christian communities.

THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL INSIGHTS:

Through worship, which is patterned after familiar liturgies for John's audience, Archer discusses how the hymns and songs in the text function to proclaim the nature, character, and work of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How do the depictions of worship in Revelation 11–15 challenge or inspire your own personal or communal worship experiences?
- 2. Consider Archer's emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. How does the Spirit facilitate John's visionary experiences and the worship practices of the early Christian communities in Revelation 11–15? In what ways can we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our own worship and spiritual practices?

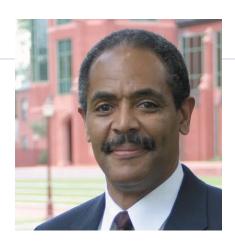
Revelation contains at least 20 distinct moments of liturgical worship

Why do you think so many worship songs are inspired directly by Revelation? Can you name any worship songs that draw from this book	?
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_
	_

July 20.

Brian K. Blount

Can I Get a Witness: Reading Revelation Through the African American Culture



PROPHETIC REACTION AND NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE:

Blount interprets Revelation as a call for a prophetic reaction to the world, urging believers to engage in non-violent and non-accommodating resistance to oppressive powers. This resistance is rooted in the lordship of God and Christ, contrasting with the authority of Caesar or any other oppressive power.

RELEVANCE TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES:

Blount interprets Revelation through the perspective of marginalized communities in the United States, finding connections between the book's themes and ongoing contemporary fights for justice. He highlights how Revelation can inspire and guide modern efforts to proclaim the lordship of Jesus Christ by opposing segregation and injustice.

THEOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC NATURE:

Blount explores the symbolic nature of Revelation's apocalyptic literature, emphasizing its theological implications. He argues that the book's imagery and visions are meant to inspire and guide believers in their witness to God's justice and love rather than simply predicting future events.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How might Revelation 16–19 encourage believers to engage in prophetic, non-violent resistance against oppressive powers? In what ways can this call be applied to contemporary struggles for justice and equality?
- 2. Considering Blount's interpretation, how can the themes and messages in Revelation 16–19 provide hope and guidance to marginalized communities today? How might these passages inspire action against modern forms of segregation and injustice?

3. What are some key symbols and images in Revelation 16–19, and how

do they convey theological messages about God's justice and love? How

1	can understanding these symbols enhance our efforts to witness to the ordship of Jesus Christ in today's world?

July 27

Eugene Peterson

Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination



REVELATION AS A BOOK OF WORSHIP AND PRAYER:

Similar to Melissa Archer, Peterson emphasizes that Revelation is primarily a book of worship and invites believers into a deep, prayerful relationship with God. The vivid and symbolic imagery of Revelation is meant to inspire and deepen the worship experience of the Christian community. Rather than seeing Revelation as a code to be deciphered for predicting the end times, Peterson argues it should be seen as a guide for living a life of worship and prayer amidst the trials and tribulations of life.

THE VICTORY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH:

The triumph of Jesus Christ over the forces of evil is a central theme in *Reversed Thunder*. Peterson highlights how Revelation assures Christians of Christ's ultimate victory, providing hope and encouragement to persevere in faith. This victory is not just a future event, but a present reality. Believers are called to live in the light of Christ's victory, embodying the values of the Kingdom of God in their daily lives and communities.

THE NEW CREATION AND THE RENEWAL OF ALL THINGS:

Peterson interprets the closing chapters of Revelation as a vision of new creation. The New Jerusalem symbolizes the renewal and restoration of all things—where God dwells with humanity in perfect harmony. This vision encourages Christians to work towards justice, peace, and renewal in the present world, participating in God's ongoing work of creation. It's a call to be agents of transformation who reflect the hope and promise of the new creation in their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Now that we are at the end of Revelation, how does viewing Revelation as a book of worship and prayer reshape our understanding of its purpose and message? What practices can we adopt to engage more deeply with Revelation's invitation to worship and prayer?
- 2. How does Revelation 20–22 portray the victory of Jesus Christ over evil and injustice? In what ways does this message provide hope and encouragement for believers facing trials and tribulations today?

How do you envision new creation and the renewal of all things? In what

ways can Christians actively participate in God's work of creating a new

and harmonious wo	orld?		g ==

Notes

BEHIND THE DESIGN

In the artwork for this series, you may see shapes representing mountains, waves, or a sky, and an orange circle illustrating a partially veiled sun. When brought together, these abstract shapes and textures create a subtle representational image. There is a watery chaos that fills the page, and the only indication of clarity is due to the presence of the sun.

We find similar mystery in the Book of Revelation, with multiple perspectives available to the reader. Within those perspectives, there is clariy in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who we look to as the ultimate hope among the uncertainty.

The textures used were made with watercolor on smooth paper and then collaged together digitally.

