

Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church
Bible Sharing Program 2023-24
Session #1: Introduction to Revelation, Background, and
Overview

CSB = Ignatius Catholic Study Bible
 CCSS = Cath Commentary on Sacred Scriptures
 BSP04 = 2004-05 BSP notes SN = Special notes
 NAB = New American Bible
 CSSN = Catholic Scripture Study notes

<p>A</p>	<p><u>Author, Date</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Church’s traditions, it is widely accepted that John the Apostle is the author. • Written in the mid 90s AD, during the reign of Domitian, 80 – 96, or in the 60s AD or even later, during the reign of Nero 54 – 68. 	<p>CSB p 490</p> <p>CCSS, BSP 04, CSB</p>
<p>B</p>	<p><u>Genre & Writing Style</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literary genre “Apocalypse” (GK), used in Rev. 1:1, originated about 200 BC and remained widespread among Jews and Christians until a century or two after Christ. It explains unseen spiritual realities behind human events or looks forward to history’s end. It is characterized by dreams, visions, and other highly symbolic ways of communicating. Other similar contemporary works include: 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and Apocalypse of Abraham. Similar to the OT prophetic books, Revelation is read as a prophecy (1:3). • A wealth of symbolism, numbers, and allusions to the OT – the significance of symbolism and numbers are difficult to comprehend, which often leave readers guessing; several hundred allusions to the OT; all these make Rev. a difficult text, lending itself to misinterpretations. Any interpretations and conjectures must be made in light of the entirety of Scripture and Christian faith. 	<p>CCSS p 19</p> <p>CCSS p 18</p> <p>CCSS p 17</p> <p>CSB p 490</p>
<p>C</p>	<p><u>Structure and Plot</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the plot of Rev. advance from the beginning to the end in a linear fashion? In fact, the story is told in a spiral pattern. Jesus commands John to “write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this” (1:19). John begins the narrative with “what is” in the present (chapters 1-3: messages to the seven churches), and then transitions to “what is to take place” (21 -22 New Heaven and New Earth, eternal happiness). • In 4:1, the author transitions from the present to the future through visions: the future is revealed to him when he is “in the spirit” (4:2). 	<p>CCSS 23 – 25</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All future is accounted for in God’s plan, written in the scroll to which only “the lamb that was slaughtered” can open (5:12). • The three series of seven reveal how the future will unfold and the events that will happen before the end of history: seven seals (6-7), seven trumpets (8-9), and seven bowls (15-16). • Two major series of visions before the pouring out of the seven bowls: 1. The commissioning of John to prophesy words of judgment against “many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings”. 2. The two witnesses, the woman, the male child, the red dragon, Michael, the two beasts, the Lamb’s companions, and previews of history’s outcome (the fall of Babylon and the harvest of the earth). • After the pouring out of the seven golden bowls, filled with God’s righteous wrath, by the seven angels, the significance of the whore Babylon and the beasts is interpreted by angels. Her miserable fate contrasts that of “the Bride Jerusalem and her future glory, ... the descent from heaven of the new Jerusalem”. Between these two visions are four visions that reveal how God judges the enemies of his people (the Messiah defeating “the beast”, symbolizing false prophets 19:10-21; God defeating Satan in two stages 20:1-10, final judgment 20:11-15; New Heaven and New Earth 21:1-8). An epilogue and a final greeting complete the work. • Overview and Summary of the book. 	<p>Rev 10: 11</p> <p>Rev 11 - 14</p> <p>15 – 16 17 – 18 29 – 21</p> <p>22:12-21</p> <p>SN1</p>
<p>D</p>	<p><u>Reading Revelation from Four Different Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Historicist – holds that Revelation foretells in a linear way the history of the Church from the 1st Century to the end of the world. • The Preterist – holds that Revelation presents the author’s stories and experiences during the 1st Century, such as the Roman Empire, the destruction of Jerusalem, and so on. • The Futurist – holds that Revelation narrates the events preceding the end of human history; known as “chiliasm”, deemed by the Church a cult. 	<p>CCSS 30-31, CSB 491, CSSNB 1 / 2</p> <p>BSP 04 B 1 / 2</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Idealist – holds that Revelation provides images and narratives of the spiritual struggle between good and evil that have no specific relation to history; they are intended to encourage and comfort Christians engaged in the struggle. • The approach taken in this commentary draws insights from each of these views without adopting any of them. We believe that Revelation speaks not only to the 1st Century readers but also to the Christian people throughout the ages. The author uses prefiguration to connect the past and the present: the new hidden in the old; the old manifested in the new. 	CCSS 31 – 32
E	<p><u>Key Messages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letters to the <u>seven</u> churches are also intended for <u>all</u> the churches. • Rampant with evil and suffering, the entire world is accounted for in God’s plan. In fact, God’s plan will be fulfilled. The true throne “stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne”, He governs everything. Jesus Christ is the true king, “Lord of lords, King of kings”. • Before the second coming of Christ, the Church continues to be persecuted: the dragon, the beasts from land and sea, and the whore of Babylon. • According to God’s plan, everything that has not been fulfilled at Christ’s second coming will be fulfilled before and at His coming. These include: (1) Satan will be “thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, ... will be tormented day and night for ever and ever”; (2) The Last Judgment; (3) God’s kingdom is completely free from evil and is a perfect and harmonious new heaven and new earth, new creation; (4) The covenant between God and humanity begins with A & E and ends with the New A & E; the victorious Heaven and the wedding feast of the Lamb; (5) From the Tabernacle and the Temple of Jerusalem to the Church, God’s temple is finally established in the Holy City in Heaven, the New Jerusalem, where “He will dwell with them, ... he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning 	<p>CCSS 33 – 36, CSB 491, BSP 04 CCSS 33</p> <p>CCSS 33 4:2 17:4</p> <p>CCSS 34, 12:13-17 13:1-17, 17:1-6</p> <p>20:10</p> <p>21:3-4</p>

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	<p>nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation reminds Christians that they must be courageous and remain stoic; even during persecutions, they must follow the examples of the two witnesses to bear witness to the Gospel in words and deeds. Our ultimate goal is not merely to die and to go to heaven, but rather to see the glorious return of our Lord, the resurrection, and the new heaven and new earth. • The theme of the woman => Mother Mary; as well as the Church • Demonstrates the relationship between the Eucharistic celebration and the Heavenly worship. 	<p>11:3-13</p> <p>22:20</p> <p>CSB 506</p> <p>Lamb’s Supper 3:1:3-5; SN2</p>
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SPECIAL NOTES

1. Outline of Revelation

- i. Prologue – the prophecy inspired by Jesus 1:1-3
- ii. Letters to the Seven Churches and John’s first vision 1:4 – 3:22
- iii. The Worship of Heaven; the sealed scrolls, the Lamb opening the scrolls 4 – 5
- iv. Seven seals, seven trumpets: disasters, the persecutions of the holy ones 6 – 11
- v. The Woman, the Dragon, the beasts, the Lamb and the Chosen Ones, the announcement of the Last Judgement 12 – 14
- vi. Seven Bowls (the evil-doers will experience disasters, righteous judgement) 15 -16
- vii. The Whore of Babylon to be punished, the defeat of those who are against Christ, Triumphant chants in Heaven, Final Judgement 17 – 20
- viii. New Heaven, New Earth; eternal happiness 21 – 22:5
- ix. Epilogue: Come Lord Jesus! 22:6-21

- 2. Those who even celebrate the liturgy without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy, where celebration is wholly communion and feast ... It is in this eternal liturgy that the Spirit and the Church enable us to participate whenever we celebrate the mystery of salvation in the sacrament. (CCC 1136, 1139)