

Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church, Port Jefferson, Summer Bible Class 2026
Monday, July 20, 2026

Monday: General Introduction

Tuesday: Theology and Christology

Wednesday: Ecclesiology, Discipleship and Eschatology

Thursday: Images and Symbolism in the Book of Revelation

Friday: Revelation and Catholic Spirituality: The Holy Mass

WELCOME TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

This year, we are reading the Book of Revelation for our Summer Bible Classes. Hopefully, many will join the nightly classes all week. Where that is absolutely impossible for you, please use the material emailed to you.

There continues to be a lot of buzz around the book of Revelation, albeit, not as much as was generated by the close of the last millennium and the Y2K saga. Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse of John (taking a cue from the very first Greek word of the book, *apokalupsis*), is the last book of the bible (with 22 chapters) and the only strictly prophetic writing of the New Testament. It has its own genre, and therefore, like no other book in the New Testament. People have found it to be mysterious and interesting at the same time; enigmatic, yet instructive. Few love it, many dread it; yet it bears a message to which we must all pay attention. The book has many characteristics that make it an unusual writing, loaded with imageries, symbols, numbers, graphic but out-of-this-worldly portraits and much more. Sometimes, it appears like a very complex maze of unending twists and turns. But that must not discourage the reader. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, some of the mystery surrounding that book will unfold to the point where it would become a beloved piece of literature for us.

Author and date: Traditionally, the book of Revelation has been attributed to John, Son of Zebedee, to whom the Gospel and Letters of John are also ascribed. That remains the view of the Church. Scholarly opinions vary, most based on the evidence of the text. The differences in literary characteristics between Revelation and the other Johannine writings have made some to propose that the son of Zebedee may not have been the one who put pen to paper, but there are indications that the book definitely came from a context that was inspired by, and associated with, his ministry and preaching in Asia Minor.

In the text, the author gives his name as John, a servant of Christ, writing from the Island of Patmos, where he was exiled, and where he received the visions and prophecies narrated in the book (1:1, 4, 9, probably a Jewish-Christian prophet, well learned in the Hebrew scriptures, evidenced by his very copious use of the Old Testament; mostly likely *not* the brother of James, son of Zebedee, named in the Gospels, *nor* the authors of the "Fourth Gospel" and the "Johannine Epistles", but one who may have come from the Johannine tradition). He identifies himself as a fellow brother to the Christian communities addressed by him, and he never refers to himself as an apostle. When he spoke of the twelve apostles, he never included himself in their ranks (21:14). Rather, he presented himself as a prophet (1:3) and a brother among the prophets (22:9; 18:20). As Peter Williamson notes: "There is no reason to doubt what the author says about himself—namely, that he is a Christian prophet and his name is John. His Greek style shows his native language to be Hebrew or Aramaic; his extraordinary familiarity with the Old Testament supports the impression that he is a Jewish Christian...Regardless of whether he is the apostle John, the Church receives the book of Revelation as divinely inspired and canonical Scripture" (*Revelation*, 20-21).

Dating: With regard to dating, variations exist. Suffice it to say that the best date for the book of Revelation would be the end of the First Century, between 90 and 100AD, following the persecution of the Roman Emperor, Domitian (AD 81-96); many of the prophecies and visions in the book bear the marks of those persecutions.

Genre: One of the elements that make the book of Revelation difficult to read and interpret is its literary characterization. Once we know the kind of writing that it is, it becomes easier to approach it. The very first word of the book lets us know that it is a revelation, therefore, prophetic in character. Prophecy is, however, not equivalent to fortune- or future-telling as many think. Biblical prophecy has its peculiar character as the representation of God's involvement in human history, characterized by a prophet's assessment of present occurrences and activities on the basis of set divine ordinances, with a view to making prescriptions and recommendations for future actions, which are either by way of reinforcement, sustenance/retention or repentance/conversion, given with the corresponding judicial consequences. So the book of Revelation is a prophetic writing that is recorded in apocalyptic genre: An "apocalypse" (1:1; 4:1), with an epistolary frame (letter-like introduction & conclusion - 1:4; 22:21)

Apocalypses is a genre of religious writing that was prevalent mainly between 200BC and AD 200, that used cosmic imageries of unearthly proportions to portray reality in a cataclysmic manner. Some have defined it as resistance literature that paints reality with highly hyperbolic images with the urgency of end-time sentiments. Williamson clarifies this for us by defining an apocalypse as a writing that "typically 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" (*Revelation*, 19). This book contains an account of visions in symbolic and allegorical language borrowed extensively from the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Consequently, therefore, we should pay attention to the strangeness of the language we come across in our study of the book and endeavor to make sense of it for the benefit of our spiritual growth amidst contemporary challenges.

Location: "Seven churches" in Asia Minor (1:4; 2:1-22). The **Seven Churches of Revelation** were real Christian communities located in the Roman province of Asia, in what is now **western Türkiye (Turkey)**. Today, most are archaeological sites, while a few are near modern towns or cities. They remain prominent places of Christian history, tourism and pilgrimages.

Türkiye		
Ephesus	Near Selçuk	İzmir Province
Smyrna	Modern İzmir	İzmir Province
Pergamon	Bergama	İzmir Province
Thyatira	Akhisar	Manisa Province
Sardis	Near Salihli	Manisa Province
Philadelphia	Alaşehir	Manisa Province
Laodicea on the Lycus	Near Denizli	Denizli Province

The Book of Revelation itself may have been written from the city of Ephesus

Purpose: To encourage Christians to preserve faith in the midst of trials and tribulations (cf. 13:10b; 14:12)

The book was written to:

1. Encourage Christians facing persecution.
2. Assure believers that God remains sovereign over history.

3. Warn against compromise with evil and false worship.
4. Reveal the ultimate triumph of Christ and His kingdom.

Main Theme and Working Structure

The central message of Revelation is: **Jesus Christ is Lord, and He will ultimately defeat evil, judge the world, and establish His eternal kingdom.**

Structure of the Book

1. **Introduction and Vision of Christ (Chapters 1–3)**
 - John receives a vision of the risen Christ.
 - Messages are sent to seven churches in Asia Minor.
2. **The Throne Room of Heaven (Chapters 4–5)**
 - God is worshiped as Creator and King.
 - Christ, the Lamb, is found worthy to open the scroll of God's purposes.
3. **Judgments and Tribulations (Chapters 6–18)**
 - The seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls of judgment.
 - Symbolic portrayals of conflict between God's kingdom and evil powers.
4. **Christ's Victory (Chapters 19–20)**
 - The return of Christ.
 - The defeat of Satan and final judgment.
5. **New Heaven and New Earth (Chapters 21–22)**
 - God's eternal dwelling with His people.
 - The New Jerusalem and restoration of creation.

Outline:

J. M. Ford's outline, based on the views of scholars who see **seven** series of **seven** in Revelation (adapted from R. J. Loenertzop, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, tr. H. J. Carpenter, London: Sheed & Ward, 1947).
THE FIRST SEPTET: After a preliminary section to the whole apocalypse (1:1-8) and an introduction to the first septet (1:9-20) there are seven prophecies to the seven churches:

- 1 Ephesus, 2:1-7
- 2 Smyrna, 2:8-11
- 3 Pergamum, 2:12-17
- 4 Thyatira, 2:18-29
- 5 Sardis, 3:1-6
- 6 Philadelphia, 3:7-13
- 7 Laodicea, 3:14-22

THE SECOND SEPTET: After chapters 4—5, which are introductory to the second septet, come the seven seals:

- 1 The white horse, 6:1-2
- 2 The red horse, 6:3-4
- 3 The black horse, 6:5-6
- 4 The yellowish-green horse, 6:7-8
- 5 The souls under the altar, 6:9-11
- 6 The earthquake, 6:12-17
- 7 The seventh seal seems to comprise all of the third septet.

THE THIRD SEPTET: After a preparatory vision (8:1-6) the seven trumpets are sounded:

- 1 The earth is set on fire, 8:7
- 2 The sea is turned to blood, 8:8-9
- 3 The rivers and springs become bitter, 8:10-11

4 The heavenly bodies are dimmed, 8:12-13

5 The locusts, 9:1-12

6 The horsemen, 9:13—11:14

7 The seventh trumpet seems to comprise all the fourth septet.

THE FOURTH SEPTET: After an introductory section (11:6-19) seven signs appear:

1 The woman with child, 12:1-2

2 The dragon, 12:3-6

3 The beast rising out of the sea, 13:1-10

4 The beast rising out of the earth, 13:11-18

5 The Lamb and the virgins, 14:1-5

6 The seven angels, counting one like a son of man, 14:6-20

7 The seventh sign seems to comprise all the fifth septet.

THE FIFTH SEPTET: After an introductory section in 15:1—16:1, seven bowls of wrath are poured out:

1 On the earth, 16:2

2 On the sea, 16:3

3 On the waters, 16:4-7

4 On the sun, 16:8-9

5 On the throne of the beast, 16:10-11

6 On the Euphrates, 16:12-16

7 The seventh bowl seems to comprise all the sixth septet.

THE SIXTH SEPTET: After an introductory section (16:17-21) there are seven stages in the fall of Babylon:

1 The description of Babylon, 17:14

2 The explanation of Babylon, 17:7-18

3 The fall of Babylon, 18:1-8

4 The mourning for Babylon, 18:9-20

5 The final ruin of Babylon, 18:21-24

6 The song of praise at her fall, 19:1-5

7 The seventh stage seems to comprise all the seventh septet.

THE SEVENTH SEPTET: After an introductory portion (19:6-10) there occur the following scenes:

1 The rider on the white horse, 19:11-16

2 The supper of God, 19:17-18

3 The capture of the two beasts, 19:19-21

4 The angel of the abyss, 20:1-3

5 The first resurrection, 20:4-10

6 The judgment scene, 20:11-15

7 The new Jerusalem, 21:1—22:5

Rev 22:6-21 is a recapitulation and finale but does contain Christian additions and doublets.

Thank you for your attention; God bless you. See you tomorrow by God's grace.
Course coordinated by Bishop Tony Ewherido