

Sermon for Easter VI Year C 2025  
*The Lamb is the Lamp*

Over the past weeks on the Sundays of Easter,  
we've had a few sermons on the letter by John of Patmos  
we know as Revelation.

We talked about how this was a letter written by a particular person to  
seven particular congregations located in what is now coastal Turkey.

It was a letter for their time.

It is not a collection of secret codes for us.

We've talked about how this letter was written in a particular literary  
form called "apocalyptic."

Apocalyptic literature has been around for a long time.

It isn't supposed to be scary.

It's just a style of literature.

It's full of symbolic language, mythical characters

and even fantastical action all in the service

of pulling back the curtain

on the cosmic battle between good and evil . . .

oh, and spoiler alert . . . God wins! God always has the last word.

All of the fantastic symbolism and fantastically drawn creatures  
are meant to show how the consequences

of how the great cosmic battle between good and evil

are reflected in the struggles of regular people in the real world.

We never were meant

to take any of these symbols and creatures literally.

They were all meant to heighten

what is at stake in the battle between good and evil.

We also talked about how Revelation was meant, in part, to help the  
people of those seven churches hold onto the confession that Jesus is  
Lord even when the world around them was a full-on dumpster fire.

That confession also explicitly meant that for them,

Caesar was not their Lord.

That confession is important for all Christians of all generations.  
As one of my seminary professors used to say about this letter—  
It has many visions, but only one revelation.  
It intends to reveal the victory of Christ completely fulfilled.

So, in the lesson from Revelation for today,  
we see that this letter is not just about telling the people to hold on tight,  
it also offers a vision of how God intends the world to be.  
God intends, according to this vision,  
a world with open borders and gates . . . a city without walls . . .  
a place that welcomes all people.  
A place where all means all!  
It's a place where there is no darkness.  
A place where the one true God is on the throne (not Caesar or any of  
Caesar's later day successors) and where all of the world's darkness,  
in all the forms that darkness takes—lie corruption, war, hunger,  
ignorance, nationalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism and  
every other fear and hate fueled ugliness gets faded into oblivion  
in the radiant brilliance of God's light and love.

The vision at the end of this letter shows that God intends for the world  
to be a place where justice flows like crystal clear water down the  
middle of the city's public streets—where the water is available for all to  
drink from freely.  
It shows the Tree of Life, a tree always bearing fruit  
so that no one ever hungers,  
whether that be hunger for food or for justice or equality or dignity.  
In God's vision for the world, people are not degraded and dehumanized  
for being hungry for an abundant life or thirsty for equal justice.  
In God's vision for the world, the hungers and thirsts of all of humanity  
are fully and forever satisfied with abundance . . .  
All hungers and thirsts are redeemed to their original goodness  
and made holy.

When Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not,  
everyone has all that they need and everyone has life in abundance.  
When Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not,  
justice, peace, healing and wholeness are available to all of creation  
and can be found as freely and abundantly as leaves on an evergreen tree  
and as continuously as water in a stream.

This final book of our Christian scriptures was a letter of encouragement  
sent to a people stuck in a system of chaotic fear, everyday violence,  
senseless oppression, and systemic paranoia that led inevitably to anger,  
hatred, and horrific inhumanities with no obvious way out.

It was a letter sent to a people ruled by a vengeful and fearful ruler in a  
seemingly unchangeable system, enabled by people who thought they  
could manipulate the beast they had created.

Sadly, only to realize too late that they too  
will be consumed by the beast as well.

John wrote down his visions to encourage the faithful to stay strong  
and to give them a direction to walk . . . even when that direction meant  
walking through hurricane winds and endless miles of knee deep sand  
toward God's vision for the world.

This letter was written to a particular people trying to walk faithfully  
toward God's vision for the world even while living under the thumb of  
the servants of the beast.

Even though it was—as I have said—someone else's mail—  
it makes for good reading whenever people find themselves  
living under any sort of power who stirs up their minions of beasts and  
demons to spread fear, anger, hatred, and suffering into the world.

It was someone else's mail, but it makes for good reading  
when anyone needs some encouragement to hold firm to the confession  
that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not.

It makes for good reading when people need a reminder that no earthly  
power or any of the hate-fueled systems will have the last word.

“All storms run out of rain,” as Maya Angelou pointed out.

It may be a strange and mystifying letter, full of visions,  
but it does reveal Christ—the Lamb of God—  
will reign, will have the last word.  
That reign begins in our own hearts and minds and in our life together.  
When Christ is all-in-all, good has overcome evil,  
and justice will flow like streams,  
and peace and healing and reconciliation will flow on and on.  
This is what God intends for us and for all people.  
Who is going to stop God from getting God's way?

Many have and many are trying to distort God's vision  
and stop God's way, but . . .  
those efforts, the letter we know of Revelation, will not ultimately win.  
John's visions—scary though many may seem—hold out God's promise  
of renewal and life to us,  
the light of the world is the risen Christ  
who indeed is making all things new.  
This is the single "revelation" we need  
to keep walking in the way of the Lamb.