

Sermon Guide - Sunday, August 23, 2026

Current Series: The Revelation

The Antichrist. Armageddon. The Beast. 666. For centuries, the book of Revelation has fascinated, frightened, and confused Christians, but what if we've been so focused on decoding its mysteries that we've missed its main message? *The Revelation* is a 3-month journey through the Bible's final book, exploring its controversial prophecies, warnings to the Church, and breathtaking vision of the future. Along the way, we'll separate Scripture from speculation and discover that Revelation wasn't written just to make us afraid of what's coming. It was written to reveal **Jesus Christ** - the King who reigns over all other powers, the Lamb who conquers evil, and the Savior who promises that pain, death, and darkness won't have the last word. **The future belongs to Jesus, and that should change how we live right now.**

Today's Message: Part 2 - Love & Law

Would you say you're more of a "love" person or more of a "law" person, and why?

Revelation 1:19-20 - "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

"Write... what is now and what will take place later." What chapters of Revelation cover "what is now"? And which chapters cover "what will take place later"?

Revelation 2-3 includes seven letters written to seven churches scattered throughout Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Why did Jesus write a different message to each congregation, instead of one general letter to them all?

To the Church in Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-3 - To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: *These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.*

What, specifically, did Jesus praise the Christians in Ephesus for?

Acts 19:1-5 (~50 AD) - While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Ephesians 3:14-19 (~60 AD) - For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in **love**, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the **love** of Christ, and to know this **love** that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

What do we know about the church in Ephesus (how/when it was founded, opposition it overcame, issues it faced, etc)?

Revelation 2:4-5 (~90 AD) - *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."*

What were the Christians in Ephesus lacking?

Why are long-time Christians typically more prone to “keeping the law without love”?

1 Corinthians 13:2 - “If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

TRUTH without _____ CEASES TO BE _____

To the Church in Thyatira

Revelation 2:18-19 - To the angel of the church in Thyatira write, *These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.*

What did Jesus appreciate about the Christians in Thyatira?

Revelation 2:20-22 - *Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.*

What were the Christians in Thyatira lacking?

Who was Jezebel in the Old Testament, and why did Jesus liken her to the problematic woman in Thyatira?

What reasons might a church like the one in Thyatira - that was known for its love - give for *not* standing up to this “Jezebel”?

LOVE without _____ CEASES TO BE _____

What are some examples of situations in which love without truth is no longer loving?

John 1:14 - “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory... full of grace and truth.”

In one of the situations you listed above, how can the Christian response be full of both *grace and truth*?

Matthew 22:34-40 - Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

How did Jesus explain the relationship between *love* and the *Law*?

If you tend to err on the side of “Law” or “Truth,” like the Christians in Ephesus, what are some practical ways that you can recover the love you had at first?

If you tend to err on the side of “Love” or “Grace,” like the Christians in Thyatira, what are some practical ways that you can hold the line on Truth?

Ephesians 4:14-16 - Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Some people speak the truth but not in love. Some people try to love without speaking the truth. **Think of one way you can choose to speak the truth in love this week:**