

Revelation

Revelation 13:1-14, 16:13-16, 19:11-21, 20:1-15, 21:1-6

Based on NLT

Introduction

Jesus' followers continued to tell others the Good News about Jesus. Many of them suffered and were killed for their belief*. One of Jesus' followers, John, was with him while he was on the earth. John was imprisoned on a deserted island because he told others about Jesus. When John was an old man on this island, God gave him a precious gift. God showed him what will happen when Jesus comes back at the end of this world as we know it.*

Revelation 16:15

John knew that Jesus is coming back! And Jesus said to him, "Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Happy are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."

Revelation 13:1-15

In his vision, John said that he saw...a beast rising up out of the sea...Satan* gave the beast his own power and throne and great authority. (Sometimes we call this beast the 'antichrist.')*...People worshiped* Satan for giving the beast such power, and they also worshiped the beast. "Who is as great as the beast?" they exclaimed. "Who is able to fight against him?"...And the beast was allowed to wage war against God's chosen people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. And all the people who belong to this world *and did not believe in Jesus* worshiped the beast...Then I saw another

beast come up out of the earth...*He acted as a spokesman* for the first beast.* He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and its people to worship the first beast...He did astounding miracles*, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching...And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world...Then *it was* commanded that anyone refusing to worship *the first beast* must die.

Revelation 16:14, 16

The beast, the spokesman, and their evil spirits gathered all the rulers of the world in one place to wage war against Almighty God himself...to a place with the...name Armageddon.*

Revelation 19: 11-21

Then *John* saw heaven* opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was *Jesus*---named Faithful and True, *because* he judges fairly and wages a righteous* war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns...The armies of heaven...followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword...On his robe...was written this title: King of all kings and Lord* of all lords...Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army. And the beast was captured, and with him the false *spokesman* who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false *spokesman* were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And the vultures all gorged themselves on the dead bodies.

Revelation 20:1-4

...Satan *was*...bound...in chains for a thousand years...Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished...And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their forehead or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with *Jesus* for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:7-15

When the thousand years come to an end, Satan will be let out of his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations...in every corner of the earth. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the seashore. And *John* saw them as they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God's people...But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them. Then *Satan*, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake..., joining the beast and the false *spokesman*. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever...Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire...And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life---that book that shows who has chosen to follow *Jesus*---was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1-6

Then *John* saw a new heaven and a new earth, *because* the old heaven and the old

earth had disappeared...And *he* saw the *chosen* city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. *John* heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, *because* what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” And he also said, “It is finished! I am...the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life...”

Example Crafted Story

This story starts with one of Jesus' followers who also went everywhere telling people about him. His name was John. He was one of Jesus' closest followers who walked with him when he was on earth. John was imprisoned because he told people about Jesus, and he was sent to a desert island.

When he was an old man on that desert island, God gave him an amazing gift---he gave him a vision about the end of time as we know it and about how Jesus will return. So John described for us what's going to happen at the end of time. He quoted Jesus during this vision.

Jesus said, “When I come, I'm going to come like a thief comes in the night. You won't know when I'm coming, but what's important is that you are ready when I come, so that you won't be

ashamed when I do come.”

And John described what the world was like just before Jesus comes back. In that world, Satan has great power. In fact, Satan will bring up someone that John described as a beast. Others call him the Antichrist. And Satan will give him huge power. He'll be a ruler over many nations. He'll even have his own prophet—John called this prophet the second beast. And this second beast will perform amazing miracles in the name of the first beast, and he'll make people worship the beast. He'll even make a huge idol of the beast, and he'll make people worship the idol of the beast. And if you don't, you'll be killed. And many people will be beheaded because they refused to worship the beast.*

This beast will gather an army together and he and his prophet will gather this army in one place to wage war against God. They'll come and gather in a place we call Armageddon. And John described as he watched this huge army gathering at Armageddon---and he looked up and he saw the heavens opened. And he saw a white horse with a rider. He described the rider as having eyes that were burning like flames, and the words coming out of his mouth were like a sword. And as he rode out, the armies of heaven followed him. On his robe was written his title: the king of kings---the lord of lords. It was Jesus.

As he came out to meet the prophet and his armies, the beast and the prophet were captured and they were thrown into a lake of burning fire that burned for eternity. And then Jesus turned, and with his voice he killed everyone in the enemy army. Then Satan was taken, and he was bound up, and he was imprisoned for

one thousand years. And after that every person who had died because they refused to worship the beast---those who were beheaded---they were raised back to life. And they reigned in peace over all the earth with Jesus for a thousand years.

At the end of the thousand years, Satan was allowed to go free. He deceived the nations and turned them away from Jesus. Satan gathered a huge army, greater than all the grains of sands on the seashore, to wage war against Jesus. They came to the plains outside the city where Jesus was. John described the huge army that was there, and as they arrived and settled, fire came from heaven and utterly destroyed the army.

And Satan was taken and thrown into the lake of burning fire where he was to be tormented along with the beast and the prophet of the beast for eternity. And then Jesus took death itself and threw it into the lake of fire.

Then, every person, from the beginning of time until that moment, who had died was raised back to life, and they were judged. If you were a follower of Jesus and believed in him, then your name was written in the Book of Life. But if your name was not in the Book of Life, you were taken and thrown into the lake of fire.

Then John described how the earth and the heaven as it was disappeared and a new heaven and a new earth replaced it. There was a voice from heaven that called out, “Now God lives among his people. He will be their God and he will live with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more suffering, no more

tears, no more sorrow, no more pain.” And Jesus turned to John, and he said, “I am the beginning and the end. Write all these things down so that everyone will know that if they will come to me and follow me they can live with me forever.

Why This Story?

This story is part of a long-term discipleship set taken from Luke, Acts, and the Epistles, but can be told as part of any advanced or in-depth discipleship program.

This story clearly shows Jesus as the victor over evil and death at the end of time.

This story is a brief summary of what will happen in the end times, as well as a clear presentation of the choice we have to follow Jesus or not.

Story Crafting

This story is meant to be a broad summary of the second comings of Jesus as described in Revelation. It is meant to show the listener that Jesus is all-powerful and victorious as king in the end, and that those on his side win. As a broad summary, many events were omitted from this story. However, we have insured that this summary presents an accurate portrayal of the plotline.

We have re-chronologized Jesus’ statement that he is coming like a thief in the night to the beginning of the story so that it can set up the events that follow.

We have chosen to use the name for the antichrist that John himself uses---the *beast*.

We have chosen to simply identify the dragon as Satan himself, and the rider on the white horse as Jesus, in order to reduce confusion for our listeners.

We have described the Book of Life for those listeners who may not be familiar with the term.

In the crafted story, we have chosen to interpret the sword that comes out of Jesus’ mouth and that kills the enemies as the “Word of God”---his voice itself, as many commentaries also interpret it.

Words/Phrases to

Consider

Followers/Believers*

These words may be interchangeable in these stories. **Follower/believer** denotes a person who has chosen to believe in and follow Jesus exclusively. We have chosen to not use a word such as *Christian*, which may have unwanted connotations in certain cultures, and may even be understood wrongly. In some South Asian cultures, **believer** may refer to a person who worships outside of the “traditional,” historical church.

Belief*

This describes man’s response to God’s promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one’s faith/confidence in God.

Satan*

This name refers to the spiritual being, whom God created, who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. You may need to qualify the name ‘Satan’ with ‘leader of the evil spirits’ if ‘Satan’ is unknown to your audience.

Worship*

Worship's foundation is the idea of 'service,' shown through showing awe and wonder to God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In every story in this story set where 'worship' is used, it implies more than just performing rituals; it includes the heart of love, awe and wonder of the worshiper for God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea.

Spokesman/Prophet*

Choose a term for 'prophet' that adequately describes the prophet's function. A prophet:

1. receives a call from God;
2. takes God's message to men because he had been given it by God himself;
3. has as his only priority bringing the Word of God to men. We chose 'spokesman' because, in English, it can convey these three meanings but doesn't carry the unwanted connotation of a fortuneteller. If you use a religious term, be sure that it has meaning that the average hearer will understand.

Master/Lord*

The original 'Lord' in the New Testament has the connotation here of 'master,' 'supreme head,' or 'owner.' At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as 'sir.' In some stories, as noted in the story, the original "Lord" is an indication of the speaker's affirmation that Jesus is God. In those cases, a word that would be used to show Jesus' authority over us and our allegiance to him should be used.

Miracles*

This words refer to powerful deeds; a happening that evokes awe; something that points to a truth beyond itself.

Evil Spirits*

'Evil spirit' refers to spiritual beings who serve Satan as his agents, being under his authority. These spiritual beings have power to oppress a human being and even take control of him. We know from the Bible that evil spirits were created by God and chose to disobey him. It seems that many South Asian languages do not have a term that can express that adequately. (Their 'evil spirit' may refer to a dead person's spirit that 'haunts' people.) Try to choose a word that refers to an independent spirit being that is evil and opposed to God. If there is one, you can also use a neutral word for an independent spirit being and add a qualification like 'spirit from Satan,' or 'bad/evil spirit.' Be aware that extra explanation might be necessary during the discussion time.

Heaven*

Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. When it refers to the place where God lives, it is also the ultimate destination of believers. If your language does not have an adequate word for 'heaven,' or if the hearers do not understand adequately the concept of heaven at this stage, you can replace it with 'the place where God lives.'

Righteous*

The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on relationship between God and man, or between man and man. 'Righteousness' refers to holiness. The CEV (Contemporary English Version)

translates this concept in Isaiah 53:11 in the following way:

*...he will take the punishment
for the sins of others,
so that many of them
will no longer be guilty.*

In other words, 'righteousness' takes away guilt.

Worldview

Many cultures attach significance to colors. Be aware of what the color white would indicate in your culture.

Some cultures may have an end-times story or prophecy. Be aware of what that story is, because some may be similar to this story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for all the "words and phrases to consider" that you have been using throughout the story set.

This story is a full-circle ending for a story set that begins with the Son of Man story. Your audience will understand this story best if they have some idea of Jesus as King.

Story Set Themes

Epistles

End-times Prophecy

Kingship of Jesus

New Life

Victory over evil

Victory over suffering