

Revelation 1:4-8

4 John
to the seven churches
that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace
from him who is and who was
and who is to come,
and from the seven spirits
who are before his throne,

⁵and from Jesus Christ,
the faithful witness,
the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us
and freed us from our sins
by his blood,

⁶and made us to be a kingdom,
priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion
for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look!
He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account
all the tribes of the earth will wail.
So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ 'I am the Alpha and the Omega',
says the Lord God,
who is and who was and who is to come,
the Almighty.

Reading Revelation This Week – and Season

The lectionary tours Revelation in Easter Season Year C
Selecting worship texts from c. 1, 5, 7, 21, 22
How's your context for those excerpts?

I read through Revelation 3 years ago, in 2019 –
Take a look at www.hereticslikeus.com

With an overview
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/04/dusting-off-onion-easter-day-2019.html>
or this week's text:
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/04/wednesday-week-1-rev-11-8-peeling-brown.html>

You can still download audio with those links.

Who is writing to whom,
With messages from whom,
to equip the audience for what roles?

Unpack that slowly,
In real life time and space,
Then in supernatural, mythic, cosmic context!

I read this as a 'sound and light show',
Intended to be performed, dramatically,
And received, in your imagination.

We live in a modern, 'disenchanted' world –
We 're-enchant' with movie franchises –
But this one defies filmic treatment
(though the 'Left Behind' series tried)

Can you place us,
In this 'kairos', beyond 'chronos'?
Here, between promise and threat,
Heavenly and diabolical?

John 20:19-31

19 When it was evening on that day,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house
where the disciples had met
were locked
for fear of the Judeans,
Jesus came
and stood among them
and said,
'Peace be with you.'

²⁰After he said this,
he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples rejoiced
when they saw the Lord.

²¹Jesus said to them again,
'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me,
so I send you.'

²²When he had said this,
he breathed on them
and said to them,
'Receive the Holy Spirit.

²³If you forgive the sins of any,
they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any,
they are retained.'

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin),
one of the twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.

²⁵So the other disciples told him,
'We have seen the Lord.'

But he said to them,
'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands,
and put my finger in the mark of the nails
and my hand in his side,
I will not believe.'

26 A week later
his disciples were again in the house,
and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut,
Jesus came
and stood among them
and said,
'Peace be with you.'

²⁷Then he said to Thomas,
'Put your finger here and see my hands.
Reach out your hand and put it in my side.
Do not doubt but believe.'

²⁸Thomas answered him,
'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹Jesus said to him,
'Have you believed because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.'

30 Now Jesus did many other signs
in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.

³¹But these are written
so that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Messiah,
the Son of God,
and that through believing
you may have life
in his name.

Reading the Fourth Gospel This Week – and This Season

The lectionary selects John texts, in Year C of Luke, in Easter

We get excerpts from c. 20, 21, 10, 13, 14, 17
From resurrection appearances to Good Shepherd,
Paraclete, love and unity prayers

How do you see that the fourth gospel differs
From the patterns of the first three 'synoptic' ones,
What distinctive features would you list?

This first week, we're past Easter Day,
With a couple of resurrection appearances,
To the disciples – adding Thomas the second time

Why did Thomas resist the others' report of the first visit?
How was he satisfied by the second?
How does Jesus get through locked doors,
And show wounds, in your mental movie of John?

What implied audience,
Beyond the original disciples,
Is addressed by these accounts?
How are those hearers like you – or not like you?

The text ends with a summary note about 'many other signs'
A self-conscious author's voice, who edited stuff in and out –
What's the principle of including stories here,
According to the writer?

The gospel seems to end here –
But there is a chapter 21,
From which we'll hear next week.

How do you imagine
The writing and rewriting,
Editing and revision,
From Jesus' death
Till the turn of the first century CE?