
Revelation

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Dean Sam Candler**

This article is an excerpt from Sam Candler's sermon at the last 4:00 choral service of the 2018-2019 season, whose full title is "The Revelation in the Book of The Revelation to John." Read the full sermon [here](#).

I'm different from a lot of Episcopalians. I really love the Book of The Revelation to John. Some people think it is the craziest book in the Bible. I think it is, too, but I still love it. Some people think it is utterly indecipherable. I think it is, too, but I still love it.

Some people think that the book of Revelation is better left to the emotion-charged raving rapturists! You know who they are. They are those people who have figured out every hidden clue in the book, and they seem to discover the same thing every time: they're saved and you are not!

I do not think that. I do not think that the Book of Revelation gives us the detailed itinerary of the last days. It is a shame that this book has been hijacked by such terrorists as the post-tribulation millennialists, and the pre-rapture tribulationists.

I am glad we read from The Revelation to John, the last book of the Bible today; because today is the last Sunday of our choral afternoon offerings. Like us celebrating our last 4:00 service of the season, this book is presumed to be about last things.

But the book is not a prophecy of the literal last days of earth. Instead, I believe, the book is a vision of what is occurring now. And it provides a vision of what is going on in heaven, right now! In chapter after chapter, the writer, John (who is most definitely not the same John who wrote the Gospel), the writer John describes what people are doing in heaven.

And what are people doing in heaven? What are the saints doing in heaven? ... Well, they are singing! They are worshipping! Listen to some of these famous passages that they sing: ... As soon as John starts the vision, he sees the four living creatures singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, to the Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 4:8). And then, every creature in heaven singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might, forever and ever" (Revelation 5:13). And the angels are singing, "Amen, Blessing and glory and wisdom to our God forever" (Revelation 7:12).

This goes on and on and on, in the Book of Revelation! This is a book about singing! For us, who are also singing in our last 4:00 service of the season. Now, I say this sensitively and tenderly to those who don't like to sing in church. But, here it is: you better learn to sing in church. Because, once you get to heaven, singing seems to be pretty much the only thing we're going to be doing up there! Singing in church is practicing for singing in heaven! When we gather to pray and sing on Sundays, we are meant to be practicing for the kingdom of heaven.

... Finally, here in the passage we heard today, Revelation, chapter 21, verse 3, we hear what that singing accomplishes. ... Yes, here in the next to last chapter of the last book of the Bible, the writer finally reveals the great revelation of the Book of Revelation! John says, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them.'"

When we sing, God is with us. Whether our song is a praise or a lament, a canticle or a psalm, an anthem or a hymn, whether it is the first Sunday of the season, and especially when it is the last Sunday of the season, our singing brings us into community with God. The home of God is among mortals.

That is the great revelation in The Book of Revelation. In this last book of the bible, salvation is not accomplished by the ways of this world. Salvation is not about winning some violent battle. Salvation is not about Armageddon and who will be left behind. Salvation is that God dwells in humanity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip