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Thinning the Veil
Encountering Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation

May 20, 2025 | \$26, 216 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0922-2

The Biblical book of Revelation—a text that, for many, remains shrouded in mystery and confusion. The cryptic symbols and visions of the end times often evoke anxiety among believers. Is it even possible to find hope and spiritual growth within its pages? *Thinning the Veil* is not just a book; it's a spiritual guide that combines Biblical scholarship with personal reflection, making the study of Revelation accessible and enriching.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation doesn't start where we assume. We expect prophetic utterances that predict the future. Maybe our future. Maybe someone else's. Or maybe just the cataclysmic end of all things.

Yet, Revelation doesn't begin here. It doesn't situate the reader at the table of a cosmic fortuneteller ready to divine the Christian tea leaves designed to serve our desire to control and conquer what will be. No, Revelation overlooks our interests and sidesteps our questions, evading our expectations altogether in search of something greater. Something deeper. Something more along the lines of healing and transformation than fortunetelling and code cracking.

Revelation thins the veil separating heaven and earth to provide perspective and a path to overcome what's broken in us, around us, and because of us. Revelation reaches into the recesses of our souls to confront the portions we've entrusted to the darkness instead of the light. Revelation unveils mysteries of healing located only when "in the Spirit" (Rev 1:10) and opposes the deceptions of death imprisoning Christian and non-Christian alike. Woven into the scenes of beasts, battles, and satanic suffering is a clarion call for all to "come." To drink deep of the streams of living water. To taste the fruit of the tree of life. To join the choir of heaven singing songs of God's redemption and reign. Not just in the future but in the here and now. More than prediction, Revelation is an invitation. An invocation. An encounter with the Word become flesh, with the conqueror of death, with the crucified King. With the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Father, who, by God's grace, walks among the lampstands both comforting and confronting a world captivated by conflict.

Last words of a loved one are treasures beyond measure. We race overnight to their deathbed, hoping to hear one last word. If, by God's grace, they do speak, we gather each word into the box of our heart and label it "Fragile: Handle with care."

I still cling to the last words my mentor ever said to me. I dust them off, especially on dark days, and recite them to remind me of my anchor. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and mere months before he passed, we stood by his car readied to venture home. We embraced, knowing this could be our last goodbye. Then, he stepped back, held my shoulders, and gently repeated three or four times, "Shane, just hold on to Jesus. Just hold on to Jesus." We wiped our tears. Allowed the silence to speak love's three words. And he drove away.

My grandma's last words were more simple, if not more circuitous. Struggling with Alzheimer's, she repeated the same dialogue with me several times, always beginning with, "Well, Shane-daner! When did you get here?" I'd tell her we just arrived. She'd look around the room, point at my daughter, and lean over with hushed tones, "Well, who is that young lady?"

Smiling, I'd respond, "Well, Mamaw, that's my daughter Paige." Lunging back in her chair, she'd look at me exasperated (with a tinge of confusion), "No! You're not old enough to have a daughter that age?"

I'd nod my head, smiling back (with a tinge of sadness). "Yep, that's my baby girl."

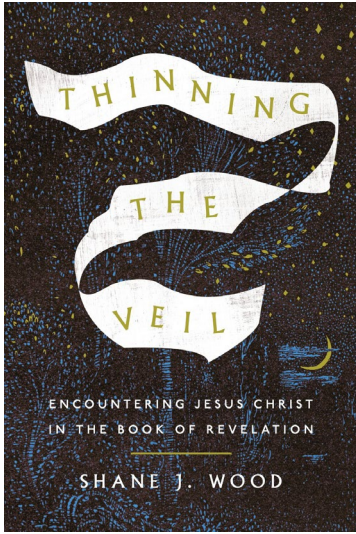
She'd laugh, shake her head, and softly say, "Well, I just can't believe it." We'd pause for a moment or two. She'd reach for my hand, placing it between hers. With tears welling up, she'd whisper, "I'm really glad you're here."



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Shortly thereafter, she'd look around the room, glance up at me, and her eyes would widen, "Well, Shane-daner! When did you get here?" Repeating the dialogue anew. Time and again. Grace upon grace.

Last words are as precious as they are rife with meaning. They capture a piece of our heart if not our curiosity. They direct our paths if not our questions. They are treasured and repeated, and serve as guides for what comes next.

Last words matter. And first words are no different.

I'll never forget when my oldest son, Zion, said my name. It was the same electricity I'd feel when all four of my kids would gibber the same two syllables, "Da-da." For weeks, he'd been jabbering and grunting, without any discernible patterns, but I was still straining and hoping he'd parrot my exaggerated pleas, "Say da-da. . . . Say daaaa-daaaa."

Finally, it happened. Sitting in his highchair, looking intently at a piece of mashed food, with slobber soaking his onesie, without my prompting, amid his indiscernible gibberish, yet clearly and without question, I heard it: "Da-da."

I jumped up and let out a cry that startled him to tears. But that's okay; I was crying too. Moments later, after he and I both gathered ourselves, he said it again, "Da-da." A name with variations I never tire of hearing. But the first time is simply precious. Because, like last words, first words matter.

Whether the words come in the opening scene or at the final bow, first and last words matter because they communicate what we value. What we cherish. Where our heart resides, and where our hope finds its home.

And the book of Revelation is no different.

—Taken from the introduction, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"



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Shane J. Wood (PhD, University of Edinburgh) is professor of New Testament and its origins at Ozark Christian College. In addition to speaking at churches and conferences worldwide, Shane produces a variety of audio, video, and written resources available at shanejwood.com. He is the author of *Between Two Trees: Our Transformation from Death to Life* and *The Alter-Imperial Paradigm: Empire Studies and the Book of Revelation*. Shane and his wife, Sara, have four children and live in southwest Missouri.

Revelation as Invitation

What led to your interest in writing about the book of Revelation?

Shane J. Wood: The book of Revelation is misunderstood and misused both inside and outside the church. Relegating the text to prediction has marred the book's reputation and maimed its purpose beyond recognition. Revelation longs to do more than prognosticate, longs to be more than a cosmic jigsaw puzzle obscuring while revealing future events for those insightful enough to sleuth its clues. Revelation's target is far grander, far more elaborate and intrusive. Revelation's target is the transformation of the reader. Calling them from complacency to vigor, from rebellion to repentance, from death to life in Jesus Christ. The condition of the church in the West would greatly benefit from Revelation's message. Yes, renovation is needed, but into what? Or to what end? Yes, repentance is necessary, but from what actions? And to what end? Yes, transformation is essential, but into whose image? And to what end? My goal in writing this book is to open the heart of John's Apocalypse, to redeem a neglected and abused book, and to offer the Revelation of Jesus Christ anew.

What is your main thesis in *Thinning the Veil*?

Wood: The first five words of the book set the course for the rest of the Apocalypse: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It's easy to forget this simple statement, especially in the chaos of the seals, the violence of the trumpets, and the suffering at the hands of the great red dragon. Yet all 404 verses of Revelation intend to do the same thing: reveal Jesus. Unveil Christ. Remind a wayward people of "who God is" and "what He demands of His people." *Thinning the Veil* intentionally keeps Jesus at the center of all twenty-two chapters of Revelation, offering unique insight into God's remedies for our suffocating loneliness (ch. 1), shattered intimacy (ch. 2), wayward action (ch. 3), distorted identity (ch. 4), misunderstood pursuits (ch. 5), forgotten foes (ch. 6), overlooked teachers (ch. 7), misplaced trust (ch. 8), devastating deception (ch. 9), and altered ends. Combining exegetical insight with everyday stories, *Thinning the Veil* celebrates the book of Revelation as an encounter with Jesus Christ, the crucified King who traverses the chasm of our loneliness with his nail-scarred hands, healing us with a tender touch and a befuddling command, "Do not fear." Additionally, this book offers interactive elements at the end of each chapter to invite the reader to go further in biblical study, the text at hand, and in their spiritual practices.

Who did you have in mind as you were writing this book?

Wood:

1. The Thoughtful Christian: The Christian who sits in the pew week after week longing for more. More depth, more study, more authenticity. This is the Christian excited both by the possibility of being stretched beyond their exegetical abilities as well as in their spiritual walk with Christ. The book's cadence, authenticity, and end-of-chapter offers will all resonate deeply with this target audience.
2. The Seminarian/Experienced Pastor: The second group that will definitely resonate with this book are people training for ministry or already located in ministry. This book surfaces deep spiritual questions, providing space for them to interact with what they've felt yet maybe not been able to articulate. This book also offers them to go deeper in their understanding of Christ, the mission, and the text of Revelation.



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Q & A



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3. The Scholar: They will be interested in my insights and conclusions on some perennially difficult texts. For example, the extended argument for “Christians” as the grapes in the winepress of God’s fury (Revelation 14), the foundational myth of Rome as the backdrop to the imagery of the great prostitute’s demise (Revelation 17), and the release of Satan as imaging God’s triumphal procession (Revelation 19-20) are all unique contributions to Revelation studies.

What do you hope your book contributes to the study of Revelation?

Wood:

1. New, fresh exegetical insights on the book of Revelation (e.g., Rev. 8-11; 14; 19-20)
2. A challenge to allow the unveiling of Christ to guide our engagement with the text instead of theological categories
3. A wedding of scholarship and vulnerability



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