

**Funeral Sermon for Nicholas  
Jeremy Hodson  
11 a.m. on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016  
at the City of London Cemetery and  
Crematorium**

Text: Revelation 21:1-7

Sermon:

May this be in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and may my spoken words point us towards the living Word of God.

The Book of Revelation of St John the Divine comes last in the Bible, and it's a bit strange. If I say that its name in the original Greek is *apokalupsis* – apocalypse, in other words – that tells you a lot.

Much of it is a disturbing vision of the the end of the world:

there came a great earthquake;  
the sun became black as sack-  
cloth, the full moon became  
like blood, and the stars of the  
sky fell to the earth as the fig  
tree drops its winter fruit when  
shaken by a gale.

That's just one early passage. It goes on and on like that. Interspersed with visions of Heaven presided over by Christ as the Saviour Lamb, we meet the four horsemen of the Apocalypse; Armageddon; Satan the great dragon; and other terrifying beasts of torment.

But after all the violent destruction comes that serene vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, adorned like a bride for her husband.'

When written nineteen centuries ago, this book of prophecy was directed at the Roman Empire's insistence that its subject peoples worship the Roman gods. St John the

Divine was predicting a terrible end to such blasphemy.

But like all great stories, Revelation towers above the narrow bounds of its time and context. For me, it is a powerful metaphor about the evils of this world, and a vision of what a loving God has in store for us.

Thinking about my brother Nick and his final years, I saw that, though the people he loved were still about him, the activities and the places he loved were becoming inaccessible.

You could call it his personal Apocalypse. In its very final stages it robbed him of almost all movement, all independence and any but the most rudimentary communication.

But now, at last, that is over – for him, though we are left, perhaps, with our own Apocalypse of grief.

‘The former things are passed away.’  
But there is something to come. He –  
and we – are left with that vision of the  
new Jerusalem and of a God who – far  
from abandoning us – has his  
tabernacle, his home, with us.

And God shall wipe away all  
tears from their eyes; and there  
shall be no more death, neither  
sorrow, nor crying ...

‘I will be his God, and he shall be  
my son.’ **Amen.**