

# REVELATION BIBLE STUDY

## ***CLASS OVERVIEW:***

In most Christian circles, the book of Revelation is either wildly popular or is completely avoided. For some, the book provides a detailed code for unlocking clues to the end times; for others, the book is just confusing and even frightening. In this study, we will discover that the book of Revelation is vitally important for the Church today. In the book, we are shown that the Triune God will defeat his foes, save his people, and restore all things. Revelation is not an end times riddle to be unraveled, nor should its contents simply be avoided. Instead, its purpose is to challenge Christians to resist worldly compromise, spiritual complacency, and false teaching, encouraging embattled believers to persevere in faithful witness and hope in the present and future reign of the Triune God. Furthermore, the book of Revelation exposes the true nature of the world's ungodly political, cultural, economic, and religious system destined for destruction, reorienting our worldview and values around God's eternal kingdom. By the end of this study, we hope that you will not only have a greater comprehension of the importance of Revelation for the Christian life, but will also have learned how to better study your Bible and understand God's Word.

## ***CLASS STRUCTURE:***

We will be meeting for an hour and a half at Harvest every Sunday night (6:00-7:30pm) from September 8th through December 1st. Each week will be built around a focused time of teaching, concentrating on the message of the passage and major themes, pointing out important details within the text, and identifying connections within Revelation and the entire Bible. However, this does not mean that you will simply be receiving a 90-minute classroom lecture! Expect to regularly participate, ask questions, and split up into smaller groups with those around you to discuss interpretation and application of the Scriptural passage. The first week will lay a foundation for how to study the Bible, and then each week, we will apply these methods as we study God's Word together. The goal is that we not only identify the meaning of the text (the message that God and the human author were trying to communicate), but that we correctly *respond* to these truths in our own lives.

I ask that *each week you read Revelation in its entirety* so you can constantly have a picture of the whole book. When you do this, seek to identify common themes, repeated words, important imagery, etc., and take note of the way that the author has crafted the book. *Do not* try and decipher every image or make connections to some possible future fulfillment; *instead*, ask what the author is trying to communicate to you today. What does he want you to notice? How does he want you to feel? What does he want you to think and do? How do his words change the way you live as a Christian right now, in 2019? It is *highly recommended* that at least one week you read the entire book *in a single sitting*, as you will more readily make connections within the text and can work on grasping the bigger picture. This sounds scary, but for the person reading at an average pace, will take no more than an hour.

Each week, you will be given a "homework assignment." This won't be anything to crazy, and along with asking that you read the entire book of Revelation over the course of the week, it will give you some guidelines for looking more closely at the passage that will be discussed in the next section. You won't have to spend hours on it, but should at least use the guidelines to help you think critically about the meaning of the passage. This weekly assignment should assist you in reading and interpreting the week's passage, also preparing you to engage in the group's discussion. In the following schedule, the text we will be focusing on each week is colored in red. If you do not complete any of the assigned "homework" (but you should!), at the very least, *please* read the section before each session so you are prepared to follow the discussion, ask questions, and respond to questions in smaller groups. It is a good idea to read the passage several times throughout the week so that its content is stirring in your heart and mind as the Spirit helps you respond to it correctly.

**Important Note:** The translation I will be teaching from is the English Standard Version (ESV), as this is what we use as a church on Sundays, and because it is also a great translation for studying the Scripture. You are welcome to read throughout the week in a translation of your choice, though I do encourage you to consider using the ESV so you can more easily follow along with the teaching and discussion.

**SCHEDULE:**

1. Class Intro; Bible Study Methods; Reading Apocalyptic Literature; (**Rev 1:1-3**) [September 8]
2. Intro to the Book of Revelation; Prologue (**1:4-20**) [September 15]
3. The Messages to the Seven Churches (**ch. 2-3**) [September 22]
4. Visions of the Throne Room (**ch. 4-5**) [September 29]
5. The Seven Seals (**6:1-8:5**) [October 6]
6. The Seven Trumpets (**8:6-11:19**) [October 13]
7. The War of the Dragon and the Lamb (**ch. 12-14**) [October 20]
8. The Seven Plagues and Bowls (**ch. 15-16**) [October 27]
9. A Tale of Two Women: The Harlot and the Bride (**17:1-19:10**) [November 3]
10. Armageddon and the End of All Things (**19:11-20:15**) [November 10]
11. The Renewal of All Things in the Lamb's New Creation (**21:1-22:5**) [November 17]
12. Conclusion: Jesus is Coming Soon (**22:6-21**); Re-cap and summary [November 24]
13. Introduction to Biblical Theology; Biblical-Theological Themes in Revelation [December 1]

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:**

- Lubeck, Ray. *Read the Bible for a Change: Understanding and Responding to God's Word*. Wipf and Stock, 2009. A brilliant and accessible introductory resource on studying the Bible, utilizing the four-step method of: Seeing, Understanding, Sharing, Responding. Provides numerous examples and helpful charts, and is a fun and engaging read. Written by Matt's favorite professor at Multnomah University, and serves as the textbook for Lubeck's famous "Bible Study Methods" course required for all students. 250 pages. \$22 on Amazon.
- Emerson, Matthew Y. *Between the Cross and the Throne: The Book of Revelation*. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016. A wonderful and concise introduction to the book of Revelation, providing tips for reading the book and overviewing some of the major themes. It could be read in one sitting, and is manageable for anyone interested in the Bible. 80 pages. \$10 on Amazon.
- Beale, G. K. and David Campbell. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. A condensed edition of G.K. Beale's magisterial commentary on the Greek text of Revelation. This version is about half as long, and is based on the English translation of the NASB. It contains no footnotes or references to secondary sources, and is accessible to the motivated student of the Bible. Beale is especially attuned to the use of the OT within Revelation, and provides detailed explanations of each verse. Begins with a concise and useful introduction to the book, and also has helpful suggestions for reflections following each section. This is Matt and Gary's #1 commentary suggestion for Revelation. 530 pages. \$21 on Amazon.
- Duvall, J. Scott. *The Heart of Revelation: Understanding the 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016. This book is specifically written for people in the Church, and provides a solid overview of what the author identifies as the 10 major themes of Revelation: God, Worship, the People of God, the Holy Spirit, Our Enemies, The Mission, Jesus Christ, Judgement, the New Creation, and Perseverance. This thematic approach is helpful tying together all of the pieces of Revelation, and for understanding how the book is relevant and true for us today. 200 pages. \$12 on Amazon.