

Revelation



5/7pm Gathering
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

How to use these Bible Studies

These Bible Studies will be most effective if each member is able to look at the passage prior to meeting together in Home Group and to write down some thoughts or reflections in answer to each question.

Each study will cover a section of the text of Revelation, working systematically through the text of the whole book. The questions that follow will refer to the passage being read.

You might notice that the studies generally do not have questions which call for application. That is intentional as each group using these notes (due to demographics) may need to apply the text in different ways. You will need to think carefully about how the text of Revelation applies to you and the other members in your group.

Enjoy and be challenged.

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Introduction

Revelation was written by the apostle John, while he was in prison on the island of Patmos. The key to Revelation is Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. The audience (the seven churches of Asia) faced Jewish hostility, false teaching, pressure to worship Caesar and persecution.

Revelation is primarily apocalyptic literature. An apocalypse is a book containing real or alleged revelations of heavenly secrets or of the events which will attend the end of the world and the inauguration of the kingdom of God. It is a very symbolic book, but many of the symbols can be determined within the context of book, or if not, within the context of the rest of the bible.

The book is not chronological but rather presents a variety of aspects of the final event; to show the different dimensions from personal struggles to cosmic battles, giving a sense of God's sovereignty.

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Structure

The following structure is based on Goldsworthy's book *Gospel and Revelation (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984)*:

Chapter	Structure
Vision 1: The Grim Condition Of The Churches	
1	Prologue
2-3	Letters (1 st seven)
Vision 2: The Journey Of God's People	
4-5	Interlude
6	Seals (2 nd seven)
7	Interlude
8-9	Trumpets (3 rd seven)
10-11	Interlude
12-14	Beasts (4 th seven)
15	Interlude
16	Plagues (5 th seven)
17-18	Interlude
19-20	Various visions (6 th seven)
New Jerusalem	
21-22	Final 'Sabbath' Consumation

1 Study 1: Revelation 1

1. What fears do you have about studying Revelation? Why?

Read Revelation 1.

2. 'Seven' is used numerous times in Revelation (and Chapter 1), the first time being in verse 4. What do you think 'seven spirits' means?
3. What does the use of the word 'throne' (verse 4) imply?
4. What does 'first born from among the dead' (verse 5) mean?
5. We are now a 'kingdom of priests' (verse 6). What do priests do (see Exodus 19:4-6)? How did we become priests?

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6. How does this influence our lives?

7. What do the 'lampstands' symbolise? See verse 20

8. So what do 'lampstands' do?

9. 'Son of Man' in verse 13 is linked to verse 20. We know that Jesus called Himself the 'Son of Man' (it was the title He used of Himself more than any other: Mark 2:10, 2:28, 8:38, 9:12, 9:31, 10:33, 10:45, 13:26, 14:21, 14:41, 14:62). Why do you think He used this title?

10. What is the significance of the link to verse 20?

11. Read Daniel 7:9-14. Who do you think is the 'Ancient of Days'?

12. So to whom do the descriptions of the body parts in verses 14 and 15 belong? What is the implication of this?

13. What do you think 'out of His mouth came a two edged sword' means?

14. What are the 'keys' symbolic of (verse18)?

15. This is the first chapter of Revelation, the introduction of the book. What is the author trying to make clear from the start?

16. How should this affect you?

17. Is there any reason for you thinking that this letter is applicable to us even though it is written to the 'seven churches that are in Asia Minor'?

This passage outlines the critical themes of Revelation: that Jesus has saved us by dying on the cross and rising again. If we have faith in Him we are part of His kingdom. He is with us now and will be with us in the future also.

Read Revelation chapters 2 and 3 for next time.

2 Study 2: Revelation 2 & 3

1. If John wrote a letter about your church, what would he commend and rebuke?

Read Revelation 2-3.

2. Each of the seven letters has a very similar structure. Fill in the table on pages 34-35. Once completed, come back and discuss the results.
3. What do you think 'tree of life' means?
4. Throughout the letters, who does Satan use to battle with the Christians?

5. What is the 'second death' (Revelation 2:11)?

6. Read Numbers 31:16, 25:1-3. Why is Balaam's teaching condemned?

7. The church of Pergamum is rebuked for being too tolerant. Can you give examples of where Christians today seem to be too tolerant?

8. Read 1 Kings 16:31. What was Jezebel's sin? How easily do you slip into the standards of the world?

9. Who or what is the 'morning star' (Revelation 2:28)? See Revelation 22:16, 2 Peter 1:19, Numbers 24:17.

10. What examples from the Old Testament can you give of people who have forfeited their 'crown' (Revelation 2:10, 3:11)?

3 Study 3: Revelation 4-5

1. What do you imagine when you think of heaven?

Read Revelation 4-5.

2. What does the 'rainbow' (Revelation 4:3) recall and imply (see Genesis 9:16, Ezekiel 1:28)?
3. Who do you think the 24 elders are (Revelation 4:4)? Does this have any deeper meaning?
4. What do the lightning and thunder (Revelation 4:5) bring to mind from the Old Testament?
5. From verses 6 and 7 of Chapter 4, why do you think these particular living creatures are shown here?

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6. What is the key to opening the book? Is this what you would have expected?

7. Contrast the symbolism of a Lion and a Lamb.

8. So what does the Lamb mean here?

9. But what is unusual about the Lamb here (Revelation 5:6)? What does this mean or refer to?

10. What do you think the 7 eyes, 7 horns and 7 spirits mean (Revelation 5:6)?

11. What do you learn about our prayers from Revelation 5:8?

4 Study 4: Revelation 6-8

1. What do you think are some of the worst things that characterise life on earth?

Read Revelation 6:1-8:5.

2. How do we see God's controlling hand in these events?
3. What do the four horsemen symbolise?
4. What are some examples of this that the audience may face?
5. In Revelation 6:6, what is implied by the fact that wheat and barley are expensive but wine and oil are not touched?
6. How many die due to the horsemen?

7. After reading Revelation 7:3, do you think the seal or mark is a literal thing or symbolic?
8. Have a look at the table (hand-out) of the seals and the trumpets. What do you notice?
9. Are the seals and trumpets consecutive or concurrent?
10. What does Revelation 7:9 remind you of from the Old Testament?
11. How should Revelation 7:10-12 influence our worship?
12. What do the robes made white in the blood of the Lamb mean (Revelation 7:14)?
13. How might John's audience find encouragement, particularly from Revelation 7:11-17?

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14. Why do you think there is silence in Revelation 8:1?

The conclusion of the passage is that the wicked are judged and the godly are saved. The same pattern is then continued in the remainder of Chapter 8 (see the following table).

The pattern of Revelation 6-11

	Seal (Tyranny) 6-7	Trumpets (Chaos) 8-11
Prelude in Heaven	Throne in heaven Heavenly worship Lightning etc 4:1-5:14	Prayers before throne Lightning etc 8:2-5
1	White horseman Conquest 6:1-2	Hail, fire etc 1/3 earth destroyed 8:7
2	Red horseman Removal of peace 6:3-4	Mountain into sea 1/3 sea destroyed 8:8-9
3	Black horseman Hunger 6:5-6	Star from sky 1/3 rivers & water 8:10-11
4	Pale horseman Death, 1/4 die 6:7-8	Sun, moon etc 1/3 darkness 8:12
5	Slain under altar Have white robe 6:9-11	1st woe Star from sky, locusts 8:13-9:12
6	Great Earthquake Kings judged 6:12-17	2nd woe 4 angels released, killing 1/3 9:13-21
Interlude	144,000 12 tribes 7:1-8	Little scroll Death of 2 prophets 10:1-11:14
Final triumph, 7	Great multitude Heavenly worship 7:9-17	World now Christ's Heavenly worship 11:15-18

Read chapters 9 to 11 for next time.

5 Study 5: Revelation 9-11

1. Review the table from the last study to see how Chapters 9 to 11 fit into the pattern.

This study will concentrate on Chapter 11. However, it will make two points about Chapter 9.

a) What are the locusts (Revelation 9:3f)? They seem to be demonic powers. They don't eat plants like real locusts (Revelation 9:4) and they can't harm Christians (Revelation 9:4). They seem to be firmly under God's control as they are not given the power to kill (Revelation 9:5).

b) The river Euphrates is the ideal boundary of the promised land (Genesis 15:18). So the key thing in Revelation 9:14 is that the 'troops' come from outside the promised land; perhaps the importance is indicating that they are not of God's people, rather than where they are from.

Read Revelation 11.

2. Why 42 months (Revelation 11:2) or 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3)?
3. Who (or what) are the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3)?
4. Of whom are we reminded of from verses 5 and 6?
5. Where is the great city of verse 8?

6 Study 6: Revelation 12-16

1. Have a look at the pattern in Chapters 12 to 16 (building upon what we have looked at in the last two studies). Any comments?

The pattern of Revelation 6-16

	Seal (Tyranny) 6-7	Trumpets (Chase) 8-11	Signs (Persecution) 12-14	Bowls (Judgement) 16-18
Prelude in Heaven	Throne in heaven Heavenly worship Lightning etc 4:1-5:14	Prayers before throne Lightning etc 8:2-5	Ark in Temple Lightning etc 11:19	7 angels plagues & wrath Temple 15:5-8
1	White horse man Conquest 6:1-2	Hail, fire etc 1/3 earth destroyed 8:7	Woman, dragon, child 12:1-6	Ugly & painful sores 16:1-2
2	Red horse man Removal of peace 6:3-4	Mountain into sea 1/3 sea destroyed 8:8-9	War in heaven Dragon to earth 12:7-12	Sea turned to blood 16:3
3	Black horse man Hunger 6:5-6	Star from sky 1/3 rivers 8:10-11	Serpent after woman War against offspring 12:13-17	Rivers & springs to blood 16:4-7
4	Pale horse man Death, 1/4 die 6:7-8	Sun, moon etc 1/3 darkness 8:12	Beast from sea Blasphemous 13:1-10	Sun scorches with heat 16:8-9
5	Slain under altar Have white robe 6:9-11	1st woe Star from sky, locusts 8:13-9:12	Beast from earth Signs and number 13:11-18	Beast's kingdom turns dark 16:10-11
6	Great Earthquake Kings judged 6:12-17	2nd woe 4 angels released, killing 1/3 9:13-21	Lamb with 144,000 Blameless 14:1-5	Euphrates dries up 16:12
Interlude	144,000 12 tribes 7:1-8	Little scroll Death of 2 prophets 10:1-11:14	6 angels announce judgement 14:6-20	3 evil spirits gather kings for Armageddon 16:13-16
Final triumph, 7	Great multitude Heavenly worship 7:9-17	World now Christ's Heavenly worship 11:15-18	Victorious song of Moses & Lamb, worship 15:1-4	It is done. Lightning etc Great earthquake 16:17-21

Let's look very quickly at **Chapter 13**.

6. What image does the Old Testament give of beasts? (see Psalm 22:16-21; 74:13-14; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9; Ezekiel 29:3; Daniel 7)

7. Who or what are the beasts?

8. The beast's number is '666'. Again it probably relates to this evil trinity and also falls consistently short of God's number, which is perfection, completeness, number '7'.

Read Revelation 14:1-12.

9. Who are the 144,000 again?

10. Who are 'marked' in verses 1 to 5?

11. Why do you think Babylon is chosen as the image of all evildoers?

7 Study 7: Revelation 17-20

Read Revelation 17-18.

1. How would you describe Babylon?
2. Is Babylon destroyed by her 'enemies' or her 'friends'?
3. Who or what else is referred to as a 'harlot' or 'whore' in the Old Testament?
4. What other cities in the Bible are condemned for their sinfulness and evil?

9. Who do you think is the rider on the white horse?

10. How does He defeat the nations?

Read Revelation 20.

11. What does John mean in verse 2, that Satan is bound? (see Mark 3:27 also)

12. When do the 1,000 years begin and end? (Revelation 20:4-6)

13. How is the devil defeated?

14. After this defeat, what happens?

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15. So how does conflict flow through Revelation?

Chapters 2-3 →

Chapters 6-7 →

Chapter 11 →

Chapters 12-14 →

Chapter 16 →

Chapters 17-18 →

Chapters 19-20 →

Jesus is the central figure in the great conflict between God's kingdom and the powers of darkness which takes place on the Day of the Lord.

Please read Revelation chapters 21 to 22 for next time.

To help discussion with Question 1:

Babylon	
<i>17:2</i>	<i>the harlot with whom the kings of the earth fornicate</i>
<i>17:4; 18:12-13, 16</i>	<i>her splendour from exploiting her empire</i>
<i>17:2; 18:3, 23; 19:2</i>	<i>her corruption and deception of the nations</i>
<i>17:18</i>	<i>she rules over the kings of the earth</i>
<i>18:12-17</i>	<i>her luxurious wealth extorted from all the world</i>
<i>17:4-5; 18:23</i>	<i>her abominations, impurities, deceptions</i>
<i>14:8; 17:2; 18:3</i>	<i>her wine that makes the nations drunk</i>
<i>17:6; 18:24</i>	<i>the blood of slaughter</i>
<i>18:4</i>	<i>God's people are called to come out of Babylon</i>
<i>17:3</i>	<i>saw Babylon in the wilderness</i>

Study 8: Revelation 21-22

Read Revelation 21-22.

1. Looking back at the last study, let's go through the points made about Babylon and contrast this 'harlot' with the 'bride' (Jerusalem)?
2. Read Revelation 21:4 again. Of what is this a reversal?
3. Of what promise is Revelation 21:7 a fulfilment?
4. What is it about the new city that is unusual?
5. What else is cubic in the Bible? See 1 Kings 6:20 for a hint.

6. So is there a temple in heaven? Why or why not?

7. Can you see one last pattern of seven?
 - a) 21:2 → 21:10-21
 - b) 21:3 → 21:22-27
 - c) 21:4-5a → 22:1-5
 - d) 21:5b → 22:6-10
 - e) 21:6a → 22:11-15
 - f) 21:6b-7 → 22:16-17
 - g) 21:8 → 22:18-19

8. So what great themes of the Old Testament are fulfilled (or reach their climax) at the end of Revelation?

9. On what note does Revelation end?

10. How do you respond to this?

Finally, let's have a look at the final table and recap where we have come from. See the pattern? Some say that this pattern is the same as that in Leviticus 25:8-17, that the final image of heaven is an example of the Year of Jubilee.

The pattern of Revelation 1-22

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	Churches 2-3	Sad (Tyranny) 6-7	Trumpets (Chaos) 8-11	Signs (Persecution) 12-14	Beasts (Judgment) 15-16	Worde 17-18	Visions 19-20	The Bride 21-22
Prelude in Heaven	Throne in heaven Son of Man	Throne in heaven Heavenly w/ orship	Prayer before throne Lightning etc	Ark n temple Lightning etc	7 angels Temple			The New Jerusalem Jesus is Coming 21:9-22:21
	1 Ephesus	Militio horseman Conquest	Hail, fire etc 1/3 earth destroyed	Woman, dragon, child	Ugly & painful sores	1st word Babylon	Captain of the armies of heaven	
	2 Smyrna	Red horseman harrow of peace	Mountain nto sea 1/3 sea destroyed	War in heaven Dragon to earth	Sea turned to blood	My enemy of Babylon	His victory is sure	
	28-11	6:3-4	8:8-9	12:7-12	10:3	17:7-18	19:7-18	
	3 Pergamum	Black horseman Hunger	Star from sky 1/3 rivers	Serpent after woman War against of eprng	River's & springs to blood	The fall of Babylon	His enemies are doomed	
	2:12-17	6:5-6	8:10-11	12:19-17	10:4-7	18:1-3	19:9-21	
	4 Thyatira	Pale t horseman Death, 1/4 die	Sun, moon etc 1/3 darkness	Beast from sea Egophorous	Sun scorches with heat	Judgment of Babylon	The Devil	
	2:18-29	6:7-8	8:12	13:1-10	16:8-9	18:4-20	20:3	
	6 Sardis	Sain under altar Have w/ hite robe	1st woe Star from sky, locusts	Beast from earth Signs of c number	Beast's kingdom turns dark	Death of Babylon	The Church	
	3:1-6	6:9-11	8:13-9:12	13:11-18	16:10-17	18:21-24	20:4-10	
	6 Philadelphia	Great Earth quake Kings judged	2nd woe 4 angels released, killing 1/3	Beast w/ th 144,000 Senseless	Euphrates dries up	Loom song of Babylon	The Last Judgment	
	3:7-13	6:12-17	9:13-21	14:1-5	16:12	19:5	20:1-15	
Interlude		144,000 12 tribes	Little scroll Death of 2 w/ shields	3 angels announce Judgment.	3 evil sores gather kings (of Antiochus)			
		7:1-8	10:1-11:14	14:6-20	16:13-16			
Final triumph, 7	Agodias Heavenly w/ orship	Great multitude Heavenly w/ orship	World now Christ's Heavenly w/ orship	Victorious song of Moses & Lam w/ cresh	It is done, lightning etc Great earthquake	Successor of Babylon	The New Age	
	3:14-22	7:9-17	11:15-18	15:1-4	16:17-21	19:9-10	21:3	

To help discussion with Question 1

Babylon	Description of Babylon	Jerusalem	Description of Jerusalem
17: 2	The harlot with whom the kings of the earth fornicate	21: 2, 9	The chaste bride, the wife of the Lamb
17: 4; 18: 12-13, 16	The splendour from exploiting her empire	21: 11-21	Her splendour is the glory of God
17: 2; 18: 3, 23; 19: 2	Her corruption and deception of the nations	21: 24	The nations walk by her light, which is the glory of God
17: 18	She rules over the kings of the earth	21: 24	The kings of the earth bring their glory into her
18: 12-17	Her luxurious wealth extorted from all the world	21: 24	They bring the glory and honour of the nations into her
17: 4-5; 18: 23	Her abominations, impurities, deceptions	21: 27	Uncleanness, abomination and falsehood are excluded
14: 8; 17: 2; 18: 3	Her wine that makes the nations drunk	21: 6; 22: 1-2	The water of life and tree of life for the healing of the nations
17: 6; 18: 24	The blood of slaughter	22: 1-2	Life and healing
18: 4	God's people are called to come out of Babylon	22: 14	God's people are called to enter the New Jerusalem
17: 3	Saw Babylon from the desert	21: 10	Saw Jerusalem from a mountain top

Closing the Revelation Studies Series

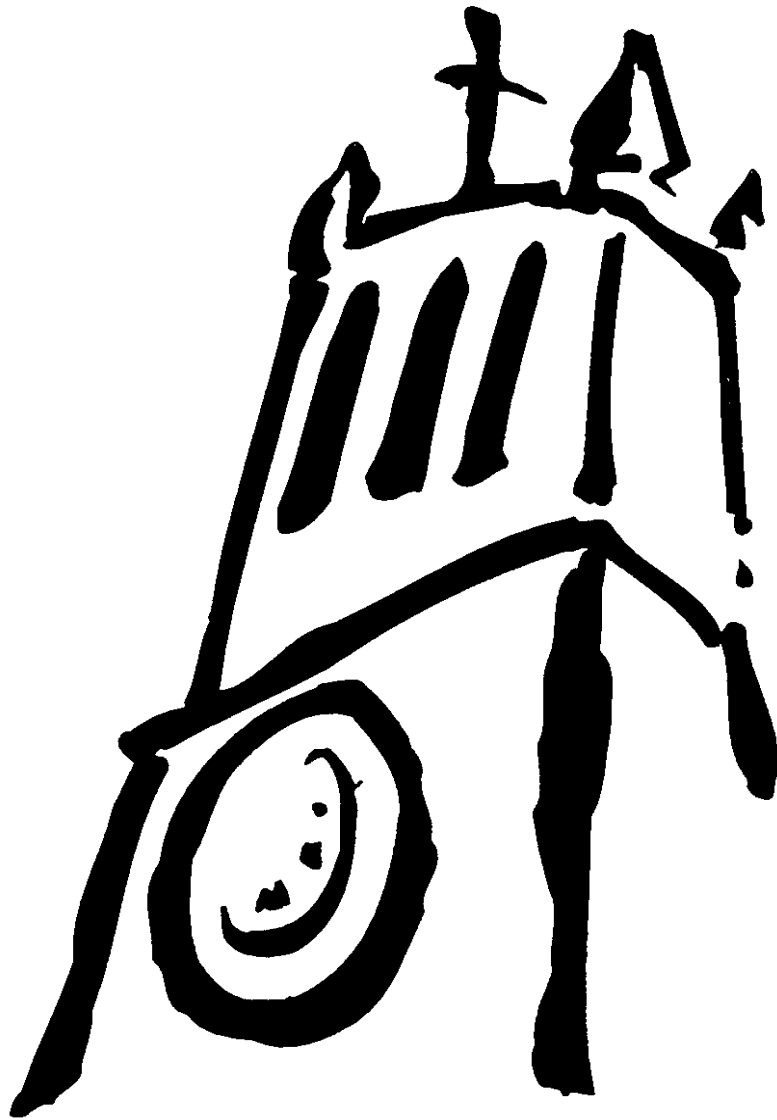
1. How has this set of studies helped you get to know God better?
2. What should change for you in the way you live for Jesus Christ?
3. Don't forget to give this all over to God in prayer.

NOTES

Study 2 Table: Question 2

Passage/ Church	Title/Description of Speaker	Commendation	Points to Rebuke	Warning
2:1-7 Ephesus				
2:8-11 Smyrna				
2:12-17 Pergamum				
2:18-29 Thyatira				
3:1-6 Sardis				
3:7-13 Philadelphia				
3:14-22 Laodicea				

	Reward	OT allusions	NT allusions	References Specific to Audience
		* tree of life (Gen 9:16)		
				* dead and come to life: relevant as the city had been 'resurrected' (rebuilt)
		* manna (Ex 16:33-35) * Balaam (Num 31:16, 25:1-3)		* Satan lives - Roman governor or emperor worship
		* Ps 2:8-9	* Rev 22:16, 2 Pet 1:19	
				* captured twice due to its slackness
		* key of David (Is 22:22)	* open door (Acts 14:27, 1 Cor 16:9, 2 Cor 2:12 * New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2)	
				* springs - terrible taste * rich - city wealthy * blind - eye cream * throne - received as reward when withstood invaders



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