

# REVELATION STUDY GUIDE

by John Whittaker



## Introduction

Re-Imagine. To imagine something is to form a mental image. To re-imagine is to form a new mental image of something. That is exactly what the book of Revelation does. It re-imagines the world, enabling us, almost compelling us as believers, to see things—God, the church, history, culture—differently than they appear. It does this by pulling back the curtain and giving us a view of life in the world from heaven’s point of view. It allows us, so to speak, to enter the throne room of the universe and stand shoulder to shoulder with the king of kings, so that we can see things from his perspective. And in this way, we are invited to re-imagine our world and where it’s going, our circumstances and what they mean.

Why does Revelation want us to have a fresh view of things? The answer to that is simple: discipleship. Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” But until that day comes in fulness, following Jesus will always be fraught with challenge. What aspects of culture are safe to enjoy? What aspects compromise our faithfulness to Christ? How should we respond to social pressure to conform or at least keep quiet? What’s the inspiration behind hostility towards Christians? And how can we stay true in the face of open hostility and opposition? In dramatic fashion, through fantastic images, song, exhortation, and beatitudes, Revelation provides the resources for living as faithful disciples in the face of such questions.

So, we must read and hear Revelation for the sake of discipleship.

This sets the goal for our study of the book. Although there are different approaches to the book of Revelation, the major purpose of the book is to inspire us and strengthen us to be faithful in a world where the forces of evil appear to prevail; to enable us to play the part we’ve been given in working out the victory Christ achieved through his death and resurrection.

So even though we may not understand everything in the book or we may not all agree on the meaning of everything in the book, may we all agree to follow and obey the Lamb who was slain – the King of Kings – as his faithful witnesses in this world.

### The Stats On Revelation

**Author:** John, traditionally John the Apostle, author of the fourth gospel

**Date:** ca. A.D. 95

**Recipients:** the seven churches of Asia, a province within the Roman Empire

**The Situation:** John has been exiled to the island of Patmos because of his ministry for Jesus. While there, he receives a series of visions which he is instructed to write down and deliver to the churches of Asia. The Christians within these churches are struggling to be faithful to Jesus as suspicion and hostility towards them increases. The message of Revelation is intended to strengthen their faith.

## The Original Author and Audience

One of the most important pieces of advice for reading Revelation well is don't forget the original audience. Because we (rightly) read the Bible as God's word for us, it's very easy for us to forget that it wasn't originally written to us. The original readers lived a long time ago.

So, for example, the original audience for Paul's letter to the Philippians were the Christians learning to live out their faith in Jesus who lived in the city of Philippi ca. 61 A.D. If you listen closely to the letter, you can begin to figure out some of the circumstances surrounding the letter (much like listening to one side of a phone conversation and trying to figure who's on the other end and what's going on): e.g., Paul's in prison, the church in Philippi had sent him an offering, a man named Epaphroditus brought the money, there was some apparently minor friction in the church involving two ladies, etc. The point is, they were the original recipients of the letter and their circumstances shaped what Paul said to them. What he said to them was indeed God's word but to read it well we must never forget that it was originally God's word to them.

The same is true with book of Revelation. The original author and audience are just as important to understanding Revelation as they are to Paul's letters or any other biblical book. The original author is John (1:1) and the original recipients are the churches of Asia (1:4). Though there has been some questions about it, traditionally John has been identified with the apostle John and author of the fourth gospel. He had been living in Ephesus and caring for these churches until he was banished to the island of Patmos because of the message about Jesus (Rev. 1:9). John originally wrote to pass on the revelation of Jesus Christ to the churches of Asia in order to address their situation. We are not the original audience – they are.

The churches of Asia were located on what is the western edge of modern Turkey. The order in which they are listed Revelation is the order of the usual postal route from Ephesus through each city ending up in Laodicea. These were important cities. Ephesus was the harbor town and one of the largest cities of the Roman Empire, renowned for its famed Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Smyrna boasted that it was the first in beauty and size. Pergamum was called "the most famous place in Asia" and was famous for a library containing 200,000 volumes.

More could be said, but the point is that these were real cities with real people, featuring administrative centers, business districts, religious traditions and temples, libraries, arenas, stadiums, and the like. And the Christians in these locations were the original recipients of Revelation. Since they were originally the ones addressed by the letter, whatever the book means to us today, it must have first meant to them.

An important fact about these cities for the study of Revelation is that, although hundreds of miles from the capital in Rome, these cities were deeply loyal to Rome, even competing for the right to be temple guardians on behalf of Rome. Pergamum hosted the first temple in honor of the Emperor. Ephesus was awarded the honor of temple guardian twice after that. Their loyalty to Rome and the Emperor added to the hostility that the original readers experienced because of their loyalty to Jesus. More on that below.



So when we read Revelation, as with all Bible books, we are trying to grasp the A.I.M – the Author's Intended Meaning. Specifically, we are trying to grasp what John intended to communicate to the churches of Asia in A.D. 95. We must never forget this A.I.M. if we're going to read Revelation (or any Bible book) accurately.

## Genre (type of literature)

Beasts with seven heads. Locusts with scorpion tails and human heads. A woman clothed with the sun. Dragons. What kind of bizarre book is this? While Revelation seems bizarre to us at times, that's because we aren't familiar with the type of literature it is. Revelation fits into a recognized form of writing that flourished among the Jews from B.C. 200 - A.D. 100. Today, we call that form of writing apocalyptic literature. There are roots of this type of literature in the Old Testament, in books like Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. But it came full-flower during the time between the Old and New Testaments as a way for Jewish writers to encourage their fellow Jews that God is still on his throne and He will accomplish his purposes in spite of the way things appear. Those centuries saw God's people kicked around and trampled on by the pagan kingdoms surrounding them. The Jews cried out to God, but the heavens were dark and silent. God's people ached for God to act and fulfill the promises he had given through the prophets. For hope's sake, apocalyptic literature painted a picture of God almighty reigning from heaven's throne, judging the nations, and vindicating his people. Its goal was to inspire hope and call God's people to faithfulness.

This is exactly what Revelation is and does. In fact, Revelation combines apocalyptic with prophecy and letter. John describes his work as a "prophecy" (1:3). So John stands with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others as one of God's prophets, speaking to God's people on God's behalf. Contrary to popular opinion, Old Testament and New Testament prophecy is in not mainly about prediction. Rather, it is primarily about calling God's people to live in keeping with God's purposes and will in the midst of a world set against God. If you read the Old Testament prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos), they repeatedly call God's people to faithful obedience to God, confronting their sins and compromises. The goal is faithfulness. In Revelation, John does the same. At the outset John pronounces a blessing on those who hear and heed the book. The messages to the church in chs. 2-3 call them to overcome by being faithful. Throughout the book blessings are offered for those who remain true to God and to Jesus (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). In both Old Testament prophecy and Revelation, prediction comes in as a means of encouraging faithfulness and obedience.

Revelation is also a letter. As we've already seen, it is addressed to the seven churches of Asia (1:4). Letters speak to specific people about their specific circumstances. This is what John does in Revelation. He encourages and challenges these churches struggling to be faithful in Asia under the rule of the Roman Empire.

Finally, Revelation is apocalyptic literature. Ironically, the word "apocalyptic" comes from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, which means "revelation" or "unveiling," which is the first word in the book; yet most readers find Revelation more cloaked than unveiled and more concealing than revealing. Still, it is the first word of the book which says something about what John was trying to do for his readers: pull back the curtain and reveal what is really going on in the world.

Apocalyptic literature, however, is unfamiliar to us and so we struggle to read it well. It was a way of communicating a message that captivated and inspired the imagination. In all such literature, several common elements were involved.

First, the message typically is revealed to the writer through dreams or visions. These visions often come through a heavenly intermediary--an angel--who conducts the seer on a tour of great heavenly or cosmic scenes. Thus in Revelation the phrase "and I saw" appears repeatedly.

Second, in keeping with the historical situation, the time period the original author and audience are living in is described as a time of trouble for God's people; and the future is pictured as ultimately a time of divine deliverance and triumph. As noted above, apocalyptic literature grew out of crisis, times when it seemed that God no longer cared for his people or had lost control of his creation or his promises had been forgotten. Persecution threatened. Compromise and conformity appeared a practical survival strategy. In response, apocalyptic literature held out hope in God's sovereignty and ultimate triumph and warning of final justice.

Third, the story is told in a series of dramatic presentations that make use of imaginative symbols. In the very first verse, Revelation indicates that it communicates in “sign language” by using the word *semaino*, signified (“communicated” or “show” in the translations) to describe the manner of communication. This word is the verb form of the word “sign” that is repeated in John’s gospel. It is thus sign language or symbol language. So we should think of Revelation like a great stage drama with costumes and props and fanciful characters. It’s like Lord of the Rings or The Chronicles of Narnia. Often the symbols are drawn from the world of myth and fantasy and are strangely bizarre: e.g., a beast with seven heads, locusts with scorpion tails and human heads, winged lions.

Though unfamiliar to us many were very familiar to the original audience. They may be a general symbol for what they refer to but are expressed in details the original audience could recognize. In fact many of the symbols are used in the Old Testament and John recycles them in Revelation. Knowing the Old Testament background of these symbols is absolutely necessary for understanding Revelation.

A good analogy for how the symbols works is the political cartoon. If forced to be taken literally, the images would make no sense or be ridiculous. But to those familiar with them the meaning is perfectly clear. Consider the following example:



We don’t really believe in a super-sized man with striped pants and an American-flag hat. But we easily recognize Uncle Sam. And we know that the twin towers weren’t domed-shaped with inscriptions. But we can get the idea – tombstones. And thus we get the point of the cartoon: the nation mourns for the tragedy of 9/11.

That’s very much the way Revelation works. Familiar images communicate a powerful message. To read Revelation well, therefore, we must awaken our capacity for imagination, and utilize our ability think in images that speak of powerful spiritual realities. In that way, Revelation works a lot like Jesus’ parables. One special note on the theme of symbolism in Revelation: on several occasions John offers an explanation of the symbols (e.g., 1:20; 12:9; 17:9). These interpretations of the symbols help us both understand what those specific symbols mean as well as how to handle other symbols in the book.

Finally, apocalyptic literature makes use of numbers. In all apocalypses, the numbers three, four, seven, ten, twelve, and seventy predominate. Numbers tend to have consistent symbolical value. Four usually has to do with the earth, perhaps because of the four points of the compass. Seven has to do with completeness presumably because of the seven days of creation. Twelve has to do with the people of God, because of the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes, and the twelve apostles. And so on. It's sort of like the number thirteen today - in certain contexts, it carries a consistent meaning beyond its numerical value. Numbers in Revelation are more about meaning than numerical value.

So Revelation is an apocalyptic prophecy delivered as a letter. It fits a well-known style, employing techniques, images, and symbols that were familiar to John and his audience. As we read, therefore, we must remember that we are seeking the author's intended meaning!!! That meaning must fit his historical context and have been something the original readers could have understood.

## Historical Setting

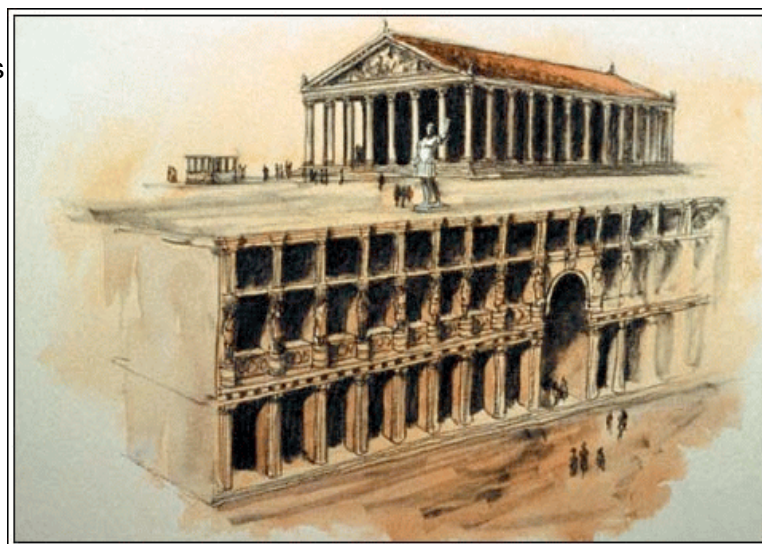
The churches to which Revelation were written resided in Asia Minor, a province under the rule of the Roman Empire. By the first century A.D., Rome had conquered a vast territory extending from Britain and Spain in the west to the Euphrates River in the east and incorporating many different ethnic groups and cultures within its Empire. For those under its charge, it ruled the world and its governors and military maintained order and control. And the fact is, Rome did bring stability to the Mediterranean world. It boasted of this fact via its *Pax Romana*, the peace of Rome. And with peace, trade and travel thrived. Piracy was put down on the Mediterranean. Roads were built. Goods and foods from the countries around the Mediterranean made their way to the cities of the Empire and to the capital in Rome. For the wealthy elite, luxury prevailed. Rome was the great benefactor and the Emperor was spoken of as the savior to the world.

Rome maintained its control and the peace it brought in a variety of ways. Its military presence was ever-present. A common currency and a common legal system united the diverse peoples of the empire. And self-promoting propaganda was the order of the day. The original readers of Revelation were bombarded with images promoting Rome's self-glorifying vision of the world. Coins, statues, temples, and altars were all decorated with powerful symbols of Rome's magnificence. Rituals and festivals celebrated her honor and magnified the Emperors. And as long as the wealth flowed, the businessmen and leaders throughout the Empire gladly gave themselves to this adoration.

In fact, one way Rome propped up its might and authority was cultivating the belief in its divine right to power through religion. Temples dedicated to the goddess *Roma* were scattered throughout the Empire. So Rome itself was worshiped as divine and the myth that it was an eternal city was propagated. Individual emperors were worshiped as well. This usually surprises us, but deceased emperors were voted to be recognized as gods by the senate and temples were built in their honor. Holy days were then placed on the calendar, and on those days work ceased, parties were held, and the emperors were celebrated as god, often being acclaimed with the titles savior and lord. Parade-like processions were part of these celebrations, and if your home lined the parade route you were expected to set up small altars outside your doors and burn incense or offer other sacrifices in the Emperor's honor as the procession passed.

During the late first century, when Revelation was written, this emperor cult flourished in Asia, where John and his audience lived. The cities competed heavily for the honor of building a temple to the emperor. When Revelation was written (ca. A.D. 95), Domitian reigned as Emperor, and Domitian is famous for ascribing to himself divine rights and titles while he was still living, demanding his subjects worship him as "lord and god."

By the time of Domitian, a temple built on a massive platform was dedicated in honor of the "sebastoi," the Greek plural of honored or magnificent ones. It was a temple that at least honored Domitian, his brother Titus (who reigned as emperor before him), and their father Vespasian. It included a large altar where sacrifices to them as gods were offered. Regular processions were held in their honor, and all citizens were expected to pledge their allegiance to the Empire by acknowledging that Caesar is Lord. This posed a serious problem to Christians who only acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.



An artist's rendition of the Temple to Domitian in Ephesus, fr. followtherabbi.com.  
Note: further research has shown that the statue in this rendition actually was inside the temple.



To not participate in such emperor worship was not merely odd; it was a form of subversion that was socially dangerous. It was considered treasonous and a threat to the Pax Romana, and such action invited serious repercussions, including even the possibility of death. In addition to illegitimate worship ascribed to the emperor, other forms of idolatry were rampant. In Ephesus, for example, the Temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. At Pergamum, you could worship at the temple of *Athena Nikephoros* or seek healing from Asclepius at his sacred pools. Temples, shrines, and altars marked each city's roadways. If you were a business man or woman, your trade guilds worshiped patron gods and goddesses and festal meals were held in their honor sometimes including sexual activity as part of the festivities. To not participate in this worship, it was believed, invited the hostility of the gods. To not participate, therefore, excluded you from the business community, ruining your trade, bringing you financial ruin, and isolating you socially.

To be a faithful Christian, therefore, put you at odds with your community politically, socially, and economically because all of these were tied together religiously. As a result, suspicion of and open hostility towards Christians was on the rise in Asia at this time. The Christians in Ephesus have "endured hardship" for Jesus (2:3). Antipas of Pergamum had already been executed (2:13). We know from records just 25 years after Revelation was written that to prove the sincerity of their loyalty to the Empire, Christians in Asia who renounced their faith in Jesus were required to worship images of the gods and images of the emperor.

It should not surprise us, then, that pressure mounted to conform in various ways in order to avoid suspicion and hostility. This is reflected in the messages to the churches in Revelation 2-3. For example, there are a few members of the church in Sardis who haven't soiled their garments by compromising with pagan society (3:4).

But if a few haven't, a good number have. Being seduced by the wealth and luxury of society is perhaps the greatest threat facing the churches to which John writes. Frank Theilman notes, "The composite picture that emerges from John's messages is of a situation in which the pressure is intense to compromise with both the traditional religious customs of these cities and with imperial cultic celebrations. Failure to conform to society's religious expectations—whether worship of the trade guild's patron deity or religious support of Rome's authority over its subjects—often entailed economic impoverishment. Sometimes, as in the case of Antipas in Pergamum, it meant death."

One of the most important things Revelation does is provide a contrasting perspective on the world, a perspective from heaven. Rome promoted itself as divine and eternal, a benefactor bestowing gifts and blessings on the world. Revelation subverts this self-portrait, painting Rome as a harlot riding a beast, a minion of Satan corrupting the world. In doing this, Revelation offers us a fresh set of lenses with which to view the world—there's far more going on in the world than meets the eyes and God's people must be wary of being seduced by the harlot. Bob Lowery writes, "Until we dwell perfectly with God, we continue to live in cities alienated from God due to ungodly living of their citizens. We must heed the voice from heaven that warned Christians about the perils of living in Babylon: 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven and God has remembered her crimes' (Rev. 18:4-5)."

## Overview of Content and Structure

The book of Revelation is a great drama about the conflict between God and evil, and about the place of God’s people and the world within that drama. It is organized around three series of judgments, each of which unfold in a sequence of seven (seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls). Prior to those, however, we are shown the throne room of God (chs. 4-5), from which the judgments proceed and from which the world looks quite different - perspective is everything. In between each series of judgment are interludes which portray God’s protection of his people and the supernatural conflict they are involved in. The book then concludes with scenes of the final removal of the forces of evil—the unholy trinity of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet—and with a triumphant vision of God and His people reigning over a new heavens and a new earth.

Central to the story is the vision of the throne of God in chs. 4-5. It is the control center of the world and the judgments within Revelation are commanded out of the throne room. These chapters thus cast their shadow over the whole drama and God’s throne is the central symbol of the book. God controls the action in this drama.

We must understand that John tells this drama with a spiral effect, so that the story keeps coming up to the end and then circles back to retrace the same ground again but from a different angle to make a different point. This can be seen in a chart that shows how we keep coming up to the end but the story isn’t over yet.

Topic	Messages to the Seven Churches 1-3	The Seven Seals 4-7 (8:1)	The Seven Trumpets 8-11	The Dragon and the Two Beasts 12-14 (15:5?)	The Seven Bowls of Wrath 15-16	The Fall of the Woman Babylon 17-18 (19:10)	The Final Conflict and the New Jerusalem 19-22
Key Word	Overcome	Affliction	Warning	Conflict	Wrath	Justice	Victory
	What’s the end point for each vision?	“Great day of wrath”	Day of judgment and rewards	Judgment: The harvest of the earth	The final battle; fulness of God’s wrath	Wedding feast of the lamb	Judgment and new heavens and new earth

Keep in mind that this isn’t in chronological order – Jesus appears in ch. 1 exalted and glorified, in ch. 5 as a slaughtered lamb who’s ready to assume kingly rule, and in ch. 12 his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension are pictured in the span of a few verses. This chart is simply a summary of the contents, helping us see what material is covered in each section and how each section touches up against the end before circling back through similar ground from a different angle for a different purpose.

We see this same kind of approach in visions elsewhere in Scripture. For example, Joseph has two dreams using different imagery—sheaves of grain and the sun, moon, and stars—which envision his ruling over his family, both dreams portraying the same events but in different ways (Gen. 37). Or consider the book of Daniel, which includes several visions using different imagery for the kingdoms that would follow Daniel’s day—a statue (ch. 2), beasts (ch. 7), and a ram and a goat (ch. 8). In each of these visions there is a high degree of overlap. Revelation does the same thing, spiraling up to end and then circling back around to cover similar ground again.

Understanding this will help us not get lost in the drama. It instructs us that Revelation is more about theology than chronology. In other words, it's more about a message with meaning than about predicting a sequence of events. Using striking, evocative, and powerful images, each vision, and the composite of all the visions, calls us as God's people to re-imagine this world and what's going on within it. It does this to help us live lives as faithful witnesses to Christ in a world set against him.

## **Concluding Summary: Tips for Reading Revelation Well**

Whenever we study Scripture the initial goal is to understand what the original author intended to communicate to the original audience as noted above. That, in fact, is true of all communication because that's just the way communication works. And what's true of the Bible in general is true for Revelation in particular: in trying to understand the book we are trying to discover what the original author intended to communicate to the original audience That's the A.I.M – the Author's Intended Meaning. In the spirit of Revelation (it likes the number 7), therefore, we offer the following seven suggestions for reading Revelation well that will aid you in your quest to discover what the intended message is. To him (or her) who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

- **Always ask, What's the ancient meaning of the symbol?**

Everyone interprets Revelation symbolically. What we need to do, however, is do our best to understand how John and the Christians in Asia would have understood the symbols. Since John recycles many Old Testament symbols we would be wise to look them up in the Old Testament. When John interprets symbols for us (e.g., Rev. 17:9) that should instruct us in how the other symbols in the book work. All of this will help us avoid the pitfall of concocting our own meaning rather than discovering what John intended to communicate.

- **Read the whole book noting broad themes**

Because Revelation is a drama, it's meant to be experienced in total not piecemeal. Listen to a recording of the whole book or set aside an hour or two to read the whole book in one sitting, and let the power of the story overwhelm you. Especially soak in the images related to the broad themes: God's sovereignty, judgment, the lure of fallen culture, overcoming/triumphing, etc.

- **Pay close attention to Old Testament background.**

We've said it before, but the more our mind is saturated with the Old Testament the better we'll read Revelation. This will take time, but we can improve our familiarity with the Old Testament.

- **What is the main point of the vision?**

Concerning individual visions the best advice is: Don't get lost in the details because the meaning is in the whole. The whole vision works together to create a compelling image that communicates a powerful truth. The details are there to contribute to the whole. It's like an impressionistic painting: up close you see every brushstroke and every dot of color; but stand back ten feet and all those dots and strokes work together to form the overall image. So too with Revelation: don't get lost in the little details; stand back and take in the whole.

- **Keep this question in mind: How does this provide comfort or hope to the distressed?**

Since Revelation was written during times of crisis for the purpose of encouraging the faithful, reading it from the vantage point of a Christian struggling to remain true to Jesus in the midst of tense or even hostile circumstances can be extremely helpful. Put yourself in the shoes of the first readers confronted by pagan worship and hostile society: how would this text provide hope, comfort, and courage to remain faithful and overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11).

- **Keep this question in mind: How does this challenge compromisers to be faithful to God?**

Since Revelation was written during times of crisis for the purpose of challenging those who have been compromising with Roman society and culture, reading it from the vantage point of a Christian who has been minimizing accommodations to culture in order to avoid rejection, shame, loss of status, financial ruin, or physical abuse helps us hear Revelation well. It might even convict us of the ways we've been seduced by our culture and settled for less than God's kingdom and will, opening our eyes to how we can be more faithful to Jesus.

- **Be humble!**

We shouldn't assume we know it all already. Or even that we can master it and get it all figured out. We should be honest. There are things that are difficult to understand here. Let's be humble and keep an openness to learning.

### **Suggested Exercises for Encountering the Text**

As with all Bible books, the goal is not merely to learn the content. It's to experience the text in a way that helps you know God and follow him faithfully. So we want you to experience the power of Revelation as we study it together. The following exercises are ways we invite you to interact with the text on your own, so that you can allow Revelation to shape the way you see the world.

- One week listen to an audio recording of Revelation. Try to hear the whole book at least two times.
- Pray through the songs of Revelation: 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:9-12; 11:15-18; 15:3-4; 19:1-8
- Meditate on the beatitudes ("blessed are...") of Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14
- Each day one week read and pray through one of the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. One church a day for seven days.
- Each day one week read the picture of the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation 21:1-22:5. Read the whole picture at once. Imagine it. Soak in the images and the message. This is our destiny. Then do it again at least 4 days that week.

Though the book is somewhat mysterious and is often neglected, it pronounces a blessing on those who hear and heed its message (1:3). To that end we invite you to read Revelation and to hear Revelation so that you can be a better disciple of Jesus today. To the one who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to churches!

## Suggestions For Further Reading

*How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth*, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

This first book by Fee and Stuart is an excellent little read for the various types of literature we encounter in our bible: Gospel, Law, Narrative, Apocalypse.

*How To Read the Bible Book By Book*, Gordon and Douglas Stuart

This second book by Fee and Stuart exists to give a summary and an overview of the contents of each biblical book. Again, this book is very useful for Revelation as well as the other 65 books in our bible.

*Revelation's Rhapsody: Listening to the Lyrics of the Lamb*, Robert Lowery

Robert Lowery's commentary is a very good introduction that treats the same material we have in this booklet, only in more detail. It is a very simple and straight forward read designed to build confidence in reading the book of Revelation.

*The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, Craig Keener.

The NIV Application Commentary does a good job of balancing good scriptural interpretation with life application. It is a larger volume and should be used for more in depth research of a particular passages.

*Revelation*, in the New Covenant Commentary Series, Gordon Fee

Prior to his death, Gordon Fee was one of the leader New Testament scholars and teachers in the world. He provides a sound and clear presentation of the meaning of Revelation.