

REVELATION: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Student study guide | Introduction to Revelation & the throne room | Revelation 1–5

THE BIG IDEA

Revelation does not hide the reality of evil or judgment. It reveals Jesus Christ, shows us that God reigns, and reminds believers who is ultimately in control.

01 | BEFORE WE READ

Who wrote it? Revelation identifies its writer as John, traditionally understood to be the apostle John. He was on the island of Patmos when he received a vision and was instructed to write what he saw.

(Revelation 1:9–11)

Who received it? The book was originally addressed to seven real churches in the Roman province of Asia. Its message mattered to first-century believers before it was ever read by us. (Revelation 1:4)

Why does that matter? We can learn from and apply Revelation today, but we should not ignore the people who first received it.

02 | WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS REVELATION?

- 1** Revelation
An unveiling from Jesus Christ that reveals Him, exposes evil, warns God's people, and shows where history is headed. Revelation 1:1

- 2** Prophecy
Speaks of God's purposes, judgment, Christ's return, resurrection, and the renewal of creation. Revelation 1:3

- 3** Letter
A message sent to seven actual churches, offering correction, encouragement, and preparation. Revelation 1:4

- 4** Apocalyptic literature
A form of writing full of visions, symbols, numbers, strange creatures, and dramatic cosmic images.

Remember: Revelation is not just a collection of frightening images. It is a message meant to be heard and taken to heart. (Revelation 1:3)

HOW TO READ REVELATION

The four guardrails from the message

- 1** Symbols mean something
The strange images communicate real truths. Some symbols are easier to understand than others; don't assume they are meaningless.
- 2** Let Scripture explain Scripture
Look for similar images elsewhere in the Bible before connecting a passage to a modern news story, invention, or event.
- 3** Remember the original audience
Revelation had meaning for its first readers. Ask what the seven churches would have understood before asking how the book speaks to us.
- 4** Stay humble where Christians disagree
Christians can take Scripture seriously and still disagree about difficult details. Be willing to listen, ask questions, and learn.

03 | FOUR APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION

Christians debate when Revelation's visions take place and how literally or symbolically to read them. These are four major approaches introduced in the message:

- A** Partial Preterist
Sees much of Revelation's prophetic imagery as referring to events in the first century, while still expecting Christ's final return.
- B** Futurist
Sees much of Revelation's prophetic material as describing events still to come.
- C** Historicist
Sees Revelation unfolding across the history of the church.
- D** Idealist
Emphasizes the ongoing spiritual realities Revelation communicates through its symbolic imagery.

HOW WE DISCUSSED THESE VIEWS

Our pastor shared that he currently leans toward a Futurist reading while remaining open to learning. The goal of learning these views is not to win arguments, but to read carefully and recognize where faithful Christians differ.

THE THRONE ROOM

Revelation 4–5 | The center of our Week 1 reflection

04 | WHAT CHRISTIANS AGREE ON

Although Christians disagree about how to interpret certain visions, the message highlighted these shared convictions:

- Jesus reigns and will return.
- Evil will be judged, and Satan will be defeated.
- The dead will be raised, and God will judge humanity.
- Creation will be made new, and God will dwell with His people.

05 | JOHN SEES HEAVEN’S THRONE

After the messages to the seven churches, John sees a door standing open in heaven. Before the book shows terrifying judgments and conflict, it shows a throne occupied by God. (Revelation 4:1–2)

- 1** The throne and its glory
John describes radiant beauty, lightning, thunder, a sea like glass, and the One seated on the throne. Revelation 4:2–6
- 2** Worship surrounding the throne
Twenty-four elders and four living creatures continually worship God, declaring His holiness and worthiness. Revelation 4:4–11
- 3** The sealed scroll
A scroll sealed with seven seals appears, but no one is found worthy to open it. John weeps. Revelation 5:1–4
- 4** The Lamb who is worthy
John hears of the victorious Lion of Judah and sees a Lamb appearing as though slain: Jesus. The Lamb takes the scroll and receives worship. Revelation 5:5–14

THE IMAGE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Before John sees the frightening things to come, he sees the throne. When Revelation becomes overwhelming, remember who reigns and who is worthy: God is on the throne, and Jesus is the victorious Lamb.

Personal response: The message invited us to consider whether we approach Christ’s return with fear, hope, or a need to turn back toward God.

TAKE IT HOME

Reflect, discuss, and prepare for Week 2

06 | QUESTIONS TO WRESTLE WITH

01. Why is it important to remember that Revelation was first written to seven real churches?
02. Which of the four reading rules will be hardest for you to practice? Why?
03. How can you be confident about what Scripture clearly teaches while remaining humble about disputed details?
04. What detail from the throne room vision stood out most to you? What does it show you about God?
05. Why do you think the vision of God's throne comes before the opening of the seals?
06. When you think about Jesus returning, do you feel fear, comfort, excitement, or something else? What might be behind that response?

07 | HOMEWORK FOR THIS WEEK

Suggested follow-up study - this was not formally assigned during the message.

- 1 Read Revelation 4–5 again
Read slowly and without rushing. If possible, read it aloud, or listen to an audio Bible.
- 2 Notice what repeats
Write down every description of God or the Lamb, and every expression of worship that you find.
- 3 Write one short reflection
In 4–6 sentences, answer: How does the throne room change the way I think about the frightening parts of Revelation or the challenges in my life?
- 4 Prepare for the next message
Read Revelation 6. Notice who opens the seals and what happens when the first seals are opened. Bring one honest question.

A PRAYER TO CLOSE

PRAY IN YOUR OWN WORDS

God, help me to read Your Word with humility and courage. When I feel afraid or confused, remind me that You are on the throne and that Jesus is worthy. Teach me to trust You and follow You faithfully.

Next in THE END: The opening of the seals, the Four Horsemen, and the reality of judgment. Read ahead: Revelation 6.