

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE AUTHOR	iii
ABOUT THE AUTHOR—Robert A. Bryant	v
PREPARING TO LEAD A KERYGMA STUDY	vi

SESSIONS

1	Approaching God’s Revelation to John	1
2	Vision of the Risen Christ.....	45
3	Vision of Seven Letters to Seven Churches	77
4	Vision of God and the Lamb.....	106
5	Vision of Seven Seals.....	137
6	Vision of Seven Trumpets of Engagement.....	166
7	Vision of Seven Embodiments of Power	200
8	Vision of Seven Bowls of Wrath	243
9	Vision of Hallelujahs, Victory, and the Last Judgment	276
10	Vision of God’s Heavenly Kingdom on Earth	305

WELCOME FROM THE AUTHOR

Welcome to the Leader's Guide for *The Book of Revelation: All Creation's Hallelujah!* This Leader's Guide is intended both to enhance your understanding of The Revelation to John and to encourage and equip you for facilitating the study group's engagement with one of the most fascinating, unsettling, and inspiring books of the Bible. The Leader's Guide will help you and study participants to navigate the terrain of Revelation, view its vistas, and appreciate its inclusion in the canon of Scripture. With God's blessing it will also enrich faithfulness.

The Kerygma approach to Bible study for adults does not expect leaders to know everything about a study's subject matter or even to have prior experience leading a Bible study. Rather, it seeks to support anyone who is willing and committed to humbly serve others while studying the Bible. In many ways this approach celebrates the priesthood of all believers and seeks to equip all participants for contributing to the group's understanding and growth. Still, group leaders play a vital role in what group members learn. Your commitment to read, study, plan, and facilitate participation will affect the group's learning and experience.

Of course, the best outcomes of group Bible study are never in the hands of any one person. Each participant plays a vital role in the group's life. Most of all, it is the presence and work of the Holy Spirit that enables us to perceive and receive the Bible as the word of God, and God promises to be present (Matthew 18:20; 1 John 5:14). This important truth frees us to offer our best without being anxious, defensive, or domineering (2 Corinthians 2:9; Romans 12:16). It also frees us from thinking too highly of ourselves or that we can "cover it all." The presence and promise of God free us to trust God to work through our offerings and the offerings of fellow participants to accomplish God's purposes for us. For this reason, pray and be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Pray for God's guidance throughout your preparations and the group sessions. Offer prayers for God to be present with all of you at the start of each session and prayers of thanksgiving to close each session. Prayer is essential for Bible study and Christian fellowship, and every session in this book includes suggestions for prayers. There are additional thoughts about prayer in Appendix A.

The Leader's Guide is a valuable resource, providing the nuts and bolts for planning and facilitating this study. Here you will find a wealth of supporting materials and ample guidance for each session so that you may easily adapt the materials for the group's needs and interests. Each session includes background for leaders, learning objectives, lists of useful session resources, and clear guidance for session preparation, exploring the Scripture, and concluding the session. There are also handouts for group work that are photocopy ready. Additionally, because Revelation showcases music and vivid symbolism as much as it stresses faithfulness and prayer, Appendix B provides a catalog of hymns that are keyed to the text of Revelation, and Appendix C introduces a variety of artistic interpretations of texts in Revelation.

There are also accompanying PowerPoint slides and audio-visual clips. Simply put, more is presented here than a group can do in ten or eleven 90-minute sessions. Whichever exercises you choose, though, will center your group on the text of Revelation. This material will help you and your fellow participants see Revelation's perspective of God, hear its call for persevering in faithfulness, and grasp how Christians are enabled to both live with hope and love even their enemies.

This ***Leader's Guide***, like the *Resource Book*, is also indebted to Kerygma's earlier study of Revelation (1989) by James A. Walther, Sr., and the corresponding Leader's Guide by Barbara J. Minges and Donald L. Griggs. Both volumes are as timely now as when they were first released and are still useful. The new *Resource Book*, however, offers a fresh study that brings into view several additional themes of The Revelation to John; and while this new Leader's Guide incorporates and adapts several exercises from Minges and Griggs, it also includes a wealth of new material.

As a group facilitator, you will find it helpful to have some additional resources along with the new *Resource Book* and Leader's Guide. If you do not already have a good study Bible, consider *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, 5th ed. (2018). You will also find it helpful to have readily available a Bible dictionary, a Bible concordance keyed to your translation, and perhaps also a critical commentary on Revelation, such as Eugene Boring's *Revelation* in the Interpretation Series (1989) and Craig Koester's *Revelation and the End of All Things* (2001) or *Revelation: A New*

Translation with Introduction and Commentary in the Anchor Yale Bible Series (2014). Other suggestions are offered in the *Resource Book's* bibliography.

Your willingness to interact directly with the Bible, with the Kerygma study materials, and with fellow learners as the study session's facilitator is sure to be a blessing for everyone. By the end of your study, you and your fellow participants will have a more intimate understanding of The Revelation to John and many more biblical texts. You will also grow in your understanding of the church's early history and theology as well as of the church today. We trust that through your study together you will experience blessed communion with each other and with the living Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belongs all creation's glory and praise. Hallelujah!

Robert A. Bryant

KERYGMA LEADER'S SESSION PLANNING FORM

Course Name _____ Leader _____

Session _____ Date _____ Time _____

Learning Objectives: _____

Real Time (e.g., 7:30–7:40)	Strategies and Activities	Resources Needed



Approaching God's Revelation to John

The image of the "bright and morning star (22:16) at the top of Hannah Kitzmann's "Revelation Rose Window" celebrates Jesus's abiding glory and guiding presence.



BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

The purpose of the opening session is two-fold. First, it is to help everyone in the group experience a sense of belonging and fellowship in the Spirit. Collaborative, grace-filled, faith-seeking, learning is a hallmark of the Kerygma Program. The activities and discussions in this Leader's Guide are also to help participants build meaningful relationships from the start. Take time to do so. Secondly, the opening session aims to orient everyone to the historical context of The Revelation to John. The first century Greco-Roman world is quite different from our world. Early Christian eschatology—if recognized at all by people today—is frequently misconstrued. Our understanding of Revelation will be richer if we have some familiarity with this book's historical background, its apocalyptic and symbolic literary character, and the range of interpretations of its contents.

Most if not all study participants will likely already have an opinion about the Apocalypse of John, whether or not they have read or studied the text. The spectrum of perspectives can range from enthusiastic to apathetic, from attractive to repulsive. That is because many aspects of Revelation are endemic in American culture, so much so that Americans are said to have apocalyptic fever.¹

Words and ideas like apocalypse, Armageddon, the four horsemen, the beast and the antichrist, rapture, tribulation, and millennium are common in American speech and woven into the fabric of American culture. In this opening session, invite everyone to summarize briefly how they have encountered the book of Revelation in the past and how they view Revelation now at the start of this study. Insure that everyone listens without critique or criticism and that all, who wish to do so, are able to share. Regardless of what any one person's experience and view may be, invite everyone to examine their own views as the study progresses in the light of what Revelation has to say for itself.

When participants begin discussing interpretive approaches, take time to help them to gain an appreciation for the connections between interpretive approaches and their consequences.

¹ See Richard G. Kyle, *Apocalyptic Fever: End-Time Prophecies in Modern America* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2012).

The history of interpretation shows all too well that interpreters of the Bible may often “hear” only what they want to hear. History also shows that people can make the Bible “say” anything they want it to say if they take texts out of context or do not read them through the lens of the words and ministry of Jesus Christ.

One of the activities in this session focuses on the importance of interpreting texts appropriately within their contexts—historical, literary, cultural, theological, etc. To stress the importance of interpreting texts within their contexts presenting this process personally may be helpful. For example, would we want anyone to interpret our lives based on a single moment in time—without knowing anything else about us? Better if we seek to understand texts in light of their contexts and appreciate the value of humility in all interpretations.

How we interpret Scripture is vitally important. One avenue of inquiry is to examine a biblical passage’s historical setting, with resources to make that possible. We may not know everything about what a text meant to its initial audience, but the value of interpreting texts in their historical contexts will become evident throughout your study of Revelation. Gaining awareness of a text’s original setting and meaning can help guard us from imposing our own prejudices upon a text and applying texts inappropriately to our own lives and situations. Our goal as interpreters is to hear what the texts have to say for themselves. Learning as much as we can about the historical dimensions of biblical texts will help us have ears to hear.

Other lines of inquiry include studying a text’s literary and cultural dimensions. Remember, the words of any text also have their contexts. For example, Revelation was written in Greek, but the Greek often uses Hebraic or Aramaic grammatical forms. So, Greek was at least a second language for the author. John’s words also have an intercultural dimension—Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian. There are many literary connections to other texts as well, especially to Jewish apocalyptic texts and the Old Testament.

Additionally, Revelation is expressed as vision, symbol, metaphor, and allusion. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but here a word can be worth a thousand pictures. Complicating matters further, symbols can be interpreted in different ways. Consider different meanings a cross can have for a Christian and the meaning it has for a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Revelation is a visionary text. Reading it carefully requires us to engage our creative imaginations. We should develop and enhance our imaginations, though, with

everything we can glean from the text's historical, literary, and cultural contexts. For these reasons we need to consider John's words carefully, which seems to be precisely what John himself intended readers to do.

Finally, as its title emphasizes, Revelation has a theological context. The title, "The Apocalypse of John," anchors the book to the realm of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic theology. Apocalyptic literature professes to uncover or reveal something previously hidden, especially the transcendent realities of God. The Revelation to John is both a type of literature and a theological perspective of the end times of creation as we know it. Additionally, while Revelation has many connections with the Old Testament and other Jewish literature especially, its message is thoroughly Christian. The person of Jesus Christ dominates the book. He is both the Lamb who stands as one who has been slain and the conqueror of evil whose name is "The Word of God." Our study of apocalyptic literature will help us to see more of John's perspective.

Friends, as you engage The Revelation to John, keep in mind that it was written to encourage faithfulness among Christians who were suffering. This book shares a vision of God's victory over sin, evil, and death. It issues God's promise of new creation. It empowers hope among God's faithful. You have an exciting adventure ahead. May God bless you all in the reading and hearing of The Revelation to John.

AS YOU BEGIN

Important Notes in Preparation for Session One

Planning the length and number of sessions

Decide the length of each group study session. Because of active learning approaches, Kerygma studies usually require at least fifty to sixty minutes for a group session. If possible, 90 minutes is a preferred amount of time.

Consider adding an initial gathering where participants may receive their *Resource Books*, and read the full text of Revelation before study sessions begin—so, eleven meetings as opposed to ten. (See next paragraph below for details about an initial gathering)

Considering an initial gathering and start of study sessions

- If you decide to have an initial gathering of study participants for the reading of Revelation, using the Reading Aloud Revelation script, you can distribute Resource Books at that time so that participants can read the first chapter in advance of and in readiness for the initial study session. And if participants are familiar with the interactive learning approach of The Kerygma Program, you can begin Session One with the “Exploring the Scripture” section.
- If you decide not to have an initial gathering to read the script, and participants do not yet have their Resource Books, you may need more time in the initial session for participants to get acquainted and to provide more background information for the activities in the initial session.
- If participants are not well known to each other and/or are not familiar with the inductive Kerygma Program approach to the study of Scripture and/or you only have an hour-long time period, divide this first (and lengthy) Leader’s Guide session into two sessions. In the first session, spend most of your time helping everyone get acquainted and introduce them to the Kerygma Program. You may want to use an “Exploring the Scripture” activity and then save other Session One activities for the next session. OR you may simply want to plan for a longer first session of about an hour and a half or two hours in length.

Set-up and opening of Session One

- Check to make sure that your meeting room is easy to locate, if there is a possibility that someone in your group is not thoroughly familiar with your location. You may need some directional signs.
- Leaders should arrive early and make sure that the meeting area is arranged appropriately for the session. It is helpful for participants to sit at tables where they can spread out their Bibles, *Resource Books*, notepads, laptops, and perhaps even have space for cups of coffee or water bottles (preferably with spill-proof lids!). It is also helpful to have a resource table with lesson handouts, Bible dictionaries, a concordance, and other resources for the session.

- Leaders may also want to have a chalkboard, whiteboard, newsprint on an easel, and/or a projector with a screen or a large screen monitor for session video clips and other audio-visual aids. Prior to the first session test whatever audio-visual equipment you are using to be sure it is operating properly.
- If group members are just getting acquainted in this first meeting, prepare a welcoming space where they make name tags or pick up ones that are premade. Be sure the leader (or leaders) also has a name tag.
- If you do not already have a participant roster, have paper for participants to write their preferred contact information. This will be helpful for contacting group members during the week as needed, remind them of volunteer assignments, and perhaps to share information—e.g. sharing links to artwork and/or musical selections.
- You may want to set out some drinks and snacks nearby that people may begin to enjoy, or depending on your group's needs you may want to plan for a snack break in the middle of your study or at the end.

Welcoming study participants and building an environment of fellowship

There are two aspects of a welcome to every session: individual welcomes and a group welcome once the participants are gathered. Greet each person as they arrive and let them know they are welcome. Get to know each member of your group, and help them get to know you.

- Be mindful that people coming to a Bible study, especially for the first time, may be a little anxious. Most everyone may feel like they should know more about the Bible than they do, and they will be afraid of being embarrassed. And even if there are some who are quite experienced in such studies, be mindful that they may also be a bit apprehensive about what they don't know and how this experience will be.
- Because of the nature of new beginnings and group dynamics at the start of any group project, make a special effort to help everyone feel welcome. To welcome everyone, help them appreciate that God has called the group together, that God is going to be at work through everyone in the group for the benefit of all, that all of us

are learners, that we are smarter than any of us, and that together with God's grace the time together will be a blessing for all.

- At the stated time for the session to begin, welcome the group members and introduce the title and theme(s) of the session. Be sure everyone knows where the restrooms are located, and describe the basic design of each class session (i.e., refreshments, meeting times, etc.).

Prayer at opening and closing of each session

- Open and close each session with prayer. Create and offer your own prayers throughout this study, or/and use and adapt the prayers provided in this Leader's Guide. Whether prayers are offered by an individual or by participants in unison, by using the prayers provided in each session or creating your own—ensure that prayers express sentiments of the whole group.
- Resources for opening and closing prayers are provided for group sessions. In the activities that follow, feel free to use or not use these resources as you see fit. The resources are offered as aids and a springboard, not a mandate. If you do use the suggested prayer resources, make and distribute copies for participants as they will find it helpful to have their own copies. Encourage them to take these resources home and revisit them during the week between sessions.
- Some people may be anxious about leading prayer or praying aloud in a group setting. Begin by asking for volunteers. At the close of the session, when the group has reached the Looking Ahead section, ask for a volunteer to lead the opening prayer for the next session, either using the provided prayer, or writing one of their own. Appendix A offers some reflections on prayer.
- Before leading the opening prayer for the first session consider allowing a minute of quiet for group members to be still and to breathe. Participants are coming from other activities and demands on their time and attention. A moment of quiet can help people transition and turn their attentions and energies to the study of the Scriptures. Some of the activities offer “centering” questions or issues. Learning to be silent together with attentiveness to God's presence is important also for our

learning to listen to one another. Silence plays a vital role in instruction, as well. In teaching as in prayer, silence allows individuals to think and reflect. Offer appreciation for prayers and thoughts shared by each participant. Help them also appreciate that their prayers and thoughts may be of help to someone else in the group.

- Finally, as a matter of procedure, vary the manner in which the group prays. Avoid putting anyone on the spot, which often happens if a leader has everyone pray “around the circle.” Consider, instead, a “popcorn” style prayer or a voluntary litany, and so on.

SESSIONS PLANS

Learning Objectives

This session is intended to enable participants to:

1. Become familiar with other participants in the group.
2. Express their initial impressions and questions about Revelation.
3. Gain understanding of the relevance of Revelation’s historical background, literary character, and interpretive perspectives.
4. Appreciate the meaning and importance of apocalyptic literature and eschatology.
5. Engage the symbolic process of Revelation and its relevance for their own lives.

Resources You May Need

- Pens, pencils, and paper
- Whiteboard, chalkboard, newsprint, and appropriate markers, masking tape
- *Kerygma Resource Books* that need to be distributed, extra Bibles (participants are expected to bring their own Bibles, but you might want to have extra on hand, if needed)

- If possible, extra study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, various English translations of the Bible, and hymnbooks (ask pastor or check with church library about borrowing these resources each week)
- Light refreshments, if you and participants choose to offer these
- A laptop computer, projector, and screen or a large screen monitor to show “A Word from the Author” video and other audio-visual helps
- Whiteboard, chalkboard, newsprint, and appropriate markers, masking tape, etc.
- If copies of the Resource Book for this study, *The Book of Revelation—All Creation’s Hallelujah*, were not previously distributed to participants, have copies ready to distribute. Ask participants to bring their own Bibles to each session.
- Materials for making name tags
- File folders for participants to use for Resource sheets
- Paper for compiling a list of participants’ addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses
- In addition to the map in the *Resource Book* and if available, large maps of the Roman Empire and the locations of the churches addressed in Revelation for display
- Copies of Resource 1A—1H as needed, and the Resource for the volunteer project
- Small slips of paper for the closing prayer for this session
- If having refreshments, a sign-up sheet for participants to bring refreshments for upcoming sessions

SESSION STRATEGIES

Setting The Stage

As participants are arriving,

■ Project Slide #1; Welcome, Resource Book cover & study title

1. Welcome Participants

- Greet and welcome individuals as they arrive. Invite participants to make name tags, as these will be important for the first few sessions. Make sure you have your name tag on.
- When everyone is present and you are ready for the study to begin, get everyone's attention and announce the session's start.

■ Project Slide #2; Session title, *Approaching God's Revelation to John*, with Alpha to indicate session is beginning.

2. Welcome Everyone

- Welcome everyone to the study, and make sure everyone knows the start and end time for the group sessions
- Make sure everyone is familiar with the building, the location of restrooms, exit doors, parking, etc.

3. Introductions

- If study participants do not all know each other, make time for each person to introduce themselves, either within the whole group or, if the group is large, as table groups. Point out that the title of the book they are about to study—Revelation—means to “unveil” and “reveal” and “make known.” This happens also to be the way that faithful relations with God and neighbor are built. Faithfulness is related

to our self-unveilings before God as well as to our neighbors and even ourselves (i.e., being honest in all our relations).

Ask participants to share their name and some little-known interest or fact about themselves. If they are willing, they might also summarize their relationships with the church and with the Bible. It can be helpful to the group also for its members to express what they hope to get out of this particular course. You should go first to give everyone a sense of what to address and how much they should say.

■ **Project Welcome Video from the Author. Provided on the Leader's DVD or USB Flash Drive.**

4. Opening Prayer

Distribute copies of **Resource 1A**, a Unison Prayer. Ask participants to say this prayer.

5. Introduce Study Session

Emphasize two important foundations of engaging in this study together. First, everyone is a learner, which means we are learners among learners. Second, there are no “stupid questions.” One participant’s question might be important for someone else in the group. Individually and together, we seek to grow in relationship with God and one another.

Explain, that the Kerygma model is inductive, which means that a leader does not lecture and does not do all the talking. Rather, group members are expected to read both the *Resource Book* chapters and the biblical passages—basically, to do their homework—in preparation for each session. The success of each session depends upon participants bringing with them a willingness to learn and to engage in discussion with one another.

6. Resource Books

Distribute copies of **Resources 1B** and **1C**. **Resource 1B** contains the author’s outline of Revelation as a useful reference. Then invite participants to turn to the Table of Contents in the *Resource Book* and to scan the session titles. **Resource 1C** is a useful

tool for participants to use with their *Resource Books* to quickly locate information provided by the author about specific chapters and verses of the book of Revelation.

■ Project Slides #3 & #4; Themes of the 10 Sessions

Summarize the course by pointing out the relationships between the sessions as follows:

- **Session 1** – Aspects of the historical, literary, & theological background of Revelation
- **Session 2** – Vision of the risen Jesus Christ to John and the book's purpose
- **Session 3** – Seven visions of “what is”: letters to the seven churches
- **Sessions 4-10** – Seven visions of “what is to come”

Point out that numbers in Revelation have symbolic importance. For example, the number seven signals completion and perfection.

Ask participants to open their *Resource Books* to the first chapter. Note the sections at the start and at the end of each *Resource Book* chapter:

- **Summary** – the author's overview of the chapter contents
- **Basic Bible References** – Key Scripture passages to review in advance of the group session
- **Word List** – important words to know/understand. Look up these words in a Bible dictionary or on the Internet. Explain that a Bible dictionary is vital because the Bible in English is translated from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. A concordance for the Bible translation they use will help them to locate and learn about words of interest throughout the Bible.

- **Memory Bank** – memorizing Scripture is a good spiritual discipline, a practice of faith that helps one focus on the word
- **Research** – for further study
- **Reflection** – questions to encourage further consideration and thinking about The Revelation to John
- **Appendices** – additional resources

■ Project Slide #5; Preparation TO DO List.

Stress the importance of the weekly “TO DO List” in preparation for each session. In preparation for every session, each participant should pray, read the chapter for the upcoming session material in the *Resource Book* and the associated Bible passages, respond to any research and reflection prompts that catch their attention. Write down any comments or questions that arise during their study to bring them to the group session.

7. Bibles

■ Project Slide #6; Recommended study Bibles

Emphasize the importance and usefulness of a good **study Bible** with a responsible translation. While it is true that the best Bible is the one you read, some Bibles are not actually translations but are paraphrases. A paraphrase (e.g., *The Living Bible*, *The Message*) is an interpretation of biblical text that uses intentionally different words to explain the meaning from the paraphraser’s point of view. A **translation** aims to maintain the original language’s word meaning and word order as close as the translator’s language allows. While paraphrases may be helpful for engaging biblical texts, a direct translation will bring you into the most direct encounter with the biblical text short of knowing biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. There are many responsible Bible translations available today. This study uses and recommends the **NRSV**. You may want to consider also the **NRSVue**. Other useful translations include the **KJV**, **NKJV**, **RSV**, **New Jerusalem**, **NIV**, and **CEB**.

Regardless of which translations the group participants use, help everyone appreciate the importance of comparing translations throughout the study. It may be helpful for the group to have a variety of translations on hand for gaining additional insight into how the original languages may be rendered.

Along with the reasons mentioned above, encourage participants to acquire and use a study Bible, because of the resources they contain. Study Bibles offer supporting helps, which vary by publisher, and typically include aids like footnotes, parallel texts, maps, tables, charts, articles, a glossary, and a concordance. It is recommended, also, that participants use a study Bible that includes the **Apocrypha** (also known as **Deuterocanonical** books), which are intertestamental Jewish works included in the Septuagint, often called the Greek Old Testament. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of Jewish religious texts completed during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. It includes all the books of the **Hebrew Bible** and the Protestant Old Testament, but it also includes additional books that are present in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles. These “additional” books were first called “apocrypha,” which is Greek for “hidden or secret (things),” by Jerome when he was translating the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament into Latin in the late fourth century, a work known as the **Vulgate**. Jerome applied the term to the Septuagintal books that were not included in the Hebrew Bible.

When Judaism established its canon of Scriptures at the end of the first century CE, they did not include these Second Temple texts. When Protestants established their canon of Old Testament scriptures in the 16th century CE, they chose the texts of the Hebrew Bible. Luther and others Reformers recognized, however, that these apocryphal books (which Catholics call deuterocanonical) were still important to know. At the Council of Trent in 1546, the Catholic Church declared all the books of the Vulgate to be canonical, except for 1st and 2nd Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which are included in the Orthodox canon. In short, this is why the Old Testaments of Christians vary: 39 for Protestants, 46 for Catholics, and 49 for Orthodox. While the Apocrypha is not essential to faith and practice, it can be instructive. This author recommends *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, 5th ed. (2018).

EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURE

1. Turning to God's Revelation to John

■ Project Slide #7; Session 1 learning objectives

As you turn to the book of Revelation, highlight the session's learning objectives that pertain to Revelation.

In this session, participants will:

- Express initial impressions and questions about Revelation.
- Gain understanding of the relevance of Revelation's historical background, literary character, and interpretive perspectives.
- Clarify the meaning and importance of apocalyptic and eschatology.
- Engage the symbolic process and its relevance for participants' lives.
- Reiterate that each session includes time for questions and discussion.

■ Project Slide #8; Wonder, Questions and the Revelation

2. Wonder, Questions and The Revelation to John

The test of any good Bible study is how well the Bible is used. Help participants become more comfortable using their Bibles by getting into the Bible as early and then as often as possible. Since this first session contains a lot of background material and the "Basic Bible References" encompass the entire Book of Revelation, use this first journey into the biblical text together as an opportunity to practice one of the first steps for any Bible study—wondering about the text and asking questions. Either or both of the next ten to fifteen-minute activities will help.

For this activity, begin by announcing its purpose: to enter the text of Revelation and to practice a vital step for studying the Bible—wondering and asking questions. Then

either invite participants to select any text in Revelation at random (i.e., open the text at some point and read a passage) OR assign each participant a chapter of Revelation to locate a verse within that chapter. If the latter and there are more than twenty-two members in your group, it is okay for more than one person to be assigned to a chapter.

Participants should read a text and form at least one question about it. What would they like to know? What does the text make them wonder about? Allow just a few minutes. When everyone has a verse and a question, have them identify and read the key verse that prompted their question and then share one question they have about that specific text.

- What is your text?
- What is your question?

Participants may choose not to share, but remind everyone that there are no stupid questions. Also, encourage everyone to simply listen and not to offer interpretations or evaluations. If someone asks you a question in pursuit of an answer, do not try to answer it even if you can. Just let the questions breathe and allow the participants to wonder. The group will be working on interpreting the text later. Allow about 5-8 minutes.

Also, if the number of participants is small, you may simply invite everyone to share a question that their selected text raised for them. If the number of participants is large, form groups of 3-5 and ask people to share in their small groups and then ask groups to share briefly in a plenary fashion. Again, the point of this exercise is not to interpret the texts; rather, the point is to get everyone into the Bible, to wonder about texts—especially in Revelation, and to practice asking questions of the text. You can help the group process their collective “wonderings” if you or a volunteer from the group will list the texts they select and what participants are wondering about them at this given moment. When you get into these texts later, you can return to these questions and see what you think at that point.

— or —

For a more directed activity to encourage participants to wonder about and to form questions about the Revelation, distribute copies of **Resource 1D Asking Questions of the Text** (page can be cut in half). If group size permits, form groups of three to four participants each. Assign to individuals or to each group one of the following texts in Revelation: 1:4-8; 4:1-11; 5:6-14; 7:9-17; 11:15-19; 12:10-12; 21:1-4. Not every passage needs to be used. Invite each participant or group to locate their text, read or skim it, discuss it, and respond to the following prompts:

- What does this passage say about God and the kingdom of God?
- What questions does the passage raise for you?

After about five minutes, invite participants to read their texts and offer their responses to the prompts. Take another five to ten minutes for their responses. These texts will be considered again within their contexts and we will wrestle with their interpretations then. But gaining some glimpses of Revelation's views of God and God's Kingdom at this point is helpful.

3. Initial Impressions of Revelation

Interest in the “end times” or “last days” may be at an all-time high among Christians and non-Christians alike. Not all views are Christian, but Christian texts—especially Revelation—and Christian people have been at the forefront of popularizing apocalypticism in cultures around the world.

In popular culture, apocalypticism is equated with a global catastrophic doomsday. In biblical culture, apocalypticism is the belief that God's final victory over evil and death is coming and God's world will be saved. The popular fascination with Revelation and the end of the world as we know it is reflected in best-selling books and movies, such as *The Late Great Planet Earth*, *Left Behind*, and *Mad Max* book and movie series, as well as in popular media, the latest news about disastrous world events, and actual doomsday preparations. Many people embrace end of the world views and others reject them. In one way or another, a majority of people in American culture have encountered these views.

■ Project Slide #9; The Revelation—Out and About

Invite participants to share ways they have encountered the book of Revelation and/or the topic of the “last days.” Distribute copies of **Resource 1E Awareness of Revelation and its Message** (page can be cut in half).

Consider the following questions:

- How would you describe your awareness of and/or experience with Revelation?
- How has that awareness affected you?
- How has that awareness affected your belief in God?
- How has that awareness affected your view of the church?
- What is your hope for the future and what is the basis for it?

Invite participants to select one of the questions and comment about their experience with or awareness of Revelation. Point out that responses of people-at-large vary a great deal.

If you choose to spend more time on this topic, you may want to point to the use of Revelation-associated language in the media. For example, words such as apocalypse, apocalyptic, or Armageddon have been used in public commentary to describe highly unusual or potentially extreme events. As one example, the exceptionally large numbers of cicadas, the insects that live below ground and emerge every twelve to seventeen years, that were expected to emerge in places across North America between April and July of 2024, was referred to as a “cicadapocalypse”.²

2 Baisas, Laura, “*The Cicadapocalypse is nigh. 7 cicada facts to know before it hits*,” Popular Science, Apr 15, 2024. https://www.popsoci.com/environment/cicada-facts-2024/?utm_source=pocket-newtab-en-us/.

Ask if participants have read or heard other examples of the use of Revelation-related language in the media or the public sphere.

After a few examples, return the group's focus to the Revelation to John. Ask if there are any other questions about Revelation that anyone would like to add to the questions raised in the earlier activity above. If so, add them to the class list.

While it is important that participants have a chance to express their general impressions of Revelation and listen to each other, keep this exchange relatively brief and continue the study.

4. Interpretive Approaches and Consequences

Whether or not participants have read the first chapter of the *Resource Book* in preparation for this first session, provide an overview of the primary orientations of interpretations of Revelation. Generally, interpretations fit into one of five categories. (A list of the five interpretive categories is included in **Resource 1F**.)

■ Project Slide #10; Five Interpretive Categories.

Revelation is viewed as a:

- Guide to current events (contemporary fulfillment of prophecy)
- Lens for viewing any historical period (continuing history)
- Historical text only (past history)
- Timeless spiritual guide for faithfulness (symbolic myth)
- Mixture of approaches (integrated)

-and-

Invite participants to wonder about the possible strengths and weaknesses of each approach. If helpful, distribute copies of **Resource 1F Interpretive Approaches**. Or use one copy, and cut into four pieces; each piece with one of the questions (below) to distribute. Ask for four volunteers. Assign to each volunteer one of the questions below about interpretive approaches to Revelation.

- If Revelation was only intended for people in a distant future at the end of world as we know it, what relevance did Revelation have at its time of origin, and why have so many other interpreters in the past seen their historical moment as the time of the predicted future and the fulfillment of Revelation's end time prophecy?
- If Revelation is only a lens for viewing the continuous natural movement of history to the end of the world, what could Revelation have meant to its first sender and recipients, and what is the point of prophecy and Revelation's description of a new creation?
- If Revelation is only past history, how does one account for the text's ongoing affects in history over the past twenty centuries?
- If Revelation is a non-historical spiritual guide, to whom was the writer writing and why are the text's historical realities minimized?

Explain the process for this activity. Each volunteer will read their question. Invite participants to wonder as each question is read and to offer comments about what answers to the question might include. Repeat for each question. Conclude by asking participants to consider how and why an interpreter's beliefs and expectations about a document's message can then affect what is "read" and "heard."

Considering these interpretive approaches is to help participants recognize that our expectations and points of view can affect what we pay attention to and what we hear. The challenge for interpreting Scripture is that every interpreter faces a danger of imposing his or her own ideas on the biblical text, bending it to say what he or she wants it to say, rather than letting the Scripture guide the interpretation. Faithful interpretation and exposition of the Bible, however, means letting the text speak for itself.

Close the activity by indicating to participants that this study engages a mixture of perspectives. Most importantly this study interprets Revelation as Scripture. The book of Revelation's inclusion in the Bible means that it has unique authority for faith and practice. It also means that the church believes that this text—like all Scripture—was summoned forth by the spirit of God as both a record and a guide for the people of faith in a particular time and place as well as for every time and place since.

5. Historical, Literary, and Theological Contexts

■ Project Slide #11; Map of the Roman Empire.

-or-

Refer participants to the map of the seven church locations, in the *Resource Book*.

-and-

If available, display a map of the Roman Empire that clearly shows the island of Patmos and the seven cities of the seven churches in Revelation.

■ Project Slide #12; Scripture texts and Slide #13; 3 Questions.

-or-

Distribute copies of **Resource 1G** (page can be cut in half).

One way to enter the first century Greco-Roman world is to engage some passages in the Bible where certain aspects of that culture are apparent. For this exercise, form groups of three to four participants and assign to each group one of the following texts (a “group” may also be 1 person): Matthew 2:13-18; 10:16-23; 14:1-12; Mark 13:9-27; 15:1-24; Luke 2:1-7; Acts 17:16-34. Not every passage must be used. If your group is large, any text may be assigned to more than one group. Invite each group to locate their text, read

or skim it, and respond to the following prompts:

- What does this passage reveal about first century Greco-Roman life?
- What would it be like to live under such a power?
- What questions does the passage raise for you?

-or-

Another activity for appreciating the cultural context of Revelation is to engage secondary sources. Direct participants to their *Resource Books* and Appendix B “Selected Classical Sources: Roman Persecution of Christians” in order to engage its subject matter. Divide participants into three groups and assign each group one of the primary sources in the appendix (Suetonius, Tacitus & Dio Cassius, and Pliny). Ask them to take about five to eight minutes to read or skim their assigned text(s), taking notes of key points. Gather the groups and ask one person from each group to offer a brief summary of or key points from what they read.

Encourage participants to learn more about the first-century Greco-Roman world as the study progresses, including first-century Judaism and Christianity. Calvin J. Roetzel’s *The World That Shaped the New Testament* and C. K. Barrett’s *The New Testament Background* are especially helpful for understanding the New Testament world.

-and-

If participants have not already read chapter one of the *Resource Book*, divide participants into three groups.

■ **Project Slide #14; The Revelation—Starting with the Background.**
(Includes the 3 groups listed below.)

Make assignments to each group as noted below. Ask them to read the sections under the headings in Chapter One of the *Resource Book* that correspond to their topic. Then prepare a summary of highlights to share with the group. Indicate that groups will have about fifteen minutes. When ready, ask a representative from each group to share the group's work.

Group 1 – Authorship and date of Revelation (See Historical Contexts section)

Group 2 – Christian life under Roman rule in the late first century CE (See Historical Contexts section)

Group 3 – Origins and Popularity of Apocalyptic Literature (See An Apocalyptic Text section)

-or-

■ **Project Slide #15; The Revelation—Starting with What We Know.**
(includes the 3 questions listed below)

If participants have read Chapter One of the *Resource Book*, form small groups of three or four persons. Or if a smaller number of participants, have them work in pairs. With the help of their *Resource Books*, ask them to respond to these questions:

- Who is the author of the book of Revelation and what do we know about him?
- What are the circumstances under which the book was written?
- What type of literature is Revelation and what does it mean for interpreting Revelation?

Ask groups to share their discoveries and surprises, their thoughts and questions raised by the background information they have read.

In either case, allow time for the group to share. Bring participants back together and ask individuals to share what was most helpful for them in terms of the background information they learned in reading chapter one of the *Resource Book*.

6. Approaching the Symbolic Text of Revelation

■ Project Slide #16; An Apocalyptic Text.

Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts are inherently symbolic. They are written from a perspective of awe in God's power to accomplish God's purpose, and they seek to inspire the same point of view in others. Consequently, understanding the symbolic process and the interpretation of symbols is vital for interpreting Revelation (refer to last three paragraphs in *Resource Book* chapter one section, An Apocalyptic Text).

-and-

■ Project Slide #17; Questions about symbols.

- Invite participants to identify symbols in their everyday lives. Then ask them to identify a symbol that is personally meaningful. What symbols are most meaningful? Why? What meanings do their symbols have?
- After some discussion, point out that a symbol is a representation, visual or conceptual, that points to a reality and/or meaning beyond itself which is unseen and invisible yet which has power to those who accept its values.
- Also, note that the value of a symbol is its ability to compress and elucidate meaning into a single entity that shapes belief and conduct. Not only may symbols express key values but they are also vehicles for revelation and can take on a life of their own apart from a symbol's origin or common use.
- Take the cross for example. The cross as a symbol existed before the Christian era, but the cross in a Christian context speaks of unfathomable love and grace and the reality of God's saving presence and redemption. For others, the symbol of a cross may mean and promote the values of racism and hatred.

Consequently, the context of a symbol's use is vital for understanding and interpreting the symbol's meaning. Thus this study seeks to interpret the symbols in Revelation within the text's historical and literary contexts. This means that the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds of the first century CE—especially those religious texts that we call the Old Testament—are essential for interpreting Revelation.

■ Project Slide #18; Pastoral Letter to a Church in Crisis

7. Revelation: A Pastoral Letter to a Church in Crisis

Prepare participants to enter the text of Revelation more deeply in the next session.

Remind them that the text of Revelation is an historical text from a first century CE Christian in exile under Roman rule that was written to Christian churches facing a range of pressures that threatened their faithfulness and their very lives. The insight that the imprisoned John of Patmos received from God is that God wanted to give particular churches warning about God's coming judgment, encouragement to persevere in love, and to hope in God's ultimate victory over evil and death. In contrast to the threats of assimilation, ostracism, persecution, and suffering that these Christians were facing, the revelation of Jesus Christ to John affirms God's faithfulness, power, and love.

As Christian people, we affirm that Revelation was not only a gift from God for the churches it addressed in Asia Minor in the first century CE, but is also a gift from God for the whole church of every time and place. Hence, we call it Scripture.

In short, the church receives the Revelation to John as holy Scripture that is inspired by God and given to the faithful to build hope and strengthen faithfulness in any time or place. In no uncertain terms, God is presented as the Almighty who rules over all creation and Jesus is the Savior through whom sin and evil are vanquished. God's covenant promises will be fulfilled with a new creation in which Jesus Christ is fully Lord of all. This message is just as vital to the church today as it was when first revealed.

Encourage participants to read in the coming week Appendix C The Canonical Context of Revelation in the *Resource Book*.

■ Project Slide #19; Omega, indicating that study session is concluding.

Closing

Remind participants to read chapters two of the Resource Book, along with the related Bible passages, in preparation for the next session. Emphasize the importance of their preparation, regular attendance, and active participation for enhancing the learning experience not only for themselves but for everyone in the group. Their participation is an act of loving their neighbor.

Invite all participants to read and pursue the Research and Reflection topics found at the end of each chapter in the Resource Book.

Invite participants to write down questions that arise during their study and to bring them to the next study session.

And suggest that, in the weeks to come, participants listen or watch for words such as “apocalypse,” “apocalyptic,” or “Armageddon” used in print or broadcast news, media, or other platforms of public discourse. Bring in any such examples of “Revelation in the public sphere/psyche” to the group in the following study session.

Close with a hymn and a prayer.

- Sing “Lord Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary” or “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord, God Almighty!” or another hymn of your choice.
- As an option for a closing prayer, distribute copies of **Resource 1H**. Ask that each participant to select one of the passages from Revelation and to read it aloud as a prayer. After each prayer, all participants respond, saying together “Praise be to you, O God.” After all participants have offered prayers, close with “Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray.”
- Another option is to distribute to everyone a slip of paper and ask them to write upon it a one sentence prayer and/or an affirmation of praise. Collect the slips

of paper in a basket, stir them up. For a group prayer, pass the basket around, ask participants to take one paper, read it as a prayer, followed by the response, “Thanks be to you, O God” after each sentence prayer is read. And continue to pass around the basket until each participant has had a chance to offer one of the prayers.

Looking Ahead to Session 2

Ask if there are participants who are interested in how the revelation to John has been depicted in the arts. Three works of art can be considered in next week’s session. Use the Resource for Session 2, Volunteer Assignment with the art work, the artist’s name and related links to look up the work, the artist, and questions to consider related to the way the artist has depicted a scene/or scenes from The Revelation to John. Volunteers would then be asked to give a short report (three to five minutes) in Session 2, reflecting on the artwork. If there are volunteers, distribute copies of Resource for Session 2 to them.

Ask also if someone would like to volunteer to read about the life of Albrecht Durer (1471 – 1528) and his series of woodcuts inspired by the Revelation to John.

If you want additional focus on the importance of symbolism in Revelation in the next session, ask participants: a) bring one natural object of personal symbolic importance (something that they found in the outdoors) and be prepared to share with the group some way it is personally relevant for faith and life; and b) learn what they can about symbols and how they work.

If the group did use the Reading Aloud Revelation script at an initial gathering to read the book of Revelation, you may want to consider re-reading shorter segments of it, basically the chapters that will be the focus of each session. If so, you will need copies of the script available for each session

Unison Prayer

Gracious God, we are grateful that you have called us together to study your word. Open our hearts and minds that we might hear your word and gain new understanding and insight into your grace and love.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen

Outline: The Book of Revelation

I. Vision of the Risen Crucified Christ (1:1-20)

1:1-3 The Source of the Revelation

1:4-8 A Salutation to the Seven Churches

1:9-20 The Voice and the Vision

II. Vision of What Is —Letters to Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)

2:1-7 The First Message to the Churches in a Letter to Ephesus

2:8-11 The Second Message to the Churches in a Letter to Smyrna

2:12-17 The Third Message to the Churches in a Letter to Pergamum

2:18-29 The Fourth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Thyatira

3:1-6 The Fifth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Sardis

3:7-13 The Sixth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Philadelphia

3:14-22 The Seventh Message to the Churches in a Letter to Laodicea

III. Vision of What Is To Come (4:1-22:5)

A. Vision of God and the Lamb (4:1-5:14)

4:1 An Open Door to God and the Lamb

4:2-3 God Enthroned Over All

4:4-11 Heavenly Worship of the Lord God Almighty

5:1-5 A Closed Scroll and the Worthy One

5:6-7 The Lion is the Lamb

5:8-14 Cosmic Praise of the Lamb Who Was Slaughtered

B. Vision of Seven Seals (6:1-8:2)

6:1-8	The First Four Seals: Horsemen
6:9-11	The Fifth Seal: Cry of the Martyrs
6:12-17	The Sixth Seal: Signs in the Heavens
7:1-17	The First Interlude
8:1-2	The Seventh Seal: An Awesome Reverent Silence

C. Vision of Seven Trumpets of Engagement (8:3-11:19)

8:3-5	Preparations
8:6-13	The First Four Trumpets
9:1-21	The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets
10:1-11:14	The Second Interlude
11:15-19	The Seventh Trumpet

D. Vision of Seven Embodiments of Power (12:1-14:20)

12:1-2	The Woman with Child
12:3-4	The Red Dragon
12:5-6	The Male Child
12:7-17	The Angel Michael and His Angels
13:1-10	The Beast from the Sea
13:11-18	The Beast from the Earth
14:1-5	The Lamb on Mount Zion
14:6-20	A Third Interlude

E. Vision of Seven Bowls of Wrath (15:1-18:24)

- 15:1-8 Preparation for Emptying the Bowls
- 16:1-21 The Emptying of God's Wrath
- 17:1-18:24 The Judgment of Babylon
 - 17:1-6 The Great Harlot
 - 17:7-18 Relation Between the Harlot and the Beast Revealed
 - 18:1-8 Dirge for Babylon
 - 18:9-20 World's Lament Over Babylon
 - 18:21 Heaven's Rejoicing Over Babylon's Fall
 - 18:21-24 Babylon Symbolically Destroyed

F. Vision of Heavenly Hallelujahs, God's Victory, and Last Judgment (19:1-20:15)

- 19:1-5 Heavenly Hallelujahs Over the Demise of Babylon
- 19:6-10 Announcement of the Lamb's Marriage
- 19:11-16 Word-Warrior Messiah on the White Horse
- 19:17-21 Antichrist and Allies are Captured
- 20:1-3 Binding of Satan
- 20:4-10 A Millennial Reign Satan Destroyed
- 20:11-15 The Final Judgment

G. Vision of God's Heavenly Kingdom on Earth (21:1-22:21)

21:1-8 All Creation Made New

21:9-22:5 The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth

IV. Epilogue (22:6-21)

Division of Revelation Chapters in the Resource Book:

The Book of Revelation: All Creation's Hallelujah

Chapter Two. Vision of the Risen Christ (1:1-20)

- 1:1-3 The Source of the Revelation
- 1:4-8 A Salutation to the Seven Churches
- 1:9-20 The Voice and the Vision

Chapter Three. Vision of Letters to Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)

- 2:1-7 The First Message to the Churches in a Letter to Ephesus
- 2:8-11 The Second Message to the Churches in a Letter to Smyrna
- 2:12-17 The Third Message to the Churches in a Letter to Pergamum
- 2:18-29 The Fourth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Thyatira
- 3:1-6 The Fifth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Sardis
- 3:7-13 The Sixth Message to the Churches in a Letter to Philadelphia
- 3:14-22 The Seventh Message to the Churches in a Letter to Laodicea

Chapter Four. Vision of God and the Lamb (4:1-5:14)

- 4:1 An Open Door to God and the Lamb
- 4:2-3 God Enthroned Over All
- 4:4-11 Heavenly Worship of the Lord God Almighty
- 5:1-5 A Closed Scroll and the Worthy One
- 5:6-7 The Lion is the Lamb
- 5:8-14 Cosmic Praise of the Lamb Who Was Slaughtered

Chapter Five. Vision of Seven Seals (6:1-8:2)

6:1-8	The First Four Seals: Horsemen
6:9-11	The Fifth Seal: Cry of the Martyrs
6:12-17	The Sixth Seal: Signs in the Heavens
7:1-17	The First Interlude
8:1-2	The Seventh Seal

Chapter Six. Vision of Seven Trumpets of Engagement (8:3-11:19)

8:3-5	Preparations
8:6-13	The First Four Trumpets
9:1-21	The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets
10:1-11:14	The Second Interlude
11:15-19	The Seventh Trumpet

Chapter Seven. Vision of Seven Embodiments of Power (12:1-14:20)

12:1-2	The Woman with Child
12:3-4	The Red Dragon
12:5-6	The Male Child
12:7-17	The Angel Michael and His Angels
13:1-10	The Beast from the Sea
13:11-18	The Beast from the Earth
14:1-5	The Lamb on Mount Zion
14:6-20	A Third Interlude

Chapter Eight. Vision of Seven Bowls of Wrath (15:1-18:24)

- 15:1-8 Preparation for Emptying the Bowls
- 16:1-21 The Emptying of God's Wrath
- 17:1-18:24 The Judgment of Babylon
- 17:1-6 The Great Harlot
- 17:7-18 Relation Between the Harlot and the Beast Revealed
- 18:1-8 Dirge for Babylon
- 18:9-20 World's Lament Over Babylon
- 18:21 Heaven's Rejoicing Over Babylon's Fall
- 18:21-24 Babylon Symbolically Destroyed

**Chapter 9. Vision of Heavenly Hallelujahs, God's Victory,
and the Last Judgment (19:1-20:15)**

- 19:1-5 Heavenly Hallelujahs Over the Demise of Babylon
- 19:6-10 Announcement of the Lamb's Marriage
- 19:11-16 Word-Warrior Messiah on the White Horse
- 19:17-21 Antichrist and Allies are Captured
- 20:1-3 Binding of Satan
- 20:4-10 A Millennial Reign Satan Destroyed
- 20:11-15 The Final Judgment

Chapter 10. Vision of God's Heavenly Kingdom on Earth (21:1 22:21)

- 21:1-8 All Creation Made New
- 21:9-22:5 The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth
- 22:6-21 Epilogue

Asking Questions of the Text

Revelation 1:4-8

Revelation 7:9-17

Revelation 4:1-11

Revelation 11:15-19

Revelation 5:6-14

Revelation 12:10-12

Revelation 21:1-4

Locate the text, read or skim it, discuss it, and respond to the following questions:

- What does this passage say about God and the kingdom of God?
- What questions does the passage raise for you?

Awareness of Revelation and its Message at this point in time

Consider the following questions:

- How would you describe your awareness of and/or experience with Revelation?
- How has that awareness affected you?
- How has that awareness affected your belief in God?
- How has that awareness affected your view of the church?
- What is your hope for the future and what is the basis for it?

Interpretive Approaches and where they might lead

Revelation is viewed as a:

- Guide to current events (i.e., contemporary fulfillment of prophecy)
- Lens for viewing any historical period (i.e. continuing history)
- Historical text only (i.e., past history)
- Timeless spiritual guide for faithfulness (i.e., symbolic myth)
- Mixture of approaches (i.e., something of each of the above / integrated)
- What are the possible strengths and weaknesses of each approach?

Resource 1F-2

- If Revelation was only intended for people in a distant future at the end of world as we know it, what relevance did Revelation have at its time of origin, and why have so many other interpreters in the past seen their historical moment as the time of the predicted future and the fulfillment of Revelation's end time prophecy?
- If Revelation is only a lens for viewing the continuous natural movement of history to the end of the world, what could Revelation have meant to its first sender and recipients, and what is the point of prophecy and Revelation's description of a new creation?
- If Revelation is only past history, how does one account for the text's ongoing affects in history over the past twenty centuries?
- If Revelation is a non-historical spiritual guide, to whom was the writer writing and why are the text's historical realities minimized?

Contexts: Historical, Literary, and Theological

After reading (or skimming) one of these passages,

Matthew 2:13-18

Mark 13:9-27

Matthew 10:16-23

Mark 15:1-24

Matthew 14:1-12

Luke 2:1-7

Acts 17:16-34

How would you answer the following questions

- What does this passage reveal about first century Greco-Roman life?
- What would it be like to live under such a power?
- What questions does the passage raise for you?

Some Prayers and Praises Addressed to God in Revelation

4:8b	Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.
4:11	You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.
5:12b	<i>Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!</i>
5:13b	<i>To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!</i>
7:10b	<i>Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!</i>
7:12	<i>Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.</i>
11:15b	<i>The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.</i>
11:17-18	<i>We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.</i>
15:3b	<i>Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations!</i>
15:4	Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.
16:7b	Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!
19:1b-2a	Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power to our God, for his judgments are true and just.
19:5b	<i>Praise our God, all you his servants and all who fear him, small and great.</i>
19:6b-7a	<i>Hallelujah! For the Lord God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory.</i>
22:21	The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

Artwork and The Revelation to John

The Bamberg Apocalypse illuminated manuscript containing the pictorial cycle of the Book of Revelation and a Gospel Lectionary (1000-1020 CE). Bamberg State Library, Bavaria:

<https://www.staatsbibliothek-bamberg.de/en/cultural-education/virtual-exhibitions/miniatures-of-the-bamberg-apocalypse>



Artwork and The Revelation to John

Hans Memling's altarpiece, "Johannes on Patmos" (1479). Memling Museum, Saint John's Hospital, Bruges.

<https://www.artbible.info/art/large/308.html>



Artwork and The Revelation to John

Eric Newton's mosaic, "Scenes from the Revelation of St. John" (1927) Gallery at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Chorlton, Manchester, England

<https://stjohnschorlton.co.uk/st-johns-gallery/>

