



REVELATION

DECEMBER 2020

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

The simple answer is that this book was written for people like us; ordinary Christians who live between the death and resurrection of Jesus and his return in glory at the end of time.

It is easy to forget this as we read the book of Revelation. The book is full of big bold pictures that can sometimes seem confusing. On top of this there are a lot of people who have come up with grand and complicated schemes that make us feel inadequate to read the book for ourselves.

However, the book of Revelation was not written to create complicated time charts, but to be a blessing to all of God's people (Revelation 1:3). The original hearers were members of ordinary churches (Revelation 1:11) struggling with the same problems we face.

Don't be frightened to read this book, it was written for you and, as with all the other books we have read, God will help us to understand it with the help of his Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

The book of Revelation was written to encourage the Church of Jesus Christ as they wait for the return of Jesus. There are four main themes that run through the book:

The wait will be hard

The wait for Jesus to come will not be easy. It will be characterized by natural disasters as well as warfare and other atrocities. On top of this we are reminded again and again that the people of Jesus Christ will be persecuted as they wait for him (eg. Revelation: 6:9-11)

God is on the throne

As we go through the book of Revelation, we are constantly reminded that God is on the throne. History is under his control. As we wait for Jesus and see the evidence and presence of evil in the world, at no point are we to think that God has lost. Instead, we are

to remember that his throne, symbolising his reign and rule, remains intact until the end (eg. Revelation 22:1).

It's all about Jesus

From first to last the person that is at the front of the stage of history is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the first and last (1:8), the one who is with his church (1:13), the one who will inherit all things (5:5 – the scroll resembles a will), the one who is praised in heaven (5:12), the one who will deal with sin and wickedness (19:11-16) and the one who will bring his church, his bride, into eternity (21:9).

The end is in sight

Throughout the book of Revelation, we are constantly brought to look at the end of time when Jesus will return. Here we see that evil will be dealt with, sin punished, and the disciples of Jesus will be welcomed into his eternal kingdom.

As you go through the book of Revelation there will be things that you do not understand. However, if you look out for these themes you won't go far wrong and you should find the book a real blessing.

HOW DOES THIS BOOK WORK?

The book of Revelation is not one continuous story that maps out consecutive events from beginning to end. Instead, it works as a book of seven visions that look at the same time period – the cross to the return of Jesus – from seven different angles. That means that the whole book, even the later chapters, have relevance to us today.

- Vision 1 – Rev. 1:9–3:22 – Jesus speaks to his church.
- Vision 2 – Rev. 4:1-8:1 – Jesus will inherit the kingdom
- Vision 3 – Rev. 8:2-11:19 – Opportunities for repentance
- Vision 4 – Rev. 12:1–14:20 – A spiritual battle is raging
- Vision 5 – Rev. 15:1–16:21 – God says, “enough!”
- Vision 6 – Rev. 17:1–19:10 – The world exposed
- Vision 7 – Rev. 19:11–22:19 – The end of it all

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)