

GUIDE TO READING REVELATION

Revelation is the culmination of the entire Biblical story; If the Bible is like a tapestry, then every major thread beginning in Genesis will find fulfillment in Jesus and then its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation. The book draws heavily on the Hebrew Bible, with hundreds of allusions or callbacks to the Old Testament. Instead of attempting to read Revelation with the newspaper in one hand, we must read it through the lens of the Old Testament.

WHAT IS IT?

WRITTEN BETWEEN 94 TO 96 AD DURING THE RULE OF ROMAN EMPEROR DOMITIAN

Revelation speaks against the economic, military, religious, and political power of Rome, calling followers of Jesus to remain faithful even to the point of persecution.

MADE UP OF THREE TYPES OF LITERATURE

CIRCULAR LETTER to seven churches in Asia Minor.

APOCALYPTIC (“UNVEILING”)

Not about the end of the world, but a symbol-fueled vision encouraging God’s people to persevere.

PROPHETIC

Not about predicting the future, but comforting and/or challenging God’s people.

SEVEN: THE NUMBER OF COMPLETION



7 churches
of Asia Minor



7 Blessings
or Benedictions



3 sets of 7 judgments
(seals, trumpets, bowls)



7 times Jesus says,
“I am coming”

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REVELATION

AS YOU READ

Remember Revelation is not written *to* us, but it is written *for* us.

Remember Revelation is not a story about the end of the world, but the renewal of the world, the coming together of heaven and earth.

Know that reading Revelation is an act of worship.

Pay attention to what John “hears” versus what he “sees”—this is a moment where your expectations are likely about to be subverted.

Remember, at its core, this is a story about Jesus.

“REVELATION IS NOT ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST, BUT ABOUT THE LIVING CHRIST. IT IS NOT ABOUT A RAPTURE OUT OF THIS WORLD BUT ABOUT FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP IN THIS WORLD. THAT IS, LIKE EVERY OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOK, REVELATION IS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST—‘A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (REV 1:1)—AND ABOUT FOLLOWING HIM IN OBEDIENCE AND LOVE.”

MICHAEL GORMAN, READING REVELATION RESPONSIBLY

Want to go deeper? Sign up for This Week in Revelation each Wednesday at 7 pm online with Alex Johnston. Learn more at hpumc.org/bible or sign up with the QR code.

