

Lesson 8:

Revelation

This week in *The Bible Made Simple*, we dive in to the fascinating book of Revelation. This lesson will give us a lot to think about, but before we get there, consider these questions.

What are some things that stand out about the book of Revelation?

Does God want us to be afraid of the end times?

Why is the book of Revelation so hard to understand?

The Book of Revelation

Whether it's confusing symbols or surprising images, we all know something about the book of Revelation. Most of us approach this book as an "end-of-the-world _____," expecting it to tell us how to understand current world events in light of the end times. But remember, the apostle _____ wrote Revelation as a _____. Here's how one author describes John's audience after Christ's death:

"The first Christians lived in eager _____ of Christ's return. But sixty years after his death it still had not happened, persecution was increasing, and some were beginning to doubt. So [the book of Revelation was] needed to _____ them to stand firm. God is in control, no matter how things may look. Christ, not the emperor, is _____...There is a glorious, wonderful future for every faithful believer -- and especially for those who lay down their lives for Christ."*

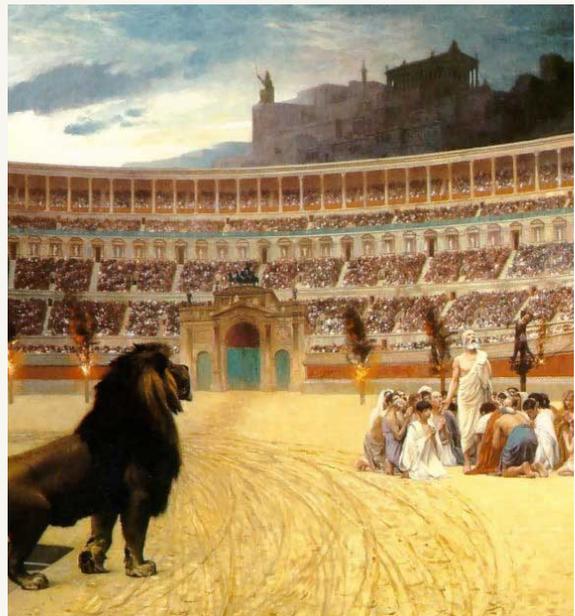
Features and Purpose of Revelation

Features

- It has two genres: letter and intense prophecy (it predicts the future and proclaims truth for the present).
- It uses symbols to make a point.

Purpose

"The purpose of Revelation is to answer the question, 'Who is Lord?'...[It shows] us in picture language that Jesus rather than Caesar is Lord." It uses symbols to describe the audience's situation and encourage them to endure through hard times.



*Both quotes come from *Grasping God's Word*.

How Should We Read Revelation?

At this point in the lesson, we would normally take a closer look at each step of the Interpretive Journey for the book of Revelation. Instead, here are some resources that will help you read the book of Revelation on your own or as part of a group.

HOW TO READ REVELATION

1. Read Revelation with humility.
2. Try to discover the message to the original readers.
3. Don't try to discover a strict timeline of future events.
4. Take Revelation seriously, but don't always take it literally.
5. Pay attention when John identifies an image.
6. Look at the Old Testament and remember what the world was like back then when studying images and symbols.
7. Focus on the main point and don't press all the details.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- I. Introduction (1:1 - 3:22)
- II. Vision of God and the Lamb (4:1 - 5:14)
- III. Opening of the Seven Seals (6:1 - 8:1)
- IV. Sounding of the Seven Trumpets (8:2 - 11:19)
- V. The People of God versus the Powers of Evil (12:1 - 14:20)
- VI. Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls (15:1 - 16:21)
- VII. Judgment of Babylon (17:1 - 19:5)
- VIII. God's Ultimate Victory (19:6 - 22:5)
- IX. Conclusion (22:6-21)

Reflection & Application

This week, walk through each step of the Interpretive Journey for Revelation 12:1-17. See the outlines in lessons 2-4 for reference, and try to have a study Bible handy for step 2.

Step One: Read carefully. (What does it say?) Make 10 observations about these verses on a separate sheet of paper. Who are the characters in the story? Which parts of the chapter are symbolic and which are literal? Remember to read the verses before (Rev. 11:15-19) and after (Rev. 13:1-4).

Step Two: The author's perspective. (What did it mean to them?) Use a study Bible to learn about the situation of the author and his audience. Are there important details from history that might help us understand the symbols or meaning of Rev. 12:1-17? Try to write one or two sentences that answer the question, "What did Revelation 12:1-17 mean to John's original audience?" Remember to keep the main point in mind and not to get lost in the details. In Revelation, it's okay to be general, not specific.

Step Three: Our perspective. (What does it mean for us?) Find the main point(s) of Revelation 12:1-17 and write each one in a single sentence. Can you think of other Bible verses that support each main point? (If not, you might need to read these verses over and try again.) To answer the question, "What does Revelation 12:1-17 mean for us?", try to be as specific as possible about how you should live differently in light of these verses.