

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Telling the New Testament
Story of God



SESSION 18
Revelation

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Revelation

SESSION OVERVIEW

An Overview of Revelation

The Nature of Apocalyptic Literature

Theology of Revelation

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- gain an understanding of the Jewish apocalyptic literature.
- know the purpose and main content for Revelation.

Revelation

INTRODUCTION

A basic issue that must be addressed at the beginning of any discussion of Revelation concerns the genre of this work or rather what type of writing it is. As Trotter notes: “We all naturally, usually instinctively, interpret the various communications we receive every day with different sets of hermeneutical rules.” For example, we read Hebrew poetry with very different eyes than those with which we read newspaper reports. If you were to happen to read the bold headlines: “Earth to Collide with Giant Asteroid Next Tuesday” from one of numerous publications at your local grocery store checkout, your anxiety level may not increase. Such would likely not be the case, however, if you read this headline in the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, or other major newspaper, a bit of concern may begin to rise. The type of publication and expectations held toward it are all important in this circumstance.

Therefore, in order to interpret Revelation, we must have some understanding of its *genre*. This need is complicated by the fact that Revelation shares traits of three genre, namely letter, prophecy, and apocalyptic literature.

Letter. The Book or Revelation or Apocalypse of John has certain features which are common with letters in the Hellenistic world which serve as the basic pattern for the letters in the New Testament. Hellenistic letters typically included an opening salutation (sender, recipient, greeting), thanksgiving, body, closing commands, and conclusion (see Session 8). In Revelation 1:4-6 we find a mark of a letter in the form of a salutation: “John to the seven churches that are in Asia; Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (NRSV). There is also a mark of a letter in the closing benediction (22:21) which reads: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.”

Prophecy. John claims for his work a close affinity in spirit and content with the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Six times, John refers to his work as prophecy (1:3, 19:10, 22:7; 10, 18-19). For example, 1:3 reads: “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.” In 22:18-19 it reads: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; if anyone takes away from

the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book." In 22:9, John places himself in the call of the prophets. He states: "I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" In 10:11, he refers to his task as prophesying. Like the prophets, John claims to hear God's Word directed to himself (1:2, 9-11).

Apocalyptic Literature (Apocalypse). The Book of Revelation begins with the statement (1:1): "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place . . ." The Greek word underlying the term revelation is apocalypse which some scholars argue may, at times, be used interchangeably with the term prophecy of 1:3. Nonetheless, when Revelation comes to mind it is most often associated with the genre of apocalypse that is a distinct genre in and of itself. It is this aspect of Revelation that will be focused upon in this session. First, however, an overview of Revelation and introductory issues relating to it are needed.

AN OVERVIEW OF REVELATION



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WHO?

Author: The book of Revelation begins: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John” (NRSV). Revelation only refers to John as a servant, a servant who most scholars would agree was known by the audience to whom he was writing. Traditionally, this John has been identified with John the Son of Zebedee, one of the twelve apostles. Other possibilities presented by modern scholarship are John Mark, John the Elder, or an unknown John. What is, perhaps, most significant is that, unlike most other apocalyptic writings, this work is not pseudonymous or written the name of some famous person from Israel’s ancient past. The author of Revelation was writing to those who knew him well. Using apocalyptic imagery, John writes an encyclical pastoral letter to actual churches and intends his message to be understood by them. Whatever else the meaning and significance of Revelation, it was firstly written to deal with issues relating to his audience.

Audience: John writes to seven churches in the province of Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea). An examination of the geographic location of these churches indicates the circular nature of this letter. What is said to one community would have been heard by all.

WHEN?

The predominant view is that Revelation was written in AD 95-96, near the end of the reign of Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96) who is known for his persecution of Christians. Some scholars, however, have placed the life-setting of Revelation earlier during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68). Nero’s persecution of Christians in Rome is chronicled by the first-century Roman historian Tacitus. He writes:

“Therefore, to scotch the rumor [that Nero was responsible for a devastating fire in Rome], Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd called Christians . . . First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers were convicted, not so much on account of the arson as for hatred of the human race. And derision accompanied their end: they were covered with wild beasts’ skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps at night.”


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While most scholars date Revelation during Domitian's reign, it is common to recognize that traditions about Nero do play a part in John's letters to the seven churches.

Other possible dates that have been given for Revelation include the time of Caligula (AD 37-41) and Claudius (41-54) and during the reign of Trajan (98-117). These positions, however, are not generally stressed today.

WHERE?

Author: Revelation 1:9 states, "I, John, your brother who shares with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (NRSV). While John received his visions on the island of Patmos, tradition holds that he probably wrote from Ephesus.

Audience: John's audience is located in Western Asia Minor (Ephesus, Laodicea, Pergamum, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, and Thyatira).

WHAT?

As indicated by Robert Mounce in *The Book of Revelation*, the major structural question concerning the Apocalypse of John is "whether John intended his readers to understand the visions recorded in his work in a straightforward chronological sense or whether some form of recapitulation [going back over the same events from a different perspective] is involved." All that can be said with certainty is that there is a lack of consensus about the structure of Revelation. As asserted by Mounce: "There is progress in the book, but it is a progress that moves the reader to a fuller experience of the divine plan for final victory rather than a progress that ticks off the minutes on an eschatological clock."

In *The Apocalypse*, Charles Talbert sees Revelation as being in accord with other apocalyptic writings in having a "highly formalized surface structure." Revelation is seen as being structured on the number seven in terms of its overall arrangement. It opens with seven letters to seven churches (2:1-3:22). This opening is followed by seven cycles of revelations (4:1-8:1, 8:2-11:18, 11:19-13:18, 14:1-20, 15:1-16:21, 17:1-19:5, and 19:6-22:5). Each of the seven cycles begins with heavenly vision that provides encouragement for what follows. Five of the seven visions are organized around the principle of seven: 6:1-8:1 (seven seals), 8:6-11:18 (seven trumpets), 14:6-20 (seven angels of judgment), 16:1-21 (seven bowls or wrath), 19:11-22:5 (seven visions of the end). The other two 12:1-13:18 and 17:1-19:5 are organized around five scenes.


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According to Talbert, the seven visions of the end times do not move forward in a chronological order so that what is narrated in cycle two (8:2-11:18) or four (14:1-20) is necessarily later in time than the events narrated in cycle one 4:1-8:1. Revelation follows the principle of recapitulation. The seven visions go over the same subject matter with variations. There is an advance in clarity and detail of the same message. The succeeding visions recapitulate the basic point of the first but with variations. This practice was common in Mediterranean rhetoric. If one uses a narrative to make an argument, then it is done by repetition.

John presents his message to the seven churches as *Apocalypsis Jesu Christus*, a revelation of Jesus Christ. Vernard Eller, in *The Most Revealing Book of the Bible: Making Sense Out of Revelation*, says: “In his title John also has given us the primary principle for interpreting his book . . . his desire to proclaim and expound the person of Jesus Christ . . . John has given us a revelation of Jesus Christ which is to be harmonized with the larger revelation of Christ which is the New Testament itself—this, rather than as a revelation of future history to be correlated, now, with ‘signs,’ i.e., whatever can be observed in today’s world and in the political events of the twentieth century.”

Apocalypsis is a Greek work that means to uncover or unveil something hidden. Revelation is a highly symbolic book that uses the language of Jewish apocalypticism to express its message. We know the meaning of some of the symbols and can guess at others, but the meaning of some of the symbolism has been lost over the centuries. It is also a book of apocalyptic prophecy. As prophecy, the future is described in broad strokes, taking symbolic language from the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. As an apocalyptic book, it focuses on the end times, when God will break into human history and change is forever. It talks of judgment as well as of preparation of God’s people for the suffering and persecution they will face.

WHY?

The oldest known interpretation (second to third century) of Revelation comes from the Montanists who announced the revelation that the heavenly Jerusalem would descend near a certain village. The movement began in Phrygia, just east of the seven cities of the apocalypse. This is called a literalist interpretation.

The classical theories of interpretation of Revelation include:

Idealism. This view interprets Revelation as a purely symbolic story of the ongoing struggle between good and evil throughout history. It is not interpreted as prophecy, but simply as a picture of the battle between good and evil. The story ends with the final triumph of God or Christianity over evil or paganism.


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Preterism. This view interprets Revelation as a message of hope for those persecuted by the Romans in the late first century. It does not see the book as primarily prophecy and focuses on the situation of the probable audience in the first-century AD for clues to the meaning of the book. Some preterists do look for a coming final judgment and the perfected state of humanity.

Historicism. This view interprets Revelation as a symbolic description of Church history from the first century to Christ's second coming and the Last Judgment. It divides the book and Church history into time periods. The explanation of the various symbols in terms of historical events is extremely varied. Historicists tend to be postmillennialists, or amillennialists.

Futurism. This view interprets Revelation as dealing with future events, i.e., as a book of prophecy. This is a popular view in the 20th and 21st centuries and there are several versions of this view. Futurists tend to hold that Revelation describes the Tribulation that will be followed immediately by Jesus' Second Coming and the last judgment. They tend to be:

- *premillennialists* and hold to pretribulationism (Christians are raptured before the tribulation)
- *mid-tribulationism* (Christians raptured in the middle of the tribulation)
- *post-tribulationsim* (Christians raptured after the tribulation)

There are many versions and combinations of these views. Some of these versions include:

Premillennial View. This view dates back to the Early Church fathers, Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and Hippolytus. It holds that the Revelation relates to the life of the Church. The various persecutions in it are to be experienced by the believers up to the time of the end, when they will be delivered from the power of antichrist by the return of Christ. There will be a resurrection of believers at the time of Christ's coming, followed by a millennium (20:4-6), and then a final judgment of unbelievers at the great white throne. After that, a new heaven and new earth are instituted, and the eternal day dawns.

Amillennial View. This view dates back to the early days of the Church and was defended by Origen and Augustine, and was also held by Luther and Calvin. It is probably the majority view throughout Church history. It rejects the idea of a literal thousand-year reign of Christ after his return at the end of the age. It sees the millennium as being fulfilled in a spiritual fashion in the ministry of the Church during this present age. The Book of Revelation is understood to be a description


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of the life of the persecuted Church that will end with Christ's Second Coming, at which time there will be a general resurrection of everyone, the saved and lost alike. The last judgment takes place and a new heaven and a new earth are inaugurated as the home of the believers. The lost are cast into the lake of fire.

Postmillennial View. This view dates back to the 18th century and postulated that through the preaching of the gospel the world will gradually be won to Christ. In this way, the idea of the millennium is fulfilled. The age of the Church is the millennium, where righteousness and justice reign and good prevails throughout the earth. After the world has thus been made worthy of Christ, He returns in glory to the world He has saved. The postmillennial view understands the events in Revelation to refer to John's time, and not future prophecies.

Dispensational Premillennial View. This view is of relatively recent origin. It asserts: The first three chapters of Revelation deal with the church (or church age), after which the saints are raptured (removed) from the earth. The middle section of the books (4-19) deals with Israel on earth during a seven-year period of great tribulation that does not affect the Church because it is in heaven with Christ. At the battle of Armageddon in chapter 19, Christ brings with Him the raptured Christians and establishes a Jewish millennium in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. The Christian saints rule with Christ during this thousand-year period.

At the end of this time, Satan is released from his confinement for a final rebellion and at the great white throne, he, and his angels, and all the lost are cast into the lake of fire. A new heaven and a new earth are created and we enter into our eternal state. This theory comes in three versions:

- *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* (as described before)
- *Mid-Tribulation Rapture* (Church raptured in the middle of the seven years of Tribulation)
- *Post-Tribulation Rapture* (Church raptured after the seven years of Tribulation)

Committed, born-again Christians have held all of these views. The Church of the Nazarene holds no particular view on the interpretation of Revelation, except that:

- It is the inspired Word of God.
- It encourages us to remain totally committed to God through persecution, because Jesus is coming back soon, and God has already won the war against evil.

THE NATURE OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE



NOTES

Apocalyptic literature is a type of Jewish and Christian religious writing that has its origins in exilic and post-exilic Judaism of the fifth and sixth centuries before Christ. It became more widespread between the years 200 B.C.E. and 100 C.E. This type of literature is found in both the Old and New Testaments. Daniel is a primary Old Testament example and Revelation is a major New Testament example. However, apocalyptic literature is not confined to these writings. Examples of this literary style are found in Isaiah 24-27; Zechariah 9-11; Ezekiel 38-39; Mark 13; Matthew 24-25; Luke 21; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; and 1 Corinthians 15. In the New Testament, therefore, apocalyptic literature is found not only in Revelation, but in the Gospels and the Pauline letters. Outside the Old Testament and New Testament, there are a multitude of apocalyptic writings such as 1 Enoch and the Apocalypse of Abraham. These are Jewish writings not included in the Hebrew canon as sacred text.

EXAMPLES OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Before surveying characteristics or traits of apocalyptic literature, it would be well to read a couple of examples from the Old and New Testament to get a sense of what this type of writing is like. In the Old Testament passage of Dan. 7:1-8, we read:

“In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream: I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea, and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles’ wings. Then, as I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being; and a human mind was given to it. Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, had three tusks in its mouth among its teeth and was told, “Arise, devour many bodies!” After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its back and four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that preceded it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, when another horn appeared, a little one coming up among them; to make room for it, three of the earlier horns were plucked up by the roots. There were eyes like human eyes in this horn, and a mouth speaking arrogantly” (NRSV).


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In Rev. 15:1-8 of the New Testament we read:

“Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended. And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: ‘Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! 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.’ After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes on their chests. Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever; and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were ended.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Pseudonymity

As indicated above, apocalyptic works in general tend to be pseudonymous. In other words, they are often written under another person’s name. There are various reasons for this practice. Some scholars (R. H. Charles) relate the reason for writing under someone else name to the general belief that prophecy had ceased in Israel. Therefore, apocalyptic writings made use of the names of persons who predated this event such as Ezra, Moses, or Abraham. A new writer could not qualify for a place among sacred writings when the time of sacred writings was thought to be past. In addition, ascribing their writings to great figures of the past would give authority to their works. Also this age in which contrary to ours that which was old or ancient was viewed as being superior to that was new. Reaching back to the past for a figure to represent one’s work helped satisfy this general outlook. Revelation stands as an exception to the trait of pseudonymity. Its author was most certainly a respected Christian leader among the churches of Asia Minor.

Symbolism

A major distinguishing feature of apocalyptic literature is that it is full of powerful and graphic symbolism. It is this that, perhaps, most distinguishes it from the older form of prophecy. Its revelations are presented in a mysterious rather than

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direct way. The message that is being communicated is buried under symbols, the meaning of which we can only guess. We find references to beasts, seals, rivers, mountains, stars, numbers, and supernatural creatures.

While these symbols and their meaning may change from one writer to another, there does seem to be some consistency among them. For example, beasts often refer to people, horns refer to kings, and stars to angels. The numbers that are employed are often 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 or multiples thereof. The number 7 often stands for completion or perfection. It is sometimes referred to as the divine number. In contrast, the number 6 often refers to imperfection. Twelve is a number implying wholeness. In the book of Revelation, its multiple 144,000 is representative of the whole people of God.

Another literary device associated with the symbols of apocalyptic literature is the prominent use of dreams and visions. They are used to give authority to the documents as having been received from God. At times, these dreams and visions involve a review of world history up to the time the writer is supposed to have lived. Other times, these dreams and visions point to the future destiny of the world. They may involve the coming of God's kingdom, the judgment of the world, or the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. At times, they are used to provide insights into the nature of the coming world and the differing fates of those who will live in it.

Why would authors use such mysterious imagery, if they wanted to get their important messages across? Likely, this relates to the settings in which their particular writings or messages arose. The imagery served as a code that would be understood by those who had the key. For example, under the leadership and persecution of the infamous Idi Amin in Uganda, Christians developed a special coded language so that they could continue to share their own Christian experience and faith. In the catacombs of Rome, symbols are found on the walls as inscribed by the early Christians. For example, one finds inscriptions of fish that served to represent Christianity. Those who were Christians, those who were on the inside, knew the meaning of the symbols. They had the key to understanding. The problem we have today in interpreting apocalyptic literature is that often the key to understanding as held by the early Christians has been lost.

Pessimism

Another primary characteristic of apocalyptic literature is pessimism. As was noted earlier, apocalyptic writings arose in settings of persecution or times of trouble and suffering. Underlying the traditional prophecy as found in the Old Testament was a belief that eventually God would act within history and

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its institutions to make things right for those who were faithful to Him. In apocalyptic thought, this optimistic view of the future is lost. For things to be made right, it will involve the direct intervention of God and the setting aside of the normal course of history. True hope lies in the world as we know it coming to an end. God must intervene to deliver His people.

The Triumph of God

It is not enough to say that the apocalyptic writers were pessimists and stop there. While they retained no hope in the abilities of humanity to solve the world's problems, they were extremely confident in the abilities of God. While the present life situation may look dim, in His time, God would intervene and right all wrongs. In accordance with this hope, there was a stress upon the next world where all the hopes of God's people would be realized. This other worldly focus stood in contrast to the prophets who focused upon national hopes, and issues related to God's chosen people Israel.

Determinism

The basic concept of determinism is that the course of this world's history is pre-ordained. The implication of this is that while evil and suffering may be present on a massive scale in the world, their time was numbered. God had determined the precise course of history and all must occur according to His plan. This outlook was intended as a message of hope for those who were presently suffering.

The deterministic outlook on history is reflected in the emphasis on numbers and historical ages that we find in apocalyptic literature. The use of numbers demonstrated that all was proceeding just as God had planned. In this context, the concept of personal human freedom was not lost. However, this freedom was exercised within the overall framework or plan as set forth by God.

Dualism

The characteristic of dualism has in fact been implied in our discussion of apocalyptic literature up to this point. The basic idea of dualism is a sharp contrast between the present world and the world to come. While this age is temporary and perishable, the coming age will be eternal and imperishable or indestructible. While numerous forces keep one from doing God's will in this life, in the world to come, God's will may be perfectly accomplished.

 NOTES*Similarities Between Revelation and Jewish Apocalypticism*

- Use of images: Prophecies are clothed in the language of symbol.
- The expansion of evil toward the end. The end is a cosmic catastrophe and a time of world judgment.
- The division of time into periods.

Differences Between Revelation and Jewish Apocalypticism

- No attempt at pseudonymity. The author uses his own name and not the name of a famous person. For example, *The Assumption of Moses* is the name of a Jewish apocalypse written in the first century AD and not by a person named Moses.
- Not as intense a pessimism in Revelation as we find in, for instance, *The Assumption of Moses*, where the enemies are totally annihilated and the victors gloat over the destruction of their enemies. Revelation has some of that, but it is quite muted compared to contemporary literature.
- The prophesied event is not from the vantage point of the seer (John), but from the viewpoint of the exalted Christ.

THEOLOGY OF REVELATION

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Some of the major theological affirmations of Revelation are as follows:

GOD

- Exists
- Created the universe
- Guides the course of history
- Has overcome evil
- Will bring a triumphal end in His own good time.

SON OF GOD

- Jesus is to return as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- Jesus is the Divine Being with the same divine qualities as God, the Father.
- Jesus is the Lamb who was slain and is the Savior of the World.

PEOPLE OF GOD

- Individual churches have their strengths and weaknesses.
- As a whole, they are victorious over the beast, his image, and his followers.
- Referred to as: servants of God, a kingdom, priests, saints, the blameless, the called and chosen, the bride of the Lamb, the redeemed.
- Their job is to keep believing in the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God. They do this by being alert, keeping God's commands, being pure, and doing the work God has asked them to do.

ESCHATOLOGY

- Certainty of life after death.
- Comfort of the believer in the presence of God and Christ.
- Resurrection and reward of the saints.

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- Cosmic eschatology (what happens at the end of the world).
- Second Coming of Christ.
- Assignment of all to eternal reward or punishment.
- Creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

The symbolic language or code used in Revelation should caution us not to be dogmatic when it comes to the interpretation of Revelation. It is important to realize the primary message of Revelation is hope. There are two things we know for sure: Jesus is coming again and God triumphs over evil.

APPLICATION



NOTES

1. Read Revelation in two different translations. Look for answers to the five hermeneutical questions Who, What, Where, When, and Why. How do your findings correspond with those presented in this session? New insights?
2. Reread Rev. 15:1-8. Using study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, or Internet websites (Biblical Studies Foundation <http://www.netbible.com>; Blue Letter Bible <http://www.blueletterbible.org>; or Crosswalk.com Bible Study Tools <http://bible.crosswalk.com>), explore the symbolism of this passage. How are we to understand this passage? What new insights are gained? What is its significance for the Church and humanity at large?
3. Using Bible dictionaries, or Internet websites (Biblical Studies Foundation <http://www.netbible.com>; Blue Letter Bible <http://www.blueletterbible.org>; Crosswalk.com Bible Study Tools <http://bible.crosswalk.com>), explore the traits of Jewish apocalypticism. How has your study contributed to this type of literature?

EXAM



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1. The Book of Revelation evidences all the traits of Jewish apocalyptic writings.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. However else the Book of Revelation is understood, it must be recognized that John was writing to seven actual churches in Asia Minor in the first century AD. His message would have had significance for them.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Most scholars believe the Book of Revelation was written during the reign of the Roman emperor _____.
 - A. Caligula
 - B. Nero
 - C. Domitian
 - D. Trajan
4. According to tradition, the Book of Revelation was written from the city of _____.
 - A. Antioch in Syria
 - B. Rome
 - C. Ephesus
 - D. Laodicea
5. The authors of apocalyptic literature were extremely optimistic about God's working through human institutions to bring about His purposes for the world.
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. A major feature of apocalyptic literature that, perhaps, most distinguishes it from the older form of prophecy is _____.
 - A. determinism
 - B. pessimism
 - C. symbolism
 - D. belief in the triumph of God

 NOTES

7. According to the _____ view, there will be a resurrection of believers at the time of Christ's coming, followed by a millennium reign.
- A. premillennial
 - B. amillennial
 - C. postmillennial
 - D. dispensational premillennial
8. The number _____ seems to be of particular importance in the structure of Revelation.
- A. three
 - B. four
 - C. seven
 - D. twelve
9. The Roman emperor, _____, is infamous for his severe persecution of Christians in Rome. They were falsely accused of creating a major fire in that city.
- A. Caligula
 - B. Nero
 - C. Domitian
 - D. Trajan
10. _____ dates back to the 18th century and postulated that through the preaching of the gospel the world will gradually be won to Christ. In this way, the idea of the millennium is fulfilled.
- A. Premillennialism
 - B. Amillennialism
 - C. Postmillennialism
 - D. Dispensational premillennialism
11. Traditionally, the author of the Book of Revelation has been identified with _____.
- A. John the Elder
 - B. John Mark
 - C. an unknown person named John
 - D. John the Son of Zebedee

 **NOTES**

12. _____ interprets Revelation as a message of hope for those persecuted by the Romans in the late first century. It does not see the book as primarily prophecy and focuses on the situation of the probable audience in the first century AD for clues to the meaning of the book.
- A. Idealism
 - B. Preterism
 - C. Historicism
 - D. Futurism
13. As a statement of belief, the Church of the Nazarene holds to the premillennial view on the interpretation of Revelation.
- A. True
 - B. False
14. Concerning the structure of Revelation, all that can be said with certainty is that there is a lack of consensus among scholars.
- A. True
 - B. False
15. _____ rejects the idea of a literal thousand-year reign of Christ after His return at the end of the age. It sees the millennium as being fulfilled in a spiritual fashion in the ministry of the Church during this present age.
- A. Premillennialism
 - B. Amillennialism
 - C. Postmillennialism
 - D. Dispensational premillennialism

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. What do you think is the primary message of Revelation? Why?
2. What is the best way to teach or preach on the message(s) of Revelation?
3. How do you respond to people in the church who are caught up in reading popular fiction literature on end times and believe it to be true?
4. How important is a person's view of his or her eternal destiny to his or her everyday life?
5. Are fear and hope legitimate emotions to live our lives by? Why or why not?
6. Are the classical theories for the interpretation of Revelation including idealism, preterism, historicism, and futurism mutually exclusive, or can one accept various aspects of each one? Explain.
7. Consider the following statement: "The most important thing I will take with me from this module is . . ." How would you finish this sentence?
8. Do you have any questions about anything pertaining to this module on the New Testament?