

SESSION

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# WHY STUDY REVELATION?

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**Focus Scriptures:** Revelation 1:1-8

**Session Goal:** To enable group members to understand the importance of studying the book of Revelation.

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## OPENING OUR MINDS

### *Option 1*

In light of the fact that this is the first session in this study, do a survey of your group by asking them to respond to the following questions:

- **What comes to mind when you hear someone mention the book of Revelation?**
- **Why does Revelation seem to be different from all other books of the Bible?**
- **Do you find Revelation hard to understand? Why or why not?**
- **If there is one question you had about the book of Revelation, what would it be?**

## *Option 2*

Share with the group that the book of Revelation is considered apocalyptic literature. The Greek word “apokalypsis” means the “uncovering or unveiling of something that was originally covered.”<sup>1</sup> That is the purpose of Revelation—to reveal Jesus Christ and His message of hope and redemption.

- **In your experience, how does the message of Revelation seem hidden or difficult to understand?**
- **Do most people find Revelation hard to read? Why or why not?**
- **Even though we may find Revelation hard to understand, why should we study this book?**
- **From what you have read, what do you feel is the overall message of Revelation?**

### *Imaginative Option*

Begin your time together by distributing slips of paper and a pen/pencil to each person. Then, invite the group to write down a question or comment regarding the book of Revelation. When everyone has finished, gather the slips together and place them in a container. Pull one slip out at a time and read the question or comment. Do not have your group respond out loud. This is intended to get your group to reflect on Revelation.

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1. Alex Varughese, ed. *Discovering the Bible* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2006), p. 430.

## OPENING THE WORD

### *Understanding Revelation 1:1-8*

The book of Revelation is about fully revealing who Christ is and God's ultimate plan for His creation. The central theme is on Jesus' second coming to earth, ultimate defeat of evil, and the eternal kingdom of God. The purpose of this book is not to outline the last days of life on earth as we know it, but to point to the coming Savior Jesus Christ.

John was *not* the "Nostradamus" of His time. That is to say, he was not some psychic that was predicting the future. He was God's prophet through whom God sent His message through by way of visions. John faithfully recorded all he saw. During the time of its writing, Christians were going through a time of persecution. The message of Revelation would have given them hope that Christ was the ultimate victor. For us today, it is a message that says "God is in control of the present and future."

This book begins (v. 3) by John encouraging Christians to read this book and to apply its message to their lives. Revelation is not just about what will happen, but how we may find hope and victory in what is happening in the present.

### *Option 1*

Share with the group that this week you will begin a 7-week study of Revelation. This book is unlike other books of the Bible. Because of its symbols and imagery, it may seem like it is a coded message intended for a select few. However, its message is for everyone. Its purpose is not to obscure, but to reveal and explain.

Read Revelation 1:1-3.

- **Why is this book named "Revelation"? Who and what is being revealed?**

- **According to verse 1, what do you think is the purpose of this book?**
- **How do you interpret the message of verse 3? Is it enough just to read Revelation?**
- **What is the urgency of hearing, understanding, and applying the message of Revelation?**

Read verses 4-8.

- **Why do you think it is Jesus who is giving John the revelation?**
- **What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is?**
- **What is the message of verses 4-8? Why is this a powerful statement and testimony by Jesus?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus is the “Alpha and Omega”?**
- **How do verses 4-8 give us a window into the book of Revelation?**
- **After reading these verses, why do you think it is important to study this book of the Bible?**

### *Option 2*

Invite your group to think about the last letter they sent or received. Then, ask them to think about the content of the letter. Was the message positive or negative? Was it easy or difficult to understand? Share with the group that Revelation is a letter to early Christians, but also a letter written to us who are living today.

Read Revelation 1:1-8.

- **What is the purpose of this letter?** (v. 1)
- **Why should we read this letter?** (v. 3)
- **Who is the author of this letter?** (Jesus gave the visions and words to John.)
- **What do you think is the message of this letter?** (vv. 4-8)
- **Reread verses 4-8. What stands out to you from these words?**
- **Why do you think this is a crucial letter for people to read?**

## OPENING OUR HEARTS

### *Option 1*

Share with your group that if you were to do a Google search of the book of Revelation, there would be about 406,000,000 results. It is easy to see that people are interested and have a lot to say about this book of the Bible. From what your group has read and discussed:

- **Why is Revelation important for us to study and understand?**
- **Should we read Revelation for more than just interest in what happens in the “end times”? If so, why?**

Invite your group to silently reflect on their thoughts and feelings regarding Revelation. Lead in a time of prayer, asking God to guide and direct your study through these next seven weeks.

### *Option 2*

Revelation was a letter written to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. However, it was also intended for us today. Invite your group to think about Revelation being a letter written to the church today. Then read the doxology in verses 4-6. As it is read, ask your group to think about the words being spoken to them, the Church of today.

*John,*

*To the seven churches in the province of Asia [and the Church in the world today]:*

*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

## Connect

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### WEEK 1

#### *Why Study Revelation?*

THIS WEEK: We will explore the purpose of Revelation and the reasons why it is important to read and understand this book of the Bible.

THINK ABOUT THIS: Do you think the book of Revelation is difficult to understand? Why or why not?

PRAYER CONCERNS:

