

# New Testament Genre: Revelation

By Donald Kim

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read Luke 4:16–30. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What is happening here? Where in the Old Testament is Jesus reading? How did those in the synagogue react?

### Assignment Two

Create a visual that represents a time line. Use something long, such as a string or streamer. Mark one end with “Beginning of Time” and the other end with “End of Time.” Mark where you are on that time line. Prepare to share the time line with your group.

### Assignment Three

Read Matthew 24:1–14. Prepare to share what the end of time will look like, according to what Jesus said.

### Scripture to Memorize

*“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”* Revelation 1:3

### Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand how the book of Revelation fits in with the return of Jesus.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

When people think of end times, they often think of futuristic science-fiction movies or even “Christian” movies about the rapture and end of the world. Some movies portray a cataclysmic conflict that destroys mankind while others speculate on what would happen if all Christians disappeared from the earth. Some church members see all of this as pure fiction while others think certain future portrayals are accurate. Disciples ought to go to the Bible for answers about end times. When they do, they often look to the book of Revelation.

### Opening Words

Read Revelation 1:1–3 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage, vv. 1–3

**Verse 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ.** This book is the “revelation” (meaning “unveiling or uncovering” that which was previously hidden) of the message of Jesus Christ. **by His angel.** God used an angel (the word can also simply mean “messenger”) to deliver this revelation. **to His bond-servant John.** John recorded what he saw and heard.

**Verse 3. words of the prophecy.** Prophecy can be either foretelling the future or forth-telling: giving God’s message for the people of that day—often about a needed moral change. Throughout the New Testament, many Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in John the Baptist (see Malachi 4:5–6) and most especially in Jesus (see Luke 4:16–21). **things which are written in it.** This phrase explains that the book of Revelation is God’s prophetic word written by John.

#### Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: What is happening in Luke 4:16–30? Where in the Old Testament is Jesus reading? How did those in the synagogue react?

#### Discussion Question

After reading Revelation 1:1–3, in what ways is the book of Revelation weighty in its message?

Read Revelation 1:4–8 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage, vv. 4–8

**Verse 4. to the seven churches.** John was delivering a message to seven real churches. **that are in Asia.** This area is called western Turkey today. These seven churches are in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Chapters 2–3 contain the message for each of the congregations. **seven Spirits.** Numbers and symbols play an important part in the book of Revelation. Here, the “seven Spirits” most likely refer to the Trinity (God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) with the four corners of the earth, which encompasses the entire world ( $3 + 4 = 7$ ).

**Verse 5. the faithful witness.** Jesus delivered this prophetic message. **firstborn of the dead.** Jesus resurrected after His atoning death. **the ruler of the kings of the earth.** Jesus is the supreme ruler.

**Verse 5. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.** This is the heart of the gospel message. **Verse 6. to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.** This phrase is a doxology, featuring praise given to Jesus much like the songs we sing in churches today.

**Verse 7. He is coming with the clouds.** This is the anticipation of the church that looks forward to the return of Jesus. He promised that He would return (John 14:18; Acts 1:11), and the entire world will witness His return.

**Verse 8. "I am the Alpha and the Omega."** Jesus names Himself with the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They are also found in Revelation 21:6 and 22:13. Jesus was saying He is the beginning and the end. He was there at the beginning of time (creation) and will be at the coming end. **who is and who was and who is to come.** This is similar to "the beginning and the end," but it also includes everything in between. That means Jesus is with us and all of creation through every moment in time.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share the time line that was prepared in advance. That student also can share a guess about where we are on that time line.

### **Discussion Questions**

Where is Jesus in the time line? What does that mean for us? Since Jesus is the One "who is and who was and who is to come," how does that change how we view today?

## **Final Words**

**Read** Revelation 22:10–13 out loud.

### **Studying the Passage, vv. 10–13**

**Verse 10. Do not seal up.** "Sealing up" means to "close up or hide." That command not to seal up the book means that "what is revealed" (hence, the title) needs to remain opened and revealed to the world. **for the time is near.** This phrase expresses urgency. The book of Revelation is focused on the end and the final fulfillment of God's Word. All of these things are coming. Even after two thousand years, the church is waiting because the end is near, as Jesus has said.

Note: Throughout the book of Revelation are many symbols and descriptions of catastrophic events, which many are trying to interpret for today. However, the book of Revelation spoke to the church in the time of John as well as to the church today. The following messages of the book are relevant to the church across the centuries: remain faithful, persevere, and be set apart from the world.

**Verse 11. righteous . . . holy.** In this verse are two negative situations and two positive ones. The emphasis on faithfulness is consistently found in the New Testament. The two positive qualities here, "righteous" and "holy," seem to be most pertinent to the church. **Verse 12. coming quickly.** Jesus is coming quickly with reward and judgment.

**Verse 13. Alpha and Omega.** Jesus is reminding His church again that He was there in the beginning and will be there in the end, first and last, the beginning and the end.

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share what the end of time will look like, according to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:1–14.

### **Discussion Question**

How should the church respond in light of Jesus's words that He is coming quickly? Has the church responded as it should in recent days?

### **On Your Own**

In the space below, write some things you can do to prepare for Jesus's return. What would you want to complete before He arrives?

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

### **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

### **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

### **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

### **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

The book of Revelation is often portrayed in the media as a mystical book with lots of puzzles to solve. Admittedly, some images and events seem wildly out of this world (like the beast coming out of the sea, for instance). From that mixed bag of symbols and events, the message of Revelation is consistently clear about what the church should be doing while it awaits the return of Jesus: wait fervently, worship God alone, and persevere through the trials.

The messages to the seven churches were exactly that. A study of those messages to the seven churches can be fruitful in any church setting because the church today needs the enduring messages of correction, encouragement, and instruction given to these churches.

One aspect of Revelation that remains wonderfully clear is the mighty presence and exaltation of Jesus Christ. He is the voice proclaiming prophetic words to the church. He is the Lamb that was slain yet enthroned on high. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is Lord God Almighty. The church will recognize the greatness of our Savior Jesus Christ. His message is revealed, and that message will continue to be known through the ages until His return.

Revelation is an important part of the New Testament because it looks ahead to Jesus's return while still recognizing the need to encourage the church to be steadfast in the midst of trials and tribulation. The hope is in what Jesus has done and the work He has begun in the church. Merely knowing that fact is not enough. That hope needs to flow into a life of worship with commitment to love and follow Christ. Make Christ the treasure in all things. Seek His kingdom first. Let life come from an abundance of love and adoration for our Savior.

### **Parent Question**

*How is Jesus valued and prioritized over all things in your life? How is He not?*

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