

We will be a congregation who knows, honors, and reads the Bible.

“I grasp the story of the Bible, respect it as authoritative, know how to read it, and actually read it.”

Genesis
Exodus
Deuteronomy
1-2 Samuel
Psalms
Isaiah
Nehemiah
Matthew
Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians
Philemon
Revelation

Origin Story
Historical Narrative
Poetry
Prophetic
Gospel
Epistle
Apocalyptic

**Q: What is going on
with Revelation?**

1. Ignorers

They see Revelation as a frustrating, embarrassing, unsolvable enigma.

So, they never read it.

2. Obsessors

**They are certain they have decoded
Revelation**

So, they read everything through it.

**Q: What verse does Revelation
talk about the rapture?**

Matthew 24:36

However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.

Revelation 1:1-4

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to His servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and He blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near. This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia.

Letter < Prophecy < Apocalypse

Q: What are the keys to reading an ancient letter?

1:4 - "This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia."

Q: Who are these churches?

-Ephesus

-Smyrna

-Pergamum

-Thyatira

-Sardis

-Philadelphia

-Laodicea



**Map of the
7 Churches
of Asia**

Revelation 2 & 3

Rome

ITALY

MACEDONIA

THRACE

4. **THYATIRA**
Corrupt Church

5. **SARDIS**
Dead Church

BLACK SEA

Amphipolis Neapolis
Berea Thessalonica

Byzantium

BITHYNIA
& PONTUS

3. **PERGAMUM**
Compromising Church

ASIA

GALATIA

Delphi Athens
Olympia

ACHAIA
Sparta

AEGEAN SEA

PHRYGIA

CAPPADOCIA

SICILY

2. **SMYRNA**
Persecuted Church

LYCIA

PAMPHYLIA

CILICIA

COMMAGENE

MALTA

1. **EPHESUS**
Loveless Church

CRETE

6. **PHILADELPHIA**
Faithful Church

CYPRUS

Antioch

SYRIA

7. **LAODICEA**
Lukewarm Church

Cyrene

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

JUDEA
Jerusalem

CYRENAICA

Alexandria

EGYPT

Memphis

NABATEA

0 100 200 300 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometers

Church	Encouragement - “I know”	Opps for Growth - “I have this against you”
Ephesus	Don't tolerate evil doers or false teachers	Lost first love
Smyrna	Face suffering + persecution faithfully	*****
Pergamum	Face persecution faithfully (ex: Antipas)	False teaching & Fornication
Thyatira	Love, faith, service, patient endurance	Tolerate false teaching
Sardis	Faithful “unsoiled” remnant	Hypocrisy
Philadelphia	Kept Jesus' word with patient endurance	*****
Laodicea	Economic prosperity	Lukewarm faith

Q: With all the stuff going on in our world (pandemics, natural disasters, wars, evil superpowers) do you think Revelation was written about us?

Q: What was the message John wanted to give to these churches through a strange book like Revelation?

- Don't let the dragon and his minions compromise your church!**
- John paints a picture of the epic battle between good and evil that was (and is) happening right now.**
- It's fought in the physical world that we can see and the spiritual world that we can't.**
- The battle is between Team Dragon vs. Team Lamb.**
- The outcome has already been decided! Team Lamb wins!**
- So, don't let the dragon and his minions seduce you!**

**Q: What do all these
graphic characters in
Revelation Stand for?**

Team Dragon

Team Lamb

Dragon – Satan

Lamb – Jesus

Babylon/Prostitute – Rome

New Jerusalem – future
Heavenly Ideal City

Beast #1 – Powers/Rulers of Empire

Seven Spirits – Holy Spirit

Beast #2 –
Propagandists/Priests of Empire

Two Witnesses –
The Witnessing Churches

Woman (12) – Eve/Israel/Mary/Church

“ANCIENT SERPENT”

- Revelation falls more in the genre of epic fantasy.
- Team Dragon is behind all the evil.
- Team Lamb is behind all the good.
- Team Dragon has a warfare strategy - violence, deception, dominance, coercive power.
- Team Lamb has a warfare strategy - cross-shaped self-sacrificial love, truth of the gospel, faithful perseverance.
- Team Lamb will win! Trust me!

Q: What are the keys to reading prophecy?

Letter < Prophecy < Apocalypse

Prophetic Literature

- Prophets are NOT primarily future-tellers
- Use lots of poetry and evocative imagery
- More harmonic than chronological
- Expect you to know the baseline story of Scripture up to that point
- Three big prophetic themes: (1) Call out sin; (2) Call for repentance; (3) Pronounce judgment/hope.

**Q: What's up with the
seven seals, bowls,
and trumpets?**

Revelation 6:9-11

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?” Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters — their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred — had joined them.

Revelation 9:20-21

But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that can neither see nor hear nor walk! And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Q: What even is apocalyptic literature?

Letter < Prophecy < Apocalypse

1:1 – This is a revelation from Jesus Christ

1:1 - Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Apokalypsis

- to reveal; to disclose; to unveil; to pull the curtains back on reality
- 1:1 - This is an “unveiling of reality” from Jesus Christ
- Apocalyptic Literature was popular among Jews and Christians from 200BC to 200AD.
- Book of Enoch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Apocalypse of Adam, Apocalypse of Elijah, 2 & 3 Baruch, 2 Esdras (or 4 Ezra), Apocalypse of Peter, Revelation.
- We have to learn the rules of this style.

- 1. Apocalyptic Literature was resistance literature, politically subversive.**
- 2. Apocalyptic Literature was metaphorical and symbolic.**
- 3. The goal was to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.**

Revelation 17:3-6

So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it. The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality.

Revelation 17:3-6

A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.” I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God’s holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.

Rev 17:9 - This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules.

Rev 17:18 - And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world.

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Seven Characteristics of Babylon (R17-18)

- Idolatrous
- Opulent
- Murderous
- Militaristic
- Economically Exploitative
- Arrogance
- Image Conscious

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The New Testament Library

Revelation

A COMMENTARY

BRIAN K. BLOUNT

Interpretive Key

Revelation was a prophetic letter written to seven ancient churches in apocalyptic style about how to persevere suffering and resist compromise in a Roman Empire animated by Satan.

Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

Mark of Beast

14:16 – “[The Beast] required everyone ... to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark”

Mark of the Lamb

14:1,4 – “Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father’s name written on their foreheads ... They have kept themselves as pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever He goes.”

**Where has Babylon seeped into
your church and your life?**

WWBD or WWJD?

Revelation 7:9-10

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!”