



Studies from Revelation – leaders notes

These studies are written specifically for a prison audience, but you do need to select your audience! I would suggest that you run this series with a group who can handle the idea of studying Revelation (for some the very thought of this is too much to handle) and who can handle fairly abstract concepts, understand the nature of symbolism and cope with uncertainty about the meaning of some parts of this vision / of the Bible.

The original reason for writing the series was to try to iron out some of the commonly held misconceptions about the meaning of the book of Revelation and help people to see what it really means. The vision is full of symbolism, most of which we are meant to understand – we are not free to make up our own interpretations. Having said that, opinions do differ as to the meaning of some of the symbolism.

In order to lessen confusion, I have not faced the commonly held misconceptions head-on. For example, I have not drawn attention to contemporary politics and conspiracy theories being overlaid into the meaning. I have ignored the misconceptions and given what I understand to be the original meaning of the vision. I do not claim to have got it completely right and do recommend that you read a commentary or two yourselves!

The aim of studying God's word is to help us to know and follow Christ more closely. Academic debates do not usually help with this and can be divisive, so I would strongly recommend that you try to avoid them.

These studies do not cover every sentence in Revelation. I have tried to pull out the main teaching points and not get bogged down in details. When long explanatory notes are given, they are for you; not necessarily for the group. You do not need to cover these points, but the notes will help you if someone raises a tricky question.

The book has been broken down, for the purpose of these studies, with the following structure:

Ch 1-3 – Introduction and the struggles of seven churches

Ch 4-5 – A glimpse into heaven

Ch 6-11 – Seals and trumpets

Ch 12-14 – Spiritual battle

Ch 15-20 – God's wrath

Ch 21-22 – Assurance

There are a lot of questions in each study, but you will notice that several of them are simple comprehension questions and should not take more than a couple of minutes. I recommend that you do the study yourself before running it with prisoners, so that you can see which questions are likely to take longer, and have a good understanding of the answers and where the study is going.

Each study is designed to last for about 90 minutes. I would suggest you take a ten minute break around half-way. If you only have an hour, just go as far as you can and pick up the study again next week.

Each study is written out twice, once for leaders with a *guide to answers* and once for participants.

Layout of the studies

Please don't be put off by the number of questions in a study! These studies contain some comprehension questions – it is important that we understand what the passage literally says. These questions can usually be taken fairly quickly. Try not to go too deep with them - they just aim to set the background. There are also some deeper questions to help the group to think and unpack the meaning of the passage. There are some interactive questions, to keep people who have short attention spans engaged:

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING – SDL – 3 questions that need to be prepared. Write them on flip-chart paper, spaced out so that there is room to write the answer. Prepare enough flip-chart sheets for the group to work in pairs and provide enough marker pens for them to write their answers. When they are finished, download the answers as a group with a leader co-ordinating the discussion.

?

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

Each study contains some application questions. These application questions are very important, but should not be tackled without understanding what the Bible says – we cannot apply the Bible to our lives if we have not read and understood it!

Bibliography

- Bewes R (2003) *The Lamb Wins! A Guided tour Through the Book of Revelation*, Fearn: Christian Focus Publications
- Chester T (2019) *Revelation For You*, New Malden: The Good Book Company
- Coffey I (Aug 2002) *Christianity + Renewal*, Article p24-26
- Grudem W (2007) *Systematic Theology, An Introduction to Biblical Theology*, Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press
- Hendrickson W (1966) *More Than Conquerors*, London: The Tyndale Press
- Johnson D E (2001) *Triumph of the Lamb, A Commentary on Revelation*, Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company
- Kelly G (May 2002) *Christianity+Renewal*, Article p48-51
- Nodder M (July 2013 – March 2014) *Explore Bible notes for adults*, New Malden: The Good Book Company
- Polythress VR (2000) *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company (online copy <https://frame-poythress.org/ebooks/the-returning-king/>)
- Stott J (2002) *The Cross of Christ*, Leicester: Inter Varsity Press
- Wilcock M (1996) *The Message of Revelation, I Saw Heaven Opened*, Leicester: Inter Varsity Press