



Revelation Revealed

A devotional reading plan

how to use this devotional



The book of Revelation is arguably one of the more strange and complex books in the Bible; the book we are most curious about and yet do our best to avoid. However, it might surprise us to hear that it was written not to confuse but to make known, not to hide truth but to reveal it, not to scare but to strengthen. It's the only book in the Bible that offers a blessing to those who *read, keep and hear* its message. And its message is hardly new! Out of all 404 verses in Revelation, 278 of them reference or allude to Old Testament scriptures. Therefore, in order to begin to see and hear what this complex book intends to reveal, we need familiarity with the Old Testament themes and imagery that fill John's mind and guide his pen.

Herein we find the aim of this devotional, designed as more of a reading plan than a study guide. Our focus is not to probe and analyze but to absorb and reflect; to begin to see and hear more like John and his audience. Our intent is to start laying the groundwork necessary for future study of the Revelation itself.

Each week contains 5 passages and 5 questions you can sit with at your own pace. Read, reflect and journal. Pray thoughtfully, regularly and repeatedly the words of Revelation. Take your time, let these passages open your eyes, ears and imagination to see the truth as ultimately beautiful. *May you worship with the richness of Revelation and find yourself emboldened to follow the Lamb wherever he goes!*



Holy God, Lord Almighty
The One who was, who is, who is to come,
You are worthy to receive thanksgiving, glory and honour and
power because you have created all things
and by your will they exist and were created.

We worship...

Open our eyes to see and our ears to hear you Jesus,
The faithful and true Witness, the Lion who judges justly,
the perfect, slain Lamb who rules from the throne.
You have redeemed us out of this world by your blood,
salvation belongs to you forever.

We are thankful...

By your perfect Spirit, as we read these words,
help us to truly hear them and will to keep them
Teach us what it means to be priests in your beautiful kingdom;
to live as your holy bride. Shepherd us,
guide us to spring of the waters of true life.

We come thirsty...

You are coming again with the clouds and every eye will see.

We believe...

Amen.

week one



Revelation 1

2-3

4-5

6-8

9-11



Read through the first half of the Revelation this week. Try not to get bogged down by random details, difficult passages, or the desire to fully comprehend everything you read. Just read, and when possible, read aloud! Press into the promise that there is blessing for the one who reads, hears and keeps the words of this book.

Remember that John is describing a vision he's been given so pay attention to the word pictures he creates to describe *what he heard and saw*. When you feel confused, give yourself permission to sit in the unknown, and consider how you might respond in awe and wonder instead.



Use the questions below to help you respond to what you've read. Consider journaling your answers and subsequent thoughts on the following page.



Take some time to think back on your history with the book of Revelation. What has your experience been with it? What do you expect to find as you begin to read? Is there anything about the book that causes fear? Excitement?

If *Revelation* or "Apocalypse" means "unveiling," what truth would you say was revealed in what you've read? About God? About humanity in general? Take time to praise God and confess.

This vision was given in order to encourage and comfort a church living in difficult times, and to challenge them to live in bold allegiance to Jesus the King. What did you find comforting in your reading? Consider spending time in solitude, just sitting in and reflecting on this comfort from the Holy Spirit.

What part(s) might be challenging your allegiance? Reflect on why this might be. How is God prompting you in this?

So far, what do you think it might mean to "keep" the words you've read so far? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring clarity and help with this.





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week two



Revelation 12-13

14-15

16-17

18

19-21



This week, read the second half of the book of Revelation. Be prepared that some of these chapters are among the most difficult to understand/highly debated parts of the Bible. However, also keep in mind that John wrote this as a letter to Christians living in an actual time and place in history. Few people write a letter they don't expect their recipient to understand. So perhaps part of our difficulty in understanding has less to do with ability and more to do with a natural lack of context. Take comfort in the fact that John's readers understood what he had to say, and be assured that in time, as we give ourselves to honest study of this letter, God's Spirit will do the work of revealing; opening our eyes, minds and hearts. These passages contain some exuberant hymns and declarations of worship...slow down and meditate on these parts. Join the multitudes. May these powerful words of praise linger in your mind and pour out of your own mouth this week.



Use the questions below to help you respond to what you've read. Consider journalling your answers and subsequent thoughts on the following page.



What parts this week have been clear to you? What parts are less clear? What might it look like to respond to the less clear parts with wonder and awe instead of confusion?

What do you do when you come across something "difficult" in the Bible? How do you react to the fact that there are parts you cannot understand? What does this mean for your approach to Bible Study? Who can you talk to about this? Continue to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read.

How would you describe the corporate worship in John's vision? How does it compare with your experience of corporate worship?

How might this book challenge and inspire you to contribute to the corporate worship of Jesus? How will it shape your worship of Jesus today? The next time you gather with your church family?

What were you surprised by in the book of Revelation? What did you read that was unexpectedly encouraging or beautiful? Reflect on how this forms your faith. Praise, thank and confess.





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week three



Exodus 19
Isaiah 6:1-7
Ezekiel 1
Daniel 7:1-14
Daniel 10:1-19



This week we will read five Old Testament passages that are highly referenced and alluded to by John in Revelation. These passages all describe instances where God's people experienced *"a vision of the LORD's glory."* Pay attention to when things feel familiar to what you've read over the past two weeks and note again what is *seen and heard* in these visions. Once again, don't get stuck trying to decipher details, rather focus on becoming more aware of the way patterns flow through scripture from Old to New Testaments; from one author to others; one period of time to another. Marvel at the cohesiveness of scripture and the way these themes tie the story together reflecting God's sovereignty over his Word! In short, begin to consider and take comfort from the thought that what John sees and hears in his revelation might not be that strange and new after all!



Use the questions below to help you respond to what you've read. Consider journalling your answers and subsequent thoughts on the following page.



Consider the circumstances under which God's people receive a vision of the LORD's glory. How might seeing and hearing this form needed faith, belief and action in his people at this particular time? How might it do the same for you?

What aspects of God's nature are being revealed in these visions? Which elements are most intriguing to you? Most challenging? How does this truth form the way you think about/relate to Jesus?

What might these visions reveal about the nature of humanity? What do you need to confess in light of this? Reflect on and pray through what repentance looks like for you in this regard.

Have you been through experiences that somehow helped you "see" God's glory; his love, goodness and power perhaps? Think about how that happened and thank God for revealing himself.

What is similar in the way the people respond to seeing and hearing the glory of the LORD? What differences do you see in their responses? How will you respond? Will you worship? What will that look like today?





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week four



Exodus 6:2-10; 9:13-16

Ezekiel 2-3:3

Zechariah 4

Isaiah 44:6-23

Psalms 114



This week we will continue in our reading of Old Testament passages that are referenced or alluded to by John in his letter. These passages all speak to the sovereignty of God over redemption. God's will to rescue all people from the bondage of sin, and his plan to do this through a people set apart as his own treasured possession is the heart of the Biblical story. Though at times their circumstances may cause his people to wonder, God sovereignly rules over history, and the pages of Revelation confirm that he is bringing about the consummation of his plan through Jesus. He will indeed once again dwell with his people and they will experience the ultimate blessing and abundance of living in his kingdom forever. As you read these passages, remember and celebrate the way God has delivered his people out of the hands of evil and slavery throughout history. Be encouraged that ultimate redemption is assured for those who put their trust in Jesus as King. And even though circumstances may tempt you to doubt, know that your final redemption provides a refuge of hope in the here and now.



Use the questions below to help you respond to what you've read. Consider journaling your answers and subsequent thoughts on the following page.



How do you see both bitter judgment and sweet grace in the way Israel is redeemed out of Egypt? Which of these two aspects of redemption are you prone to focus on over the other? What about judgment is challenging? What about it is beautiful? What about grace is challenging? Beautiful?

What does it teach you about God that he pursues the rescue and redemption of his people even though they are rebellious against him? How do you respond to this personally?

Why do you think God's people often attempt to bring about their own redemption by their own "might" or "power?" How do you see yourself tempted in this way? Confess this to the Lord and draw near to him who pursues you in spite of this.

What idols does humanity tend to turn to for our own redemption? Consider their ultimate futility when compared to God's plan for salvation. How will you repent of idolatry today?

Throughout the Bible we see God's people regularly recounting the story of the deliverance from Egypt. How does this practice form their faith? How can you do likewise today?





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week five



Genesis 22:1-18

Genesis 49:8-12

Exodus 12:1-11

Isaiah 53

Hosea 13:4-9; 14:1-9



The central image in the book of Revelation is that of the slaughtered Lamb standing in the midst of the throne. Interestingly, the same verse that describes Jesus as a lamb also calls him a lion. If you're familiar with the Old Testament, you know that both these images appear early on in the biblical story. These titles trace Jesus' roots back to the family of Abraham, and confirm him as the promised Messiah King who will save. This week we'll look back at the use of lion and lamb imagery throughout scripture and reflect on what this teaches us about Jesus' identity and reign and therefore the way the Revelation seeks to challenge humanity's own images of power and victory. Some of these passages may be very familiar to you. Try to see them with new eyes as you contemplate how the readers of Revelation would have connected with these contrasting aspects of Jesus' nature...and how it would both warn and encourage them as they endured the pressures of living under Roman power.



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How does keeping Revelation's vision of the Lamb in mind deepen the meaning of Genesis 22 for you? What does it teach you about Jesus? How will you worship him in light of this?

As you read the description of Judah as a lion, what parallels do you see to Jesus? To Revelation? Take time to reflect on what this says about Jesus. What does it mean for him to be *your* king?

In his book *See the Strange*, Brett Davis says "*we often want the Lion's success with none of the Lamb's suffering.*" How does reflecting on the Passover Lamb grow thanksgiving in your heart for the costly and powerful deliverance Jesus provides?

Consider our culture's images of power. How does Jesus as lamb challenge these images? What do you need to believe in order to live according to the lamb's alternative vision of power? Let Isaiah 53 lead you in confession and repentance.

We tend to value this vision of The Lion when it means victory for us, but how does Hosea offer another meaning to Jesus as lion? How is the Spirit prompting you to respond ?





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Genesis 1-2

Genesis 3

Ezekiel 37

Isaiah 65:17-25

Ezekiel 47:1-12



In our final 5 passages we'll start by going back to the very beginning of the biblical story. These passages set up the conflict to which Revelation provides the resolution. In other words, everything after Genesis 3 is moving the story forward to its consummation in Revelation 21-22. After reading the Genesis passages, we'll listen to the voice of the prophets who point us both back to Creation and forward to New Creation. Although many of these passages may be familiar to you, ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and ears to truth in a new way. Pay attention to the shared imagery among these passages. Consider how your introductory reading to Revelation further deepens the meaning of these scriptures, and how the crucial truths in these foundational passages help you to see and hear the message of the Revelation with greater clarity. And as you anticipate the beautiful garden city illuminated by the presence of the Lamb, may your heart grow in longing for New Creation, giving you a fresh and greater urgency to live boldly in the now and the not yet of Jesus' Kingdom.



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How do you see tree imagery connect Genesis and Revelation? Why do you think trees figure so prominently in the biblical narrative? Reflect on why this is meaningful and instructive to you.

How does Revelation's view of new creation bring resolution to the conflict that begins in Eden? Reflect on the similarity and differences between the two gardens. What does this teach you about your purpose?

In Psalm 90 Moses says, *"God has been our dwelling place in all generations."* What unique significance does God's dwelling place have in creation? New Creation? Reflect on what it means to you to dwell with God.

Would you say you often long for eternity? Why might that be? What particular images of abundance, peace and joy stand out to you and stir your heart as you read these passages about new creation?

What does the prominence of water imagery teach you about new creation? In what ways are you thirsty? Talk to Jesus who *"freely gives to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life."*



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