

# The Park Church: Corporate Bible Study

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LESSON 1: THE LETTERS OF REVELATION

MIN. TONIA GATHERS

An open book is shown from a high angle, lying flat. The pages are white and slightly aged. The background is a dark, dramatic sky with swirling clouds and bright, jagged lightning bolts striking down. The overall mood is mysterious and powerful. A solid magenta vertical bar is located in the top right corner of the image.

# The Book of Revelation

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?

What's one of the first words or phrases that come to mind when someone mentions the book of Revelation?



**Access Code: 3943 5147 at [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)**

# **Most Common Myths**

- ▶ **It's primarily about predicting the modern world and end times**
- ▶ **It should be interpreted entirely literally**
- ▶ **It presents events in strict chronological order**
- ▶ **It was written to be mysterious and incomprehensible**
- ▶ **The number 666 refers to a specific technology or modern figure**

# **Most Common Myths**

- ▶ **Revelation is about the end of the physical world**
- ▶ **It can only be understood through one interpretive approach**
- ▶ **It was included in the Bible reluctantly or as an afterthought**
- ▶ **It's primarily about condemning specific people or groups**
- ▶ **It's impossible for ordinary Christians to understand**

# WHO? – Establishing a Foundation

- **Author:** John the Apostle, identified as a servant of Christ, writing while in exile
- **Recipients:** The seven churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea
- **Key Figures:** Jesus Christ (the central figure), angels, the 24 elders, the four living creatures, the Lamb, the Dragon (Satan), the beasts, the witnesses, Babylon, the bride
- **Audience Through History:** Christians facing persecution throughout the ages

# When? – Adding Historical Significance

- **Time of Writing:** Approximately 95-96 AD during Emperor Domitian's reign
- **Historical Context:** Period of increasing persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire
- **Timeframe Covered:** Events from John's present day extending to the ultimate future (new heaven and earth)
- **Three Time Dimensions:** "What you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later" (Rev 1:19)

# Where? Geographic and Symbolic Locations

- **Written From:** Island of Patmos, where John was exiled
- **Physical Settings:** The seven churches of Asia Minor
- **Spiritual Settings:** Heaven's throne room, the abyss, the New Jerusalem
- **Symbolic Locations:** Babylon (representing corrupt worldly systems), Armageddon (final battle site)

# What?- Establishes Structure...

- **Literary Genre:** Apocalyptic literature, prophecy, and epistle (letter) combined
- **Structure:**
  - Introduction and letters to seven churches (Ch. 1-3)
  - Throne room vision and seven seals (Ch. 4-7)
  - Seven trumpets (Ch. 8-11)
  - Cosmic conflict (Ch. 12-14)
  - Seven bowls of wrath (Ch. 15-16)
  - Fall of Babylon and final judgment (Ch. 17-20)
  - New heaven and new earth (Ch. 21-22)
- **Key Symbols:** Numbers (7, 12, 1000), colors, beasts, natural disasters, the Lamb

# Why? Purpose Connects to Application

- **Immediate Purpose:** To comfort persecuted Christians with assurance of God's ultimate victory
- **Theological Purpose:** To reveal Jesus Christ in his glory, power, and final triumph
- **Practical Purpose:** To call believers to faithful endurance and worship
- **Eschatological Purpose:** To unveil God's plan for culminating human history
- **Ethical Purpose:** To challenge Christians to remain distinct from corrupt systems

# How? Interpretation and Application

## Interpretive Approaches:

- Preterist (primarily about events in John's time)
- Historicist (symbolizing church history through the ages)
- Futurist (primarily about end-time events)
- Idealist (symbolic representation of the ongoing spiritual battle)

## Reading Principles:

- Read in context of first-century apocalyptic literature
- Focus on the clear central messages rather than obscure details
- Interpret symbols in light of Old Testament references

## Application Today:

- Finding hope in times of suffering
- Maintaining faithful witness in a hostile culture
- Living with eternal perspective in daily decisions