

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible. The person is wearing a grey button-down shirt. The Bible is open to a page with text. The lighting is warm and focused on the hands and the book. The background is slightly blurred.

NEW TESTAMENT

in a year - November

Daily Bible Reading Plan

REVELATION

Many have been put off the study of the book of Revelation by fears of its difficulty, or the intricate nature of some interpretations. But no book of the Bible will more surely reward the student who approaches it for its present relevance rather than as an eschatological enigma. It is important to remember that the visions that occupy so large a part of it are not to be regarded as literal pictures: the book is written in the literary form known as 'apocalyptic', which expresses heavenly and spiritual realities by means of a conventional and elaborate symbolism.

It is generally agreed that it was written by John the apostle, and in days of persecution, as his exile proves (1:9). Some think that his exile was suffered under Nero, who died in AD 68, some under Domitian (AD 81-96). The later date seems more probable. The struggle between the people of Christ and the power of Rome had now reached a state more advanced than that reflected in the Acts of the Apostles. Emperor worship became common from Nero's reign onward, and the outlook was dark and threatening.

As we embark on our journey through this Book of Revelation, we are truly about to be blessed, for of the sixty-six individual books that make up the Bible in its entirety, this book alone has a unique promise attached to it. Look at verse 3 of chapter 1: "Blessed is he that reads (that's you and me) and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein." This book alone promises anyone who reads it or even hears it receives a blessing.

As you read through this book, always bear in mind that it was given not because believers were trying to figure out the nuances of eschatology, but because they were watching their brothers and sisters dying as a result of inconceivable persecution. "Where is the Lord?" they must have cried. "We believe in Him. We've given our lives to Him, but what's happening?" They needed a revelation of Jesus Christ to see that Jesus Christ is in control, that He is on the throne. Thus, this message coming from John would give great comfort to their hearts.

The overarching theme of this book is that Jesus Christ is on the throne and is in control. Things are going according to plan, and He's coming back.

Many people are afraid of the Book of Revelation because they think it's a difficult book to comprehend. Not so. The word "revelation" means just the opposite: the revealing, the unveiling.

The Book of Revelation is very simple—particularly because it's the only Book with its own divine outline, found in chapter 1 verse 19, where Jesus told John to "write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

If you follow this divine outline, the Book unfolds very easily....

I. THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN (Chapter 1)

- The reality of the Resurrected Jesus

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE (Chapters 2–3)

- Jesus gives seven messages to seven churches, wherein lies the chronological flow of church history from the beginning of the early church to the present.

III. THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER (Chapters 4-22)

- (Chapters 4–5) The church is raptured and taken to heaven for a seven-year "honeymoon" with the Lord.
- (Chapters 6–19) The Tribulation occurs on earth as God pours out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting, sinful world.

- (Chapter 19) At the end of chapter 19, the Lord comes back to Jerusalem with His church to establish His kingdom.
- (Chapter 20) The Millennium—a thousand-year period of peace and prosperity—follows as the Lord rules and reigns from Jerusalem. At the end of the Millennium, Satan is loosed. A final rebellion ensues before Satan is put away permanently.
- (Chapters 21–22) A new heaven and a new earth are created wherein we will live oh, so happily ever after.

NOV 1

REV 1

DONE

- Observe the place given to Jesus Christ in relation to God, and consider each title given to him in verse 5a. Cf. John 3:11, 32, 33; 18:37; Col. 1:18; Rev. 19:11-16. How does John describe Christ's attitude to us, and what he has done for us? Cf. John 13:1; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:9.
- We are not for a moment to suppose that Christ is literally like this. What John sees is a vision, each feature of which is symbolic of some aspect of our glorified Lord. Write down against each feature portrayed here what trait in our Lord's character it suggests. What is the overall impression left in your mind?
- What does Christ say of himself and of his relationship to the churches in verses 17-20? With verse 17, cf. Dan. 10:8-11, 15-19, and with the figure of the lampstands', cf. Matt. 5:14-16.

NOV 2

REV 2:1-7

DONE

- State in your own words what Christ found to commend in the church at Ephesus (verses 2, 3, 6).
- What was the proof that their love had declined? How could this condition be remedied? What further danger might otherwise occur? How should we take such a warning to heart?
- Verse 7a. Note the present tense 'says', and the combination of individual appeal and universal application. How does Christ still speak through these scriptures, and to whom? Cf Mark 4:9, 23; 8:18. How can we have an ear that hears?

NOV 3

REV 2:8-17

DONE

- Reconstruct from verses 8-11 the situation with which the believers in Smyrna were confronted. What does Christ declare concerning: (a) their immediate, and (b) their final future? In what ways were they already rich? How were they to conquer? What would be the result of such conquest?
- Satan could not break the rocklike steadfastness of the church in Pergamum by frontal attack (verse 13), so he employed another method, tempting believers to ask, 'Is it necessary to be so uncompromising in our attitude towards idolatrous practices and pagan morals?' What is Christ's answer to this sort of question?

NOV 4

REV 2:18-29

DONE

- In what ways is the description of Christ in verse 18 relevant to what follows? In what character is he revealed here? How should awareness of these truths affect our own behavior?

• The religious compromise and moral laxity that were creeping into the churches seem to have proceeded further in the case of Thyatira, and have become a doctrine and almost a sect. What responsibility had the church as a whole towards the presence of such evil in its midst? What advice is given to the individual members who do not hold to this teaching?

NOV 5

REV 3:1-13

DONE

- Verses 1-6. What was wrong with the Christians in Sardis, and what was needed to remedy the situation? On whose action did change and better living depend? Is our condition at all similar?
- In verses 7-13, what Christian quality is shown to be essential? For how long ought it to be exhibited? To what rewards will its practice lead?

NOV 6

REV 3:14-22

DONE

- How do you think the church in Laodicea had become so blind to its true spiritual condition? Cf Matt. 23:25, 26; 2 Cor. 4:18. Who undertakes to deal with them, and how?
- What three qualities of Christian character are symbolized by 'gold refined in the fire', 'white clothes' and 'salve to put on your eyes', respectively? See for the first, 1 Pet. 1:7; for the second, verses 4 and 19:8; Ps. 51:7; and for the third, Ps. 119:18; 2 Pet. 1:9; Eph. 1:18, 19. How may these things be obtained?

NOV 7

REV 4

DONE

- When John looked into heaven, what is the chief and outstanding sight that met his eyes? What can we also learn from this vision about the origin, the control and the purpose of the created universe? What kind of response ought this awareness to produce in us?
- What is indicated or symbolized here concerning the nature and character of God, and concerning the way in which he ought to be worshipped?

NOV 8

REV 5

DONE

- Of what does this vision assure us concerning the purpose and the results of Christ's earthly sacrifice as 'the Lamb who was slain'?
- What is it that prompts here 'a new song' (verse 9)? How many ultimately join in the singing? See 14:3. Have you discovered why you should sing?

NOV 9

REV 6

DONE

- As the book of future events is opened seal by seal, what points of correspondence do you find with Matt. 24:4-14? Cf, e.g, verses 4, 6 and 9 with Matt. 24:6, 7 and 9. What does this teach about the present course of world history?
- For what were the martyrs willing to lay down their lives? Are those right who think that God takes no action either for their reward or their vindication? May similar sacrifice still be called for?

NOV 10**REV 7****DONE**

Before the revelation of further judgments, two visions are interposed for the comfort of believers. In all that has been shown so far, nothing has been said of the church, except with regard to those who have been martyred. This passage shows the church first in this life, on earth, and so always limited in number (verses 1-8), and then, numberless, in heaven, having life forevermore.

- What assurance is given in verses 1-8 concerning God's watchful care over his people? Cf. Ezek. 9:3-6; John 6:27; 10:27-29; Rev. 9: 4.
- In verses 9-17, who make up the great multitude, and where are they standing? How did they come to be there, and what are they now doing? Make a list of the blessings that they enjoy, translating the symbols into the realities that they represent.

NOV 11**REV 8-9****DONE**

We are brought back, after the interlude of chapter 7, to the opening of the seventh seal. Will it usher in the final end? All heaven is silent, as if in suspense and expectancy (cf. Mark 13:32), but there follows a new series of judgments (cf. Mark 13:7, 8).

- In 8:3-5 we see, in the heavenly sanctuary, what happens to the prayers of Christ's people. What are we taught as to the efficacy of prayer when mingled with the incense of Christ's intercession and fire from the altar of his sacrifice? In this case, what kind of answer is granted? Cf. 6:9, 10; Rom. 8:26.
- What do we learn from these chapters concerning God's control over all that happens? See especially 8:2; 9:1, 4, 13-15.

NOV 12**REV 10****DONE**

Rev. 10:1- 11:13 is an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, corresponding to chapter 7. The seer first tells of his new commission (10:1-11), and then describes the church as God's sanctuary (11:1, 2), and as bearing witness in the world (11:3-13).

- In what two ways does chapter 10 show that the revelation thus far given to John, though it extends to the end of the age (verses 6, 7), is by no means a complete disclosure of the hidden counsel of God? Cf. Deut. 29:29; Job 26:14. Of what was John now solemnly assured concerning truths that had been revealed?
- What made God's Word sweet to taste, but bitter to digest? What responsibility did the reception of such revelation place upon John? Cf. Ezek. 2:8 - 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:15-18; 1 Cor. 9:16, 17. Have you any comparable privileges and responsibilities?

NOV 13**REV 11****DONE**

• The question of 'who are the two witnesses in 11:3-12 has received many answers. Assuming that they represent the witness of the church throughout the present age, what lessons can we learn from this passage concerning true witness for Christ, the authority of his witnesses, their preservation, their suffering to death, and their final triumph? Cf. Luke 10:19; John 16:2; Acts 7:54-60.

- When God's purposes are completely fulfilled by the sounding of the seventh trumpet (see 10:7), who is seen

to be triumphant at the last? What attributes and activities of God make his triumph over all opposition certain? What ought this prospect to make us do?

NOV 14

REV 12

DONE

The chapter gives a symbolic picture of the birth of Christ, and of his return to the throne of God, but its main purpose is to show the power and malignity of Satan as the enemy of Christ and his people.

- Gather out what is said about Christ. Cf. Ps. 2:6-9; Luke 10:13; John 12:31; Eph. 1:19-21. What is the significance of verse 10? Cf. Rom. 8:33, 34.
- Why, according to this chapter, is the lot of the church on earth one of constant conflict? Cf. Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8. How is the fearful power of Satan depicted? How do or may we share in Christ's victory over him?

NOV 15

REV 13

DONE

Satan in his war against the saints uses two chief instruments: (a) totalitarian world power, hostile to the true God, subservient to Satan, and claiming worship for itself (verses 1-10); and (b) established religion, supporting the claims of the world power, by false miracles and signs (verses 11-18). Such 'beasts' were found in John's day in the Roman Empire and the cult of emperor worship. They have also appeared in later history, and may appear again.

- Note how true Christians are here distinguished from others (verse 8; cf. 17:8). What experience is inevitable for them in such a world situation as verses 1-10 depict? How is it appointed that they should show their faithfulness? Cf. Mark 13:13.
- In what respects does the second beast differ in outward appearance from the first? Cf. 1 Pet. 5:8 with 2 Cor. 11:14. How does its aims and methods bring Christians into direct conflict with it? Cf. Dan 3:4-6; John 15:18-21.

NOV 16

REV 14

DONE

This chapter, like chapters 7 and 10:1 - 11:13, is an interlude introduced for the comfort of believers.

- Verses 1-5 present a picture of the true followers of Christ. Although outwardly scattered, suffering and in danger of death, spiritually they are with the Lamb on the impregnable rock of Mount Zion, belonging to God, not one missing (verse 1), and sharing in the worship of heaven (verses 2, 3). To what do they owe their position and what four characteristics mark their life? See verses 4 and 5, and cf. Matt. 5:3; Luke 14:27; Eph. 4:25; Phil. 2:15. How does your own life appear in the light of these standards?
- In verses 6-11 three angels are shown, each with a message for all who live on the earth. Examine the contents of their threefold message. Verses 12 and 13 are addressed to believers. What encouragement do they give to those who may have to die for Christ's sake?

NOV 17

REV 15-16

DONE

The series of judgments described here, though similar to those of the seals and trumpets, is seen as a separate 'sign' in heaven. What follow are no longer warnings but a final outpouring of the wrath of God.

• John is looking at the seven angels when his eye is caught by another vision, which he describes in 15:2-4, no doubt for the comfort of believers, in face of the terrible judgments that are about to fall. What great truths are they thereby assured of, and encouraged to rejoice in? What should such awareness make them - and us - do? Cf. 16:5-7.

• In what respects are the 'bowl' judgments more severe than those of the seals and the trumpets? What was the reaction to them: (a) of men, and (b) of the dragon and his allies? Before such a prospect, what ground have we for hope, and what reason for watchful concern? With 16:15, cf. Matt. 24:42-44.

NOV 18

REV 17

DONE



The people of Christ have another enemy - Babylon. Babylon is possibly the nickname of a city, and like the two beasts of chapter 13, is a symbol; a symbol of the world's lust, love of gain, pride and corruption. Wherever these aspects of the worldly spirit are found there is Babylon, and there God's judgment will fall, unless men repent.

• John's wonder at the woman (verse 6) should lead us to examine her closely. What does each feature of the picture symbolize? Contrast the woman and her brood with the woman of chapter 12 and her seed (with 17:14, cf. 12:17). What, in the face of such a foe, is the prospect before those who follow the Lamb (14:4)?

• Verses 7-13, as the interpreting angel himself admits, require for their understanding a mind that has wisdom (verse 9). Observe that two different meanings are assigned to the heads of the beast. Note carefully also the difference between the heads and the horns. The main lesson of the chapter is the certain 'doom' of Babylon. How is this brought about? What does this illustrate concerning God's judgments?

NOV 19

REV 18-19:10

DONE



• Consider first the messages of the angel and of the voice from heaven. What aspects of God's judgments do these emphasize? What urgent imperative does the Lord speak here to his own people? Cf 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

• In contrast, listen to the voices of earth at Babylon's fall. Who are the speakers? To what fact about Babylon's fall do they refer, and for what reason did they mourn in this way for Babylon? Observe the difference between the points of view of heaven and of the world. In such circumstances, in which would you join - mourning or joy?

• What calls forth the praises of 19:1-3, 4, 5-8, and by whom, respectively, were they spoken? What truths about God's character and ways are acknowledged here? Cf. 19:10; Is. 45:21-25.

NOV 20

REV 19:11-21

DONE



Following the destruction of 'Babylon', the beast and the kings in alliance with him (cf. 17:12-14), make war against Christ, who comes from heaven in judgment to overthrow them. The end of the present age, prophesied throughout the book, has now come, and we have in today's portion Christ's second coming described, in its aspect of judgment upon his enemies, as in 2 Thess. 1:6-10 and Ps. 2:9.

• Verses 11-16. In this symbolic picture of Christ, seek to appreciate the suggestive significance of each descriptive phrase. Contrast some of the phrases of Zech. 9:9, 10. In what ways will Christ's second coming be different from his first coming? Should this prospect fill us with fear or joy?

• Verses 17-21. This is the battle of Armageddon, spoken of in 16:14-16. Note the contrast between "the great

supper' of judgment and 'the wedding supper of the Lamb' (verse 9). Cf. the contrast in 14:14-20 between the two harvests. See also Matt. 13:30, 40-43. What truths are thus repeatedly emphasized concerning the final settlement and issue of world history?

NOV 21

REV 20:1-10

DONE

- What activity is particularly attributed to Satan? In what different ways is he dealt with? How is his activity made to serve God's purposes? Cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12. What will be his end? Who will share the same fate? Cf. Matt. 25:41.
- What are the rewards of the martyrs who are faithful to death? Cf. Luke 22:28-30; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:10, 11; 5:10. What grace should such awareness make us desire?

NOV 22

REV 20:11 – 21:8

DONE

- 20:11-15. We see here the final settlement of the destiny of the present world order and of all who belong to it. Who is to be the Judge? How is each man's destiny to be determined? What are the only alternatives? Cf. Matt. 16:27; John 5:28, 29; Rom. 2:6, 16; Rev. 21:8; 22:12.
- 21:1-7. A revelation of the new world order is now given. Cf. Is. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13. What is its metropolis? Contrast Rev. 18:10. Who are its citizens? What are their privileges? Of what blessings are they assured, and by whose word and deed?

NOV 23

REV 21:9-21

DONE

This vision of the city of God is no more to be taken literally than was the vision of Christ in 1:12-20. It is a symbolic picture, and we have to see in and through the symbols the spiritual realities that they represent.

- For example, the size of the city (verse 16; see Note 2 below) expresses the same thought as the phrase 'that no-one could count' in 7:9; the shape of the city as a cube (21:16) suggests its perfection of design and its permanence; the gold and precious stones represent its brilliance and perfection of quality, and so forth. What other spiritual realities does this passage suggest to you?
- How is the contrast between this city and the harlot city Babylon brought to the mind of the reader? Cf. verse 9 with 17:1. Work out this contrast in some of its features. What are the outstanding differences between Babylon and the New Jerusalem? Cf. Zech. 14:20, 21; Luke. 16:15; 1 John 2:16, 17.

NOV 24

REV 21:22 – 22:5

DONE

- Make a list of all that is said not to be found in the perfected kingdom of God. Over against these, set the positive blessing spoken of here. Comparing these blessings with those of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1:28, 29; 2:8-25), how do they transcend them, and what is their chief glory? Cf. 1 Cor. 15:46; Eph. 1:3.
- Would a non-Christian be able to enter the city (see 21:27), and if he did enter would he find satisfaction in its blessings (cf. Eph. 2:3; 1 Cor. 2:14)? In the light of this, consider the absolute necessity of 'the blood of the Lamb' and of regeneration for every man. Cf. John 3:5; Luke 10:20.

NOV 25

REV 22:6-21

DONE

- What word of Christ is repeated three times in these verses? See also 3:11, and cf 1:7; 16:15. How are we to reconcile this word with the fact that even now he has not come? What should be our attitude and response to this word of our Master? Cf. 2 Pet. 3; Matt. 24:43-51; Heb. 10:36-39. Can you join in the prayer of verses 17 and 20 as the spontaneous yearning of your heart?
- How are the truth and the importance of the contents of this book confirmed to us in this passage? By what name is it four times described? What is its origin? From where does it derive its authority? How ought we to express our regard for it and our response to it?

GOSPEL OF JOHN

DONE

The author of this Gospel claims to have been an eye-witness of the scenes that he records (1:14; 19:35; cf. 1 John 1:1-3), and in 21:24 his identity with 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' is asserted. Among the many reasons for identifying this disciple with John the son of Zebedee, one of the most striking is the Evangelist's habit of referring to the Baptist as 'John' only, and never mentioning the son of Zebedee by name.

It is important to observe that in the record of Jesus' ministry up to his death, seven miracles are recorded in this Gospel. These are: (1) the turning of water into wine (2:1-11); (2) the healing of the Royal Official's son (4:46-54); (3) the healing of the man who was an invalid (5:2-9); (4) the feeding of the five thousand (6:4-13); (5) the walking on the water (6:16-21); (6) the healing of the man born blind (9:1-7); (7) the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).

John calls these miracles 'signs', by which he means that they have a meaning beyond themselves, and point to the identity of Jesus as the Christ, and to his corresponding works in the spiritual realm, such as the raising of the spiritually dead, the opening of the eyes of the spiritually blind, etc.

The purpose of the Gospel, and particularly of the signs recorded in it, is clearly stated, 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name' (20:31). It shows the divine Word coming to his own people, revealing the Father to them both by teaching and by 'signs', and yet rejected and persecuted to the death. To the world this Gospel reveals the tremendous claims of the Lord Jesus and the awfulness of rejecting him. To the disciple it reveals the implications of accepting him, showing the interdependence of love and obedience, of life and feeding on the Lord, of fruit-bearing and abiding in him.

NOV 26

JOHN 1:1-18

DONE

- Why is Jesus called here 'the Word'? What is his relation to God; to the world; to men? See the whole passage.
- Who does not, and who does become a child of God? By what means is one brought into this new status?
- Note all the allusions to 'light' and associated ideas (e.g., 'glory') in this passage. How much of the purpose of Jesus' coming does this explain?

NOV 27

JOHN 1:19-51

DONE

- What do we learn here about: (a) the character, (b) the work, of John the Baptist? See also verses 6-8 and 3:28-30.
- Verses 26-34. What testimony does John the Baptist bear here to Jesus? How much of this did John learn

about him through his experience at Christ's baptism? Do these truths mean something to you?

- Describe what it was that brought each of these five men to Jesus. How far did they understand who Jesus was? What account of him can you give to others?

NOV 28

JOHN 2:1-22

DONE

- Verses 1-11 present the first of the seven 'signs' (see Introduction), which reveal the identity of Jesus and stimulate faith (verse 11). What particular aspect of Jesus' glory does this miracle display? What change in our life does turning the water into wine represent? Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. What can we learn from Mary's response to Jesus?
- The idea of the 'temple' unites verses 13-17 with 18-22. How does Jesus appear in each incident? By what authority does he drive out the traders? Cf. Mal. 3:1-3. What crisis does this incident foreshadow in the mind of Jesus? What did he foresee concerning the cost and character of his mission?

NOV 29

JOHN 2:23 – 3:21

DONE

- What was right and what was lacking in Nicodemus' assessment of Jesus? How did Jesus' answer correct him? What is involved in being 'born of the Spirit', and why is it needed? Cf. Matt. 18:3; John 1:12, 13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:8, 9.
- Why was the lifting up of the Son of man necessary? (Note 'must' in 3:14.) On what ground are men judged and condemned? Where do you stand in relation to these truths?

NOV 30

JOHN 3:22-36

DONE

- How might one have expected John to have replied to the statement of verse 26? Consider the quality of character and the principles brought out in his answer. How far do you share his attitude to Christ? How does it apply to your situation?
- What is said about Jesus in verses 31, 32, 34, 35 that set him apart from and above all others?
- 'The man who has accepted it' (verse 33), 'believes in the Son', 'rejects the Son' (verse 36). What kinds of response to Jesus Christ do these phrases describe? To what consequences do they lead?