



Getting started with Revelation

At the end of the 1st century, it was pretty tough to live as a follower of Jesus. Most of the original disciples were dead. Lots of people hated you simply for following Jesus and you were seen as an easy target. Local churches were seen as weak and small. Many Christians felt as if they were losing 10-0 and it was all over.

What do you need when you feel like that?

1) **A big vision of the Lord Jesus:** Who He is and the kind of power He has, what He has done by dying on the cross, rising again and ascending to heaven, and what He is doing throughout our world today. And that's how the book begins!

2) **A reminder** that as Christians we are in a real, spiritual battle and the devil is our enemy but Jesus has triumphed over him. Ultimately, the devil is defeated but he loves to make us feel like we are losing 10-0 and on the wrong team.

3) **A glimpse of the future:** Jesus will one day return to gather His people and live with them forever and it will be amazing. The enemies of Jesus however will be totally destroyed.

Those are brilliant things to remember when it's tough to follow Jesus. Not just in our time and place but in every time and place. One of the big messages of the book then is keep going, hang on in there, just a little further.

What about all the weird stuff? Visions, numbers, beasts, trumpets and when is it all going to happen?

Lots of people have strong opinions about these things and too often these get unhelpful.

For the most part the language used in the book of Revelation is picture language. That doesn't mean it's not true but that we need to handle it carefully!

Just as the numbers **9/11** in our day stimulate lots of thoughts, emotions and reactions in our heads, so the visions John sees have pictures and numbers from elsewhere in the bible that stir up similar reactions in those who know them.

When will it all happen? It would seem odd that a book that was written to encourage Christians at the end of the 1st century was all about the future. It was supposed to help them in the time they lived just as it will help us in the time we live.

There are no doubt some things in the book that are about the future and haven't happened yet but in the main what is being described is what the church and Christians will face through all the years until the Lord Jesus returns.

So keep going. Remember that Jesus wins and He will come back for us.

Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at Biblegateway.com
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.

Grow 1:1 questions to unlock the passage:

What does this teach me about God?

How does this point me to the Lord Jesus and His cross?

What does this teach me about myself?

How does this help me to pray?

What difference will this make to my week?



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)