

Discussion Questions

Apocalypse Now

Revelation 1:1-3

(If you could map out the next 10 years of your life what would they look like?)

- When you think about the book of Revelation, what do you think of? What ideas & images come to mind? What questions do you have that you'd like to have answered?
- Why do you think the book of Revelation is in the Bible?
- What do you think it's all about?

Read Revelation 1:1-3

Revelation 1:1 "*The Revelation...*" [the word in Greek is *apocolupsis* (It's where we get our English word: Apolocalypse.) Apolocalypse literally means "unveiling." [*apo*—"out of" + *kalupto*—"hide, cover, veil"] Revelation 1:1 "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ...*"

- Considering the information above, what do you think the book of Revelation is unveiling or revealing?
- What is the purpose of this unveiling?
- What does Revelation 1:3 say about reading and keeping the Revelation?
- What do you think it means to "keep what is written" in the prophesy?
- Look at the attached handout (See pg. 2). Out of the list, what would you consider yourself to be (you could be a combination of these as well or even something else.)

The last few words of Revelation 1:3 say "the time is **near**." The Greek word used for "near" is *eggus* and it means "at hand"—so close it's right near us and we can touch it.

- What clues does the use of this word give us about the time in which these things take place?

We often think of the book of Revelation is like a map or a puzzle that needs to be solved that will reveal when Christ will return and a series of events that will take place around that but consider this: the resurrected Jesus says, "*It's not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.*" In Matthew 24 Jesus says, "*Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.*" Jesus does say something about discerning seasons just before that, but then He seems to say, "*Now is the season, so always be ready.*" "*Keep your lamps burning, foolish virgins.*"

- Do you think it's possible to know when Christ will return? If not, why do you think so many try to figure it out or predict it by using the book of Revelation?
- If the Revelation is not a map or a puzzle it's not meant to be all about predicting the hour and the day, what do you think the Revelation is all about? And why should we bother reading it?

We try to control the future but God wants us to entrust ourselves and our futures to Him.

- Why do you think God makes space for so many unknowns?

**These questions were created by Kimberly Weynen*

There are four traditional views regarding the chronology of The Revelation:

1. Preterist. Preterists believe that most of it happened in 70 AD or before . . . So . . . *Holy Moly!* Are we “left behind”? No. Not according to the Preterists. They say all the imagery and events described in Revelation were easily understandable and applicable to the people to whom John sent the vision. It was about them and not a “rapture” two-thousand years later. Most critical Bible scholars today hold to this view. And it does seem awfully clear to me, having carefully examined the texts, that when Jesus said the stuff about discerning seasons, and when he said, “*this generation will not pass away until all these things take place,*” He was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD—one generation after His ministry. It was right after He said those things about seasons that He went on to say, “*But of that day and that hour, no one knows.*”
2. Historist. Historists believe that Revelation is an elaborate map of all church history. They’re the ones who usually pegged the Pope as the antichrist. It was a very popular view during the Reformation. Its adherents were folks like Wycliffe, Knox, Tyndale, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin, Luther, Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Matthew Henry . . . *all* the heavyweights. Very few ascribe to Historism anymore: some had this “day in the Revelation equals a year” scheme, and ran out of time. But even worse for Historism: the Pope has turned into a pretty nice guy.
3. Futurist. Futurists believe that everything in Revelation after the first three chapters refers to events that will happen in the future. This is the most popular view today among Evangelicals. It’s the view of the *Left Behind* series; it’s the view you’ll find on the shelf at Wal-Mart, in the *National Enquirer*, and in most Hollywood movies... See? It makes for great Science Fiction and historical movies about bloodthirsty popes with 666 stamped on their head are just not in vogue. Understandably, the Catholic Church really advocated this Futurist view during the Reformation. Most Protestants shunned the view until about 150 years ago. There are different types of Futurists. The most popular today are the Dispensationalists who argue the Church won’t even be around for most of Revelation because we’ll be raptured. Of course, this view (along with the Historist view) implies that most of the Revelation has nothing to do with the people to whom the book was first sent . . . or even to the followers of Christ who get raptured in Chapter 4.

*Idealists or Spiritualists argue that John didn’t intend or believe that his book had anything to do with particular historical events but that, instead, it is a visionary expression of timeless truths. This view was popular among the early church fathers.