

Tim Chester

# Revelation

*Heaven's Perspective*



 **7-Session Bible Study**

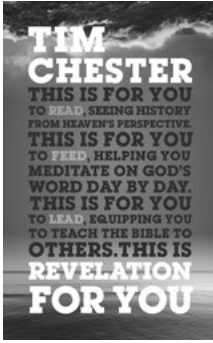
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📖 **7-Session Bible Study**



## Revelation For You

These studies are adapted from *Revelation For You*. If you are reading *Revelation For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Revelation For You*:

Study One > Ch 1                      Study Five > Ch 6-7  
Study Two > Ch 2                      Study Six > Ch 8-9  
Study Three > Ch 3                    Study Seven > Ch 9-10  
Study Four > Ch 4-5

Find out more about *Revelation For You* at:  
[www.thegoodbook.com/for-you](http://www.thegoodbook.com/for-you)

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# Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

**Talkabout:** Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

**Investigate:** These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

**Apply:** These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

**Explore More:** These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

**Getting Personal:** These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

**Pray:** Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

# Why Study Revelation?

Many people find the book of Revelation intimidating, perhaps a bit scary or just plain confusing. But there's no need to be scared—and every reason to be excited.

Imagine looking close up at the details of an impressionist painting. All you can see are strokes of paint and dabs of colour. It's hard to make sense of it. But take a step back, and the picture becomes clear. And what emerges is not just a scene but the mood it evokes. That's how we should approach the book of Revelation. If you lean in too close and look only at the detail—it's all a bit perplexing. But step back and look at the big picture, and Revelation not only becomes clearer but grabs our imaginations.

John is writing to Christians facing the threats and seductions of life in and under the Roman Empire. We need to put ourselves in their shoes and see how Revelation inspired them to remain faithful to Christ, before we apply it to ourselves. Since we are faced with the threat and seductions of the world around us, John wants to recapture our imagination about how God is at work.

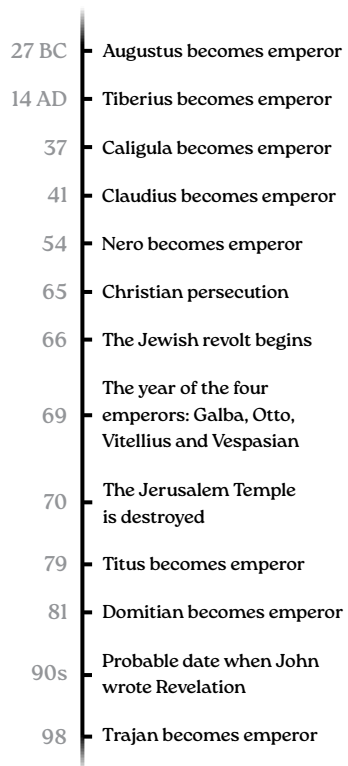
Despite everything that is going wrong with our world, God remains in control. And when we see history, our present and our future from heaven's perspective, it will encourage us to trust God and remain faithful to the end.

John does this by presenting to us the visions he has received—visions that take us beyond the chaos of history to see God at work behind the scenes; visions that raise our eyes from this world to the world above and the world to come. Above all, he shows us a vision of who Jesus Christ is—the ascended reigning Lord, the Lamb who was slain but who now lives for ever, the one who speaks with a voice like the sound of a waterfall, and the one who holds the people of God safe in his hands.

These seven insightful studies will help ordinary Christians see how John's message is just as relevant and applicable to our lives today as it was 2,000 years ago.



## Revelation 90s AD



# 1

## The Lord Who Reveals

### Revelation 1

#### **Talkabout**

1. What are your feelings as you approach these studies in the book of Revelation? If you are feeling nervous or excited, can you explain why?
- From your previous knowledge of this book, how might you summarise its message to a Christian friend, or to someone who is not a Christian?

# Investigate

 Read Revelation 1:1-11

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## DICTIONARY

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**Revelation** (v 1): hidden truths made known by God to someone.

**Testimony** (v 2): evidence or claims about Jesus.

**Blessed** (v 3): to be in right relationship with God, enjoying his love and favour.

**Alpha and Omega** (v 8): the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

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2. What is this a revelation of (v 1; see also verse 19)?

- What is the five-link chain that has led to you reading it now?

3. According to verse 3, what will be the result of us reading this book?  
How does this compare with your answer to question 1?

4. How does verse 5 fill out our understanding of what being blessed by God's grace and peace means for those who receive them?

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## Explore More | OPTIONAL

### Read Revelation 22:16-17

- What is the big application of the whole of the book of Revelation?
  - What should it cause us to do (v 17)?
- 

*Sevens and symbols:* In this section, we encounter the first example of something peculiar to Revelation and books like Daniel. Apocalyptic literature uses a system of symbols to communicate truths about God powerfully. Here “the seven spirits before his throne” (1:4) is simply a description of the Holy Spirit. Seven is the number of perfection or completeness. It is telling us that the Spirit of God is all-present and all-seeing—he is everywhere and sees everything. There is more detail on the meaning of these symbols on page 13.

5. What situation do John and the churches he is writing to face (v 9)?

- Given what we know about the number seven, what is the significance of the churches listed in verse 11?

## Investigate

### Read Revelation 1:12-20

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#### DICTIONARY

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**Hades** (v 18): the realm of the dead in Greek mythology.

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## Apply

7. What opposition or pressure do you and your church face today?

- How will this vision of Jesus encourage you to be bold and to persevere in your struggle against these powers?

8. Why is John's response the only appropriate reaction to seeing Jesus as he really is?

9. How is Jesus' response to John so encouraging for him, and for us?

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## Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Does your understanding of who Jesus is match up with what was revealed to John?

What emotions do you feel when you come to him in prayer? What emotions should you feel, if you understand who Christ is correctly?

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## Investigate

10. How might each of the descriptions Jesus gives of himself encourage John and the churches he is writing to as they face hostility and division?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What is Jesus' relationship with his beleaguered people (v 20)?

## Apply

12. What is there in your life that will last? What will truly make a difference in eternity?

## Pray

*Spend some time praising the risen Lord Jesus. Use some of the descriptions from the passage, and their meanings, to inform your praises for all that Christ is and has done for us.*

*Pray for yourselves as individuals and as a group as you read the Father's revelation to you. Pray that you would read it rightly and understand how it comforts, warns and encourages us.*

*Pray that you would become faithful witnesses to the grace and peace to be found in Jesus. Ask the Lord to help you find and make opportunities to share Jesus with others as you read this book together.*

## Symbols in Revelation

The word translated “made ... known” in 1:1 is literally “signified”. Revelation is written in the language of “Sign”. In Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a statue that is crushed by a stone that becomes a mountain. Daniel makes known this mystery to the king. The four parts of the statue are four great kingdoms, and the stone is God’s kingdom. The dream is clearly not to be taken literally. Its components are all symbols that signify something that takes place in history. The same is true of the book of Revelation. It doesn’t describe events that will literally take place at some point in the future. It’s written in symbols because its aim is not merely to convey information but to capture our imagination. Here is a brief guide to the meaning of some of them. For further help, refer to *Revelation For You*.

**Seven:** completeness or perfection (perhaps from the seven days of creation)

**Six:** incompleteness or imperfection (one less than the completeness symbolised by seven)

**Seven spirits or sevenfold Spirit:** the ever-present Spirit of God (seven signifies his complete or perfect presence)

**Four:** completeness, especially geographic completeness (the four corners of the earth)

**Horn:** strength

**Eyes:** sight or wisdom (insight)

**Sea:** the forces of chaos (so a crystal sea represents complete control over the forces of chaos)

**Living creatures:** power or imperial powers

**White robes:** God’s declaration of the wearer’s purity, righteousness and vindication, and therefore also the right to be in God’s presence

**Earthquakes:** earth-shattering events

**1,000:** many

**12:** completeness for God’s people (from the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and twelve apostles of the New Testament)

**144,000:**  $12 \times 12 \times 1000 =$  completeness  $\times$  many = all God’s many people

**Rainbow:** covenant faithfulness and mercy (from Noah’s rainbow)

**Virginity:** faithfulness to God (ready for the marriage of the Lamb)

**Adultery:** unfaithfulness to God

**Trumpets:** warnings of judgment, victory or battle