

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter 1

- 1. Why was John on the Isle of Patmos and what transpired on the Lord's Day?**
- 2. What is significant about this exalted vision of Jesus, as it pertains to the expectations of the early church?**
- 3. In Revelation 1, we are promised a blessing if we read the words of this prophecy and respond in obedience. How has your past reading of the book affected your life?**
- 4. How is God described in this first chapter and what impact should that have on us?**
- 5. How would you define and describe biblical worship? How does worship affect our lives?**

Chapter 2

- 1. Why does separation from God become separation from others? Why is the church important?**
- 2. In looking at the different messages of the church found here in the first two or three chapters, what are the essential elements that Jesus focuses on?**
- 3. What does Jesus affirm, correct, and promise the church at Ephesus? How can we apply this in our own lives?**
- 4. Explain the importance of God's initiating and unconditional love in the life of a believer? What happens when we try to earn God's love?**
- 5. How does growth in our love for God affect the love we have for others?**

Chapter 3

- 1. What is the value of trials in our lives? How should we respond to them?**
- 2. Why are people blessed who are persecuted? What is your reaction to this idea?**
- 3. While the believers in Smyrna were considered poor by human standards, Christ's evaluation of them was different. Why are faith, hope, and love more important ingredients in life than financial advantages?**
- 4. Name at least one advantage we secure in a time of suffering.**
- 5. How does understanding the historical background of the Smyrnaean tie into Jesus' commendation to them?**

Chapter 4

- 1. How does maintaining one's integrity and obedience to God rather than 'cutting corners' further God's purpose for our lives?**
- 2. How do simple decisions affect long-term development of character?**
- 3. What are the two extremes that we can fall into in sharing our faith with others?**
- 4. How are the times of the early church similar to our own time in the advancement of the gospel?**

5. Why is accommodation to sinful practices so damaging to the faith of believers?
6. What area(s) in your life are you in danger of cutting corners?

Chapter 5

1. A biblical faith impacts every aspect of life. What areas do you struggle with in making Christ the Lord of?
2. How would you describe holiness and how it is demonstrated through a person's life?
3. What is significant about the temple in Thyatira in its relationship to the vision of Jesus in Revelation 1?
4. What is one of the major issues hindering people from becoming emotionally and mentally healthy and how can this major issue be addressed?
5. Why does God correct us when we stray from His word? What are some means that God utilizes in correcting us?
6. What is the difference between forbearance and tolerance? How can we develop forbearance in our lives?
7. Do you agree with C. S. Lewis' assessment of why we develop a warped view of God?

Chapter 6

1. In the ancient Greek world, the term 'capturing Sardis' was a metaphor for achieving the impossible. Why did it also become a proverb for carelessness and overconfidence.
2. Why is the warning about coming like a thief such an appropriate warning to the city of Sardis?
3. Why can it be a struggle to move forward in life? What issues may we not be addressing or seeing in our lives that keep us from progressing?
4. In what ways may we be living with a sense of false security?
5. How are those who are spiritually dead come to life?
6. How does constant busyness keep us from doing what God desires in our lives?
7. What is the significance of being dressed in white, walking with Jesus?

Chapter 7

1. Why does God choose to use human weakness in furthering His purposes?
2. What was it about the church at Philadelphia that Jesus commends? How does this apply to your life?
3. What is significant about Jesus holding the keys of David? What application can we make of this truth in our own lives?
4. How did the original purpose of the founding of the city impact the mission of the church? How does this missional purpose need to be expressed in our communities?

5. What is the one great lesson we can learn from the church at Philadelphia? What is the result of faithful endurance? How do we develop endurance?

Chapter 8

1. While children are often taught to be self-reliant and independent, what does real maturity look like?
2. Why are apathy and self-reliance a danger to maturity in the Christian life, and what can be done about it?
3. Jesus' correction to the church at Laodicea utilizes elements that the community was famous for. How does God use things, or aspects of our lives, to address issues within our lives?
4. What can we learn from the Laodicean affluence and the results upon their spiritual lives?
5. What did Jesus mean when He stated that their deeds were neither hot nor cold, but rather lukewarm and they were rejected? What reality was Jesus referring to?
6. Explain the advice that Jesus leaves with this church? How does that apply to us today?
7. What can we learn from Jesus' correction to this church in how He ends his words with an invitation?
8. If Christ were writing a letter to speak into your life, what would He write?

Chapter 9

1. When going through a difficult time, where should our focus be and how will that change our perspective?
2. What is true worship?
3. When evil is momentarily prevailing, what should our response be?
4. What are two fundamental reasons why we should worship God?
5. Explain how we can overcome evil in our lives. How can we win by losing?
6. How does God go about defeating evil? What should our response be?
7. How do we co-reign with Christ on earth?

Chapter 10

1. Why is understanding the literary genre we are reading critical to proper understanding?
2. While the book of Revelation was designed to be understood and bring hope, inspiration and courage in the face of evil, many have high-jacked it for other purposes. Name some ways that people are misapplying the book?
3. D. S. Russell explains the nature of apocalyptic literature considering the historical oppression of the Jewish people who saw no hope of a political change. They "looked beyond history to the dramatic and intervention of God to right the wrongs." Is this

a healthy approach to people who are living in oppression and how does this apply to our current context?

4. How have you witnessed the kingdom of God coming in your own life? Do you see transformation or resistance?
5. Do you agree that the world is generally experiencing misery because of their rebellion against God?
6. How do we explain the martyrdom of God's people?

Chapter 11

1. Why do you think that people avoid the topic of God's judgment? How does judgment relate to the idea of justice and love?
2. Who will stay standing on the day of judgment? Why will they be able to stand?
3. Which view of the 144,000 makes the most sense considering apocalyptic language?
4. In the NT there is a sealing that occurs to God's people. What is the mark or seal of God upon one's life?
5. What can we conclude from Revelation 7?

Chapter 12

1. Do you agree with Eugene Peterson's description of prayer as "reverse thunder"? Why or why not? How does this imagery of prayer affect your thoughts regarding the nature and power of prayer?
2. Why does God forbid the reading of the stars in astrology (Isa. 47:13)?
3. Why are trumpets used in the book of Revelation and what are their meaning in other texts found in Scripture?
4. Why do warnings in the bible seem to intensify?
5. The chapter concludes with three takeaways from Revelation 8, what are some takeaways that you have received from reading this chapter of the biblical text and this book?

Chapter 13

1. Considering the inverted values of our culture, what is one way that seems right, but in the end leads to separation from God?
2. What is the danger of challenging God's values to suit ourselves?
3. Do you agree that there must be consequences for one's actions? If so, why? If not, why?
4. Which path do you generally take, the one where you try to avoid the painful lessons from others, or simply learn the hard way by making many mistakes?
5. What is different about the sufferings of God's people versus the sufferings that come from a sinful lifestyle?

Chapter 14

- 1. What is one area that we often don't consider as sin? How does Scripture define the sin of omission? What areas in your life might you find yourself shirking?**
- 2. Why is speaking the truth so challenging and possibly dangerous?**
- 3. What cry is the book of Revelation answering?**
- 4. What is one reason why God delays justice? How should that impact our life?**
- 5. Why is internalizing God's word so critical for life and why can it turn sour in sharing it with others?**
- 6. How does God's word shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions?**
- 7. How can we overcome our fear of sharing our faith with others?**

Chapter 15

- 1. Why is Revelation 11 so difficult to understand and therefore the widest divergent of views among Christians?**
- 2. What are the four main views of interpretation regarding the book of Revelation and what may be the best approach?**
- 3. If believers are witnesses, who is on trial? Why is Jesus on trial in our society?**
- 4. What is occurring during "the times of the Gentiles" that Jesus spoke of? Who are the witnesses? Though they have the signs of earlier prophets, what is the point that is being relayed to the church?**
- 5. Why is the church so often silent in its witness?**
- 6. We are halfway through the book of Revelation before the Antichrist arrives? What is significant about this?**
- 7. Do you agree that the world is either controlled by God's Spirit or the spirit of this age? How can we discern which spirit is ruling our lives?**
- 8. What does the death and the resurrection of the two prophets symbolize?**
- 9. What is significant about the twenty-four elders' declaration of the "Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was?" Notice earlier in the book, "the Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and is to come." Why is the final phrase not repeated here in chapter 11?**

Chapter 16

- 1. How is the book of Revelation organized? Notice that it is not chronological and sequential in order. What does Revelation 12 reveal to us?**
- 2. How does John's vision retell the ancient story of who the real protagonist or hero of the story is who is overcoming evil?**
- 3. Why is having a proper understanding of the real source of evil so critical in relating to others in our world?**
- 4. How is John's vision actually a retelling the story of Jesus' birth from a spiritual point of view whereas Matthew's gospel is more of a historical account?**

5. What are the two meanings of the wilderness from a biblical point of view and how can we interpret which one to apply to a text?
6. Why are wilderness experiences necessary in the believer's life?
7. In the great cosmic battle between those angels loyal to God and those who followed Satan into rebellion against God, what are the various views of when Satan was cast down from heaven to earth?
8. How is salvation and the forgiveness of our sins accomplished? In other words, how are we acquitted from our sins and enter a right relationship with God?
9. What are some ways in which we resist and overcome evil in our lives?

Chapter 17

1. What arenas of life is Satan trying to control and what is the purpose of controlling these areas?
2. Why is a totalitarian form of government not only repressive of freedom but also serves an evil purpose inspired by demonic forces? What freedoms are lost in this form of government?
3. Why are countries with a strong historical Christian background not immune from being deceived and embracing totalitarianism? Give some historical examples.
4. How can our personal preferences affect our biblical interpretation of texts?
5. What is one temptation when we are trying to stand for truth? What is a biblical means of "speaking the truth in love," while being prepared to suffer the consequences?
6. What is a means that Satan utilizes in deceiving and keeping people from the truth?
7. Is the mark of the beast, literally, a putting of a microchip into our hands? Or is it spiritual, which can mean simply allowing our minds and actions to be shaped by ungodly or worldly values?

Chapter 18

1. Darrell Johnson challenges us with the simple idea that we all are followers of someone or some ideology. Who are you following and why?
2. Why are we so tempted to give into evil when it seems to be prevailing in society? Why is it so difficult to stand for righteousness?
3. While we often focus on the mark of the beast as seen in Revelation 13, here we are faced with the picture of the name of Jesus and the Father written on their foreheads in chapter 14. Is this literal or a symbolic mark?
4. Who do you believe the 144,000 represent?
5. Why do people so often blame God for suffering? What does that say about us, if we do?

6. Chapter 13 and 14 are set in opposition to each other. What we discover is that we are either following the lamb or the beast, which are symbols for Jesus or Satan. Who are you following, and upon what authority are you making that statement?
7. How would you respond to C. S. Lewis' challenge that "there are two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it."

Chapter 19

1. How do you respond to the claim: "If there is no judgment, then the whole idea of justice is a sham"?
2. What is God's response to evil and how do you respond to God's approach to evil in yourself and in the lives of others?
3. In the imagery of the harvest, there are two different pictures: one of celebration and the other of judgment. How does judgment determine a need for salvation?
4. Why would judgement be welcome news to people who were suffering and experiencing persecution?
5. How does the reality of eternal judgment affect our lives as we consider the fate of so many people in our community?
6. What can we learn from Felix's response to the testimony of Paul, and how should that affect our lives?
7. How has the church moved away from preaching and teaching this foundational message regarding eternal judgment? The place of salvation and deliverance is also the place of judgment (see the crossing of the Red Sea and the cross and resurrection of Jesus).
8. Why can't sin simply disappear? Why are there always consequences to sin?

Chapter 20

1. Why did many exilic and post-exilic biblical writers use apocalyptic literature to convey God's message to the nation?
2. How should we understand the wrath of God? Do we see God's wrath as a positive or negative aspect of His character? Why do you think you see it that way?
3. Why is God's judgment a time of celebration for God's people?
4. Why is it that society deems the Christian message as intolerant?
5. What happens when we only address issues on a materialistic level and leave the spiritual dimension of life neglected?
6. How does human choice affect evil in our world and personal lives?
7. What is one thing that is absent from the celebration in this vision?

Chapter 21

1. What happens when we ignore God's warnings in our life?

2. Is God's judgment on humanity justifiable?
3. When we violate God's law, what are we doing to ourselves and ultimately what are we saying to God?
4. What is God trying to accomplish in our lives?
5. What is the value of tests in our lives?
6. What is the ultimate weapon that will defeat the deception of the enemy? How are we to employ this weapon in our lives?
7. Why does Jesus employ the imagery of His coming as "a thief in the night?" What are the implications of this imagery in our understanding of Christ's return?

Chapter 22

1. Who is the woman called Babylon, and what does she represent?
2. Why is it that the pursuit of what Babylon has to offer leads only to emptiness and dissatisfaction in the end? Where is real contentment found in life?
3. What is one example of attributing idols to sustenance in our lives?
4. Leon Morris points out that these closing chapters in Revelation talk about prostitution rather than infidelity. What is the distinction in Morris' explanation?
5. The first century readers would have identified Babylon as Rome. However, this is too limited of a view. What does Babylon stand for today? How does Babylon, the prostitute, seduce the peoples of this age?
6. Why does Babylon eventually fall? The irony in the text is that evil destroys itself. How does that come about?
7. What sustains believers in a time when we are at war with Babylon's values?

Chapter 23

1. Do you agree with Eugene Peterson's understanding of optimism as a false substitute for trusting God? Why or why not?
2. Why is it that neither optimism nor cynicism adequately address the issues of life?
3. In C. S. Lewis' 'Reflections on the Psalms,' he points out an amazing insight regarding the attitude of the Psalmist in their presentation on God's judgments. Do you see yourself as the plaintiff or defendant in God's court of judgment?
4. Why is the end of the age and Christ's coming a picture of celebration for God's people? What is the metaphor God uses to describe the relationship God has with believers?
5. In Revelation 19:8, the bridal garment is of fine linen representing the righteous acts of God's holy people. How is the idea of righteousness used differently by Matthew and Paul in their writings? How should it be understood here in Revelation 19:8?
6. Who is the real enemy that is finally defeated at the close of the chapter?
7. In thinking of the first audience to receive this message Darrell Johnson points out that the battle before the church is a crisis of conviction. Who is going to win?

Caesar, with all of his military might, or Jesus with His simple sword [the word of God]?

Chapter 24

- 1. Revelation 20 begins with the binding of Satan for 1000 years in order to not deceive the nations. After which, he will be released for a short time. The question that is raised is whether this is a literal time or a symbolic one. Which view do you hold and why?**
- 2. Why would God bind Satan for 1000 years only to release him again for another conflict?**
- 3. What are the primary views of the Millenium, which is also known as the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth?**
- 4. While every viewpoint agrees that Jesus is returning, where primary difference lies is in the sequence of events. Do you agree with Kenneth Gentry's position that the key idea is that Satan is no longer able to deceive the nations (lost his dominion over the Gentile world) after Christ's death and resurrection? Can we agree with some points of Gentry's position and not others?**
- 5. The question that we need to answer regarding what John is seeing is if it is sequential and chronological or are they occurring simultaneously? How do you understand what is occurring?**
- 6. Some criticize God as unjust for punishing a time-bound sin with eternal punishment? How could you answer that accusation?**
- 7. What are the four takeaways that we should receive from Revelation 20?**

Chapter 25

- 1. What do you think heaven will be like?**
- 2. N. T. Wright points out that the various religious expressions have very different views as to what happens after our earthly death. How does this shatter the myth that all religious expressions are basically the same?**
- 3. In John's vision of Jesus and the culmination of human history, what is it that we are to discover that will move us from a climate of despair to hope?**
- 4. What is it that God is planning for us?**
- 5. One thing about living in the new heaven and earth is that the "former things will not be remembered (Isa. 65: 17)." How do you feel about forgetting all that happened during your lifetime on earth?**
- 6. We may understand why God would create a new earth, because this is obviously a world deeply affected by sin, but why would God create a "new heaven"?**
- 7. What will be absent from the "new heaven" and earth?**
- 8. Do you agree with N. T. Wright's argument for a renovated new earth rather than a total replacement of this world as we know it?**

9. What will the “new heaven” and earth include?
10. What is significant about the “new heaven” being a cube shaped community?
11. How are we challenged to live in being a citizen in the “New Jerusalem”?

Chapter 26

1. How does the very word ‘Revelation’ helps us in discovering who Jesus is, what He is doing, and what He is about to do?
2. What are three things we can anticipate as we wait for Christ’s return?
3. We discover that what was lost in Genesis will not only be restored but enhanced. Why is the “new heaven” and “new earth” a place of abundance?
4. Why is the knowledge of “good and evil,” problematic for humanity?
5. According to Robert Wall, what is superior about the new creation versus God’s original creation?
6. What is the current spiritual conflict over?
7. How is worship both dangerous and wonderful according to Earl Palmer?
8. How is God’s assessment of time different than ours?
9. What has delayed Christ’s coming?
10. How is the description of Jesus as the “Morning Star” designed to encourage us in trials?
11. How and why does God give eternal rewards to believers?
12. What are the four elements that brings the book of Revelation to a conclusion?