

Group/Individual Study

Series - Dear Church: Introduction

Passages: Revelation 1

REFLECT on the message heard on Sunday, 9/30

Important note: The book of Revelation is from the genre of “apocalyptic” literature--which was common and popular in Jewish culture (for example, much of the books of Daniel and Ezekiel fall into this genre as well)--but since it’s an unfamiliar genre for us today, the companion book, *The Seven*, is strongly recommended for the series. It’s available in the Worship Center.

1. Read Revelation 1. The book of Revelation was originally written as a letter from God, through John, to seven highly persecuted churches in what is now modern day Turkey. Leaving aside for a moment the parts of the imagery and language that you can’t fully grasp, what themes do you see in this chapter that might encourage hard-pressed churches 2,000 years ago (and hard-pressed believers today!)?
2. Read pages 14-15 in *The Seven*. How does the explanation given there make some of the imagery in chapter 1 begin to make more sense? Does it give you hope that the rest of the book of Revelation may “make a little more sense” than you thought it did?
3. A great quote from *The Seven* says, “[beyond all the strange, spooky imagery] ...the book of Revelation has just one overarching theme: To let persecuted Christians know, God’s got your back. He is still in control even if everything seems chaotic now.” Can you see places in this chapter where this overarching theme comes through? How is this overarching message still relevant today?
4. Read Revelation 1:6-8. How does knowing that God is moving history to a time when “all that should be, shall be” encourage you when life is turbulent? Do you find courage from anything you see in these verses? Explain.
5. How does knowing “how things will turn out” change you? How does the idea that Jesus will one day come back as King make you feel? Confident? Nervous? Inspired? Confused?
6. Most scholars believe Revelation was written when Domitian was caesar in Rome. He demanded to be referred to as “Lord and God.” What parts of this chapter would have strengthened those early believers in their conviction that Jesus, not caesar, was Lord and God?