

# Book of Revelation Bible Study

Apocalyptic is a kind of sacred writing, but mysterious and very strange to the modern reader. It is present in both the Old Testament and New Testament, in a limited way, but the most extensive example is the Book of Revelation. The rich imagery and the vivid symbolism of this last book in the NT present challenges which will be explored in **seven one-hour Bible studies, beginning 11 am Wednesday 24 July 2024** (to 4 September in foyer). Each study is stand-alone so attend as you are able. We live in chaotic times with the outbreak of wars, unstable politics, an uncertain economy, senseless acts of violence, and a climate crisis – could God have something to say through this book? The studies will be led by The Rev'd Dr Bruce Stevens (PhD Boston University, 1987) previously Wicking Professor of Practical Theology CSU and currently supply-minister at Wesley UCA. There will be time for discussion and hearing your ideas. Bring a Bible.

## Outline

**(a) Week 1 Introduction to Apocalyptic Origins in the OT**, different streams including historical, prophetic, Deuteronomistic, and wisdom. What is distinctive about apocalyptic?

**(b) Week 2 Introduction to Book of Revelation** will consider some relevant details such as author, dating and historical context. Book of Revelation is composed of three genres: apocalyptic, prophecy, and letter-style. How do we understand the strange symbols? What interpretive approach is best? The Prologue (Rev 1:1-8)

**(c) Week 3 Letters to the Churches** Why were letters important? Jesus Christ's letters to seven early churches in modern Turkey. What is the relevance today? What would Jesus say to Wesley or the Uniting Church in general?

**(d) Week 4 Theme of Worship** How did the early church worship? What is the significance of the heavenly scenes of worship? How is the heavenly realm made real on earth in our worship? We look at a number of passages to explore this theme.

**(e) Week 5 The Unholy 'Trinity' of Satan, the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet** We look at the way genuine and fake is played out with dark themes emerging in the book of Revelation. The traditional foe of God is Satan who was defeated in a cosmic war but in the end times things heat up with the additional figures of the Antichrist, possibly a military figure, and the false prophet a religious figure.

**(f) Week 6 'Here comes the Judge'** The theme of judgement is hardly popular in our age, but it is an important biblical concept. We look closely at The Great White Throne Judgement (Rev 20:11-15). The imagery is terrifying, but the question is raised whether it is metaphorical or literal in some way?



**(g) Week 7 New Heavens and New Earth** After final judgement there is hope. The new heaven and a new earth, uncorrupted by sin, and the eternal presence of God with the saints in a heavenly Jerusalem. There is no need for a temple because God is with the faithful of every age. Can we stretch our belief to this wonderful vision of an ultimate spiritual reality?