

INDUCTIVE STUDY COURSE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

INTRODUCTION Christians have responded to the book of Revelation in two ways. Most are scared off the book as being too difficult and irrelevant to life. Many others have used it as justification for an elaborate programme about the future. Unfortunately since there seem to be as many expositors as programmes, it then becomes a means of conflict rather than growth.

II Tim.3:16 says, "ALL scripture is inspired by God and profitable..." so that must include Revelation. Jesus promised, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into ALL the truth;"(Jn.16:13) so we are promised understanding of the truth of Revelation if we let Him teach us. How then shall we go about it? By trusting Him - and searching diligently.

The questions that follow are simply intended to encourage your search, not to impose a point of view; we have enough points of view on Revelation already! As you think about the scriptures and the questions, I would urge you to write your thoughts down. If you write in pencil, you can always rub out ideas when second thoughts seem better. Do not use any other resources apart from a concordance and any word study books initially. There will be plenty of time to consult commentaries later when you have made your own. Remember there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to application.

CHAPTER ONE

1:1-11 Q.1 Who, according to these verses, actually wrote Revelation? What clues do we have as to which person of that name he might have been? Compare Rev.1:1; Jn.1:1; I Jn.1:1. What were his circumstances at the time of writing? How would his own experience make the writing of this book special to him? What encouragement and help would he be needing personally? How are we better able to help others when we have faced a similar situation ourselves?(II Cor.1:4)

1:1-3 Q.2 What insight does this passage give as to how God goes about revealing truth? What needs to be the attitude of heart of the writer or preacher if God is to use us to reveal truth to others? What was the purpose of the book being written? What is to be our response if we are to benefit? What is meant by 'the time is near'?(Rev.22:10; Mk.1:15)

1:4-11 Q.3 Where were the seven churches?(1:4,11; 2:1 etc) Look them up on a map and also check the location of Patmos. If they were all in the same area what conclusion can you draw about where we should begin to minister? What are the seven spirits?(v.20) These seven towns were all in the same province and were evangelised when Paul had his Bible school at Ephesus in Acts 19:10. By the time John wrote, the churches would presumably have been made up of second generation Christians. How might this account for the problems they had got themselves into?

1:4-8 Q.4 List all the facts given here about the person and work of Jesus. What are we told He has done for us and gives to us? What then is our status in the world according to verse 6?(I Pet. 2:9) What difference does this make to you personally? Why would all this information be so important to Christians facing persecution? Why do so many New Testament letters begin with a summary of the gospel? Don't we know all this already? Look up the two verses from which verse 7 is taken and put their message into your own words.(Dan.7:13; Zech.12:10) What can we still expect of Jesus in the future? Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. What is the Lord telling us about Himself in using such a title?

1:9 Q.5 What is the key quality which enables us to survive persecution? Where does perseverance come from as far as the Christian is concerned?(Rom.5:3-5) What clue does this give us as to the purpose of God in giving us Revelation?

1:10-11 Q.6 In verse 9, John says perseverance is 'in Jesus' and in verse 10 he was 'in the Spirit' when the Lord gave him a message for others. What does it mean to be 'in Jesus' or 'in the Spirit'?(Jn.15:3-11) Are they the same thing? Give your reasons. What is meant by 'the Lord's day'? Use a concordance to check if

there are any other places in the Bible which use this phrase which would help us to understand. What according to verse 11 is God's preferred means of communicating with His people?

1:12-16 Q.7 List in detail what John tells us about the Person he sees in his vision. Just from your present knowledge of the Bible and any cross references in your Bible write against each item on the list what it might be picturing about Him. Now check the beginning of each of the seven messages to the churches,(Rev.2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14) and note what you find from chapter one. What does this suggest is the pattern in the teaching of the first three chapters?

1:12,13 Q.8 How has the idea of seven golden lampstands been used in the Bible before?(Exod.25:37; Lev.24:2-4; Num.8:2; Zech.4:2; Matt.5:14-16; Jn.9:5) Of what important principle was John reminding the churches in using this image? How are the seven golden lampstands explained in verse 20?

1:13-16 Q.9 Of what Old Testament passage would John's hearers be reminded by his description of 'a son of man'?(Ezek.1:26-28; 43:2; Dan.7:9-13; 10:5,6) Do they help in identifying the Person in Rev. 1? If John, the writer, is John the apostle of Jesus, of what event would he particularly be reminded?(Matt.17:1,2) What do you suppose the Lord is trying to teach us by using the title 'son of man'? What picture of the character of the Person who appears do you get from words like 'white like snow or wool', 'golden', 'a flame of fire', 'burnished bronze', 'the sound of many waters', 'the sun shining in its strength'?

1:16-20 Q.10 What is the son of man holding? How is that later interpreted?(v.20) What encouragement would this description be to Christians facing terrible persecution who wondered if they could hold on to Christ?(Jn.10:28)

1:16-20 Q.11 What is coming out of His mouth? How has this same image been used before?(Isa.49:2; Heb.4:12; Eph.6:17) What does it teach us about His words? If we are to speak as Christians with a sharp cutting edge of conviction what is the essential condition?

1:16-20 Q.12 What was John's response to the Person? Who else had responded in a similar way?(Ezek.1:28; Lk.17:16) How can we do the same?(Rom.12:1,2) How did the Person meet John in his fear? How does He now identify Himself unmistakably? How does verse 18 explain Jesus' words to Peter in Matt.16:18,19? Hades was the Greek name for the place of the dead, called Sheol in the Old Testament; it is not Hell which is called Gehenna. Why according to verse 18 is the resurrection of Jesus the heart of the Christian message especially when we are facing tough times?

1:19 Q.13 What three topics was John to write about? Consider them carefully. How do they explain what the book of Revelation is about? Do we know whether 'the things which shall take place after these things' refers to their near future, their distant future, or both?

1:20 Q.14 What do stars and lampstands have in common? How are they linked together in the vision? 'Angel' means 'messenger'. Why would a church have its own angel? Does your church have one? What would his task be?