

Leadership Institute

Module 9: Book of Revelation

Introduction

Welcome to Module 9 of the Leadership Institute (LI). Whether you are new to this ministry, or a seasoned veteran, you are invited into the life-changing experience of studying the Bible, learning in community, and walking with an experienced coach into God's future for you. The more effort you exert, the more space you will give God to grow you. So jump in with both feet and get started!

Revelation

Revelation is both an exhilarating and confusing book of the Bible. To some it clearly reveals that we're on the verge of Armageddon. Others, however, are taken aback—even repelled—by its strange and sometimes violent imagery. Whatever your preexisting views of this book, the aim of this module is to help you better understand and appreciate Revelation as Christian Scripture, and to encourage patient, faithful endurance as we both celebrate and anticipate the victory of the Lamb.

What do you need for this module?

1. Your Bible, of course. Please use a modern translation, such as NASB or NIV, not KJV. And, for your study, please do not use a paraphrase like The Message or The Living Bible. For a helpful explanation of translations, see chapter 2 in [How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth](#). This reading is optional for your LI homework.
2. [How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth](#). If you have not purchased a copy of this book, find one now. You'll need it for many LI modules, including this one, and it will serve as a valuable resource for many years to come. Authors are Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart and you can purchase it new for \$12 or used for \$7 at Amazon.com.
3. You also need to read several articles provided for you. If you need copies, please contact Ric Lebrecht at the EFCSW office or email ricl@efcsouthwest.org.

A note about the homework: You may feel that there is a lot of homework here. There is. Some of it is master's degree level homework. Serious Christian growth, and leadership growth, requires serious commitment to scripture. And we believe you are taking your growth seriously. It may not always be possible for you to complete all of the homework, but do all that you possibly can. If you are

using LI as a route for Recording as a Friends Minister, you are required to complete and submit all of the homework. Please bring completed homework to each learning session.

Outcomes for Module 9: Revelation

Outcomes for the Revelation module include...

- Reading and appreciating the book of Revelation as Christian scripture.
- Understanding how Revelation has been interpreted differently throughout history.
- Reflecting on the message of Revelation in the face of Christian suffering.
- Reflecting on the centrality of worship in the book of Revelation.
- Considering how one's own discipleship and ministry can be shaped by the message of Revelation.

Assignments for Learning Session One (please complete prior to Session One)

1. At the very beginning of Revelation we're told, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it" (1:3). One wonders, however, how many readers actually feel blessed after reading Revelation. Frustrated, maybe. Confused, almost certainly. But blessed? (A) Take ten minutes and write down your preexisting impressions of Revelation. List how you presently think or feel about this book. (B) In addition to your listed impressions, include any words or ideas that you tend to associate with Revelation (e.g. tribulation, 666, End Times, rapture, etc.).
2. As will become clear throughout this module, much of the confusion and controversy surrounding Revelation has to do with how we read it. Remember, the first step in studying any text (biblical or otherwise) is to determine what genre or literary type it is. We obviously read a poem differently than a legal contract. In the same way, one will read and interpret the book of Revelation very differently depending upon what kind of writing one assumes it is. (A) Read chapter 13 in [How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth](#) by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart*. (B) Write down at least 5 observations from this chapter that you believe will help you read Revelation better.

*The chapter in Fee and Stuart assumes you have read the earlier sections of the book explaining the difference between exegesis and hermeneutics. See pages 23-31 for a review of the definitions of exegesis and hermeneutics.

3. It's now time to read through Revelation. Try to set aside time to read it completely in one or two settings. But let's read it with a particular focus. As you've learned, apocalyptic literature has its

origins in times of “persecution or in a time of great oppression” (Fee and Stuart, 251). Revelation repeatedly encourages its readers to persevere in the face of persecution and hardship. (A) Read through Revelation and highlight or record the instances where the book, either directly or indirectly, refers to persecution or to the importance of patient endurance during suffering. (B) Write down any key words related to this theme. (C) Write down at least 4 insights or observations this exercise gives you.

4. Probably more than any other book of the Bible, Revelation has a wide-ranging history of interpretation. Throughout the course of church history, Revelation has been interpreted in very different—sometimes even conflicting—ways. Unfortunately, the historical tendency has very often been to uncritically accept a particular framework of interpretation, and thoroughly dismiss all others. The following article helps to provide us with some historical perspective. Perhaps by better understanding the diverse interpretive approaches that other Christians have taken throughout the centuries we will be more charitable and knowledgeable when interacting with those with whom we disagree, and more humble about our own position. (A) Read the two articles “Directions: Is Revelation Prophecy or History?” by David S. Dockery, and “On the Verge of the Millennium: A History of the Interpretation of Revelation” by Craig R. Koester. (B) Identify the major interpretations of Revelation? (C) Which interpretation do you prefer? Why? (D) How do you respond to these ideas that there are several different interpretations of Revelation among Christians?

5. Quickly skim through the entire book of Revelation again and attempt to outline the basic structure of Revelation. The best way to go about this is to skim through the book and note all of its major transitions, all of its large sections. For example, chapter 2 and 3 make up a single section that you might label “letters to the seven churches.” When you create a structural outline you are simply trying to highlight all the big and important pieces of the puzzle. Label each section in a few words. Bring your structural outline, and all of the preceding assignments, to the first learning session.