

# THE NEW BEGINNING

## REVELATION 1

It's likely that if we selected 10 random people from any church and asked them, "What do you think, feel, and believe about the last book of the Bible?" that we would get 10 different responses. Someone would likely say, "I'm a committed [futurist, idealist, historicist, preterist] and I have strong convictions and beliefs about what the book means." Another individual might say, "I've read it a time or two...it's so confusing that I've never even really tried to understand it." Another might say, "To be honest, I've never read the book itself, but I think the *Left Behind* series was amazing!" And yet another might suggest, "The COVID-19 vaccine is the mark of the beast and anyone who gets it is doomed to eternal torment in hell."

These few examples summarize a variety of ways of thinking about Revelation:

- Some believe they understand absolutely every single thing in the book and can fit the pieces of the puzzle together so perfectly that they can use Revelation as a tool to predict future events.
- Some have given up completely in trying to even understand it because they believe it's impossible to understand.
- Some think they understand it because they've read, listened to, or watched society's interpretation of "The End Times" and believe that perspective is sufficient.
- Some believe it's ONLY about signs and symbols that anticipate Christ's return and humanity's eternal destination.

Each one of us comes into the study of Revelation with different experiences, opinions, and presuppositions. Over the next twelve weeks, the goal is NOT to address every detailed aspect of the book. Rather, the goal is to understand the culture and context in which it was written, the major themes throughout the book, how it describes past, present, and future events, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, what that means to us as Christ followers TODAY.

So, here's a general overview...

- Revelation is both a letter and a prophecy, and it's written primarily in the form of apocalyptic literature.
- It's written to a specific audience of seven real churches in first century Asia, but it's meant for a much wider audience (Hint: Seven is the number of completeness in the Bible. In other words, Revelation is for every church and every follower of Jesus Christ).
- It was written during a time when Christians and churches were suffering EXTREME persecution because of their faith in the resurrected Jesus.
- It is meant, in part, to encourage, strengthen, and give peace and hope to the church – NOT create confusion, fear, and disunity.

You're invited to join Trellis Church in the journey through Revelation in the coming 12 weeks!

### Discussion Questions:

1. Describe the difference between the different genres of writing that exist in Revelation: Letter, Prophecy, Apocalyptic. Why is it important we both name and understand these genres?
2. Discuss among your group the reality of how each one of you comes into a study of the book of Revelation. What do you believe? What have you been told? How are you feeling? What do you expect?
3. What do you personally believe about the spiritual realm? The existence of evil and the forces of darkness as active in the world today?
4. Read Revelation 1:12-18. What sticks out to you about John's first vision?