

Is This The Time?

Interpreting the Mystery of Revelation

S E S S I O N S

Part One: Popular Ideas of the End Times

Part Two: Revelation 1-4

Part Three: Revelation 5-7

Part Four: Revelation 8-11

Part Five: Revelation 12-13

Part Six: Revelation 17-18

Part Seven: Revelation 19-22



Craig Koester is Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he has taught since 1986. Known for his courses on the Gospel of John and Letters of Paul, he has taught numerous seminary courses and parish workshops on the book of Revelation.

Professor Koester earned the B.A. degree at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., in 1976, and the M.Div. degree in 1980 from Luther Seminary, where he was awarded the Bruce Prize in New Testament Study. He served as a parish pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minnesota for three years before moving to New York City for graduate study. He received the Ph.D. degree with distinction from Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1986. He was the 1991 recipient of an Associated Press Award for Biblical Exposition. He did advanced research at the Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, N.J., in 1992-93.

A prolific writer, his books include a major commentary on *Hebrews* in the Anchor Bible Commentary series (2001); *Revelation and the End of All Things*. (2001); *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (1st edition 1995; 2nd edition 2003); *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* (1991); and *The Dwelling of God* (1989). An innovator in the use of technology for teaching, Professor Koester designed the *Bible Tutor*, an interactive introduction to the Bible that is accessible on the internet and on CD ROM. He has also authored numerous articles and Bible studies for scholars, pastors, and laypeople.

Leaders' Guide

INTRODUCTION

A study of the book of Revelation is one of the most engaging ventures in biblical studies. Interest in Revelation is perennially high even among those who do not otherwise give much attention to questions of biblical interpretation. Curiosity is fed by the popular use of Revelation in print, film, and other media. Many of the sensationalistic interpretations of Revelation attempt to tie to its visions to contemporary events, such as crises in the Middle East, developments in the United Nations, the global economy, and advances in computer technology. Elaborate theological schemes have been imposed on Revelation in order for the events of history and current crises to seem to make sense in God's great plan. Some people are intrigued by this way of approaching the Revelation, while many others find it confusing, disturbing, or simply misguided.

This video series will offer an alternative way to understand Revelation, one that is designed to give people a sense of hope. The questions raised by contemporary speculation about Revelation serve as a prelude to the study of Revelation itself. What we find when we open the pages of the Scriptures is a message that is often surprisingly different from many of the popular treatments of Revelation's imagery. The visions in the book are not written in a secret code that is designed to confuse its readers. It is a book that was written to reveal or make known the gracious power of God and Christ, which stands over against the forces of sin and evil that seek to dominate our world.

Dr. Koester will guide you through the visions of Revelation and emphasize the centrality of God and Christ who hold our future. Some of the images are disturbing and others are encouraging, but when read together, the visions continue to point us to the God who has created us and the Lamb who redeems us by his blood. When Revelation awakens a renewed sense of faith and hope in its readers, it is having the effect for which it was written.

WAYS TO USE THIS SERIES

This seven-part video series is designed to give users a number of options for setting up their own study sessions on the book of Revelation. Each of the seven parts offers insights into a portion of Revelation and concludes with a number of questions for discussion. The discussion questions are based on the video segment and do not require participants to have done any outside preparation. Here are several possibilities:

A Seven Week Bible Study Series. Groups can watch the video segment, and then devote the remainder of the time to discussing the questions suggested at the end of the segment. For more in-depth discussion, groups may also work through a chapter of Professor Koester's book *Revelation and the End of All Things* each week.

A Three or Four Week Bible Study Series. Groups can watch two or three of the video segments per session before devoting a shorter amount of time to discussing selected questions.

A One-Session Overview of Revelation. All seven video segments can be viewed in a total of about 95 minutes. Viewing all the segments during one session gives participants of Revelation as a whole.

Optional additional reading and reference materials

- *Revelation and the End of All Things*, By Craig R. Koester (Grand Rapids: Erdmanns, 2001). Available from Luther Productions and Seraphim Communications as well as local bookstores.
- 5-disc audio CD set of *Revelation* by Craig R. Koester, available from Luther Productions and Seraphim Communications.

Leaders' Guide

FOR THE LEADER

Thank you for agreeing to facilitate this video study of the book of Revelation! Whether you are sharing leadership in this study, or it is the responsibility of one person, you are participating in something important and meaningful. Thankfully, the discussion belongs to the whole group, and does not rest solely upon your shoulders. Your job is simply to initiate conversation, inviting others fully into the discussion. Keep in mind that people participate in groups in different ways. Some may be more quiet, while others like to speak up. Help facilitate as you see best, welcoming each person to the group, and their contributions. You may need to keep in mind time considerations, helping to keep the group focused and on-track.

You will be in charge of making sure there are all the appropriate materials that the group will need for that session, including photocopies of the study guide sheets and some Bibles. Occasionally, a chalkboard, whiteboard or large easel might be helpful in recording the group's responses, but a piece of paper and a person to record will do.

Before each session, make sure you watch the video, and read the questions to be discussed. Also, read through any biblical material that is mentioned. You might want to give some attention to the place where you will be meeting, setting up the VCR or DVD and TV ahead of time, along with arranging the tables and chairs.

Additional resources for each session can be found in the corresponding chapter of Dr. Koester's book *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Chapter 1 of his book relates to the first video segment, chapter 2 relates to the second segment, and so on. The book gives more detailed information about the sections of Revelation covered in the video segment and can be helpful for discussion.

As helpful background for the group's study of Revelation, you might want to show one or both of the short video segments (2:30 minutes each) in which Professor Koester tells of his own interest in Revelation.

- Segment 1 includes Professor Koester's comments on why people might want to study the book of Revelation.
- Segment 2 gives Professor Koester's personal experience in studying the book of Revelation.

Don't forget to pray for the participants and the time you have together.

The study is divided as follows:

- Begin and end each session with prayer. This helps center and focus the group.
- After watching the video, there may be questions or issues that your group wants to discuss that evolve naturally. Go with these if they seem appropriate! Otherwise, follow-up questions are provided to help facilitate discussion.

What you need

- TV
- VCR or DVD player
- Bibles (any translation is acceptable, although the New Revised Standard Version has been used with this study)
- Hymnals (such as Lutheran Book of Worship)
- Photocopies of the appropriate sessions for participants
- Paper and pencil/pen for jotting notes
- The book, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, by Craig R. Koester.

Photocopying

Feel free to photocopy the contents of this study guide to use as handouts.

Session One

Introduction

Images from Revelation are so much a part of our popular culture that they are known even by those who have never read Revelation. Sensationalistic treatments of Revelation often seek to connect visions from Revelation with reports of political unrest, economic uncertainties, and ecological issues with visions from the Bible in order to determine where we are in God's plan for the end of the world.

Most people do not realize that these popular treatments are not really studies of Revelation. They are based on a theological system that was developed by John Nelson Darby in the early 1800s. *The Scofield Reference Bible*, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, and the *Left Behind* novels are all based on this system. The system weaves together verses from various parts of the Bible to create a scenario of what the future might look like. The key to the system is that God will "rapture" Christians by whisking them up into the air before the tribulations of the final seven years of history take place.

A problem with this approach is that it assumes that the Bible is like a box of jigsaw puzzle pieces. Those who use the system connect a verse from Daniel to a verse from 1 Thessalonians then a verse from Revelation, etc. But what happens if some of the puzzle pieces are in the wrong order? The whole system changes.

Dr. Koester proposes an alternative: Read Revelation as a book with its own integrity. Instead of moving from Daniel to 1 Thessalonians, to Revelation, and back, try reading through Revelation from start to finish. The picture that emerges is quite different from many of the popular treatments of the end times.

Questions for discussion:

- What are your impressions of Revelation?
- Where do your impressions come from?
- Are you intrigued by the book? If so, why?
- Are you apprehensive about the book? If so, why?

Opening Prayer

O God, who is the beginning and the end, give us courage to trust you in all things in between, Help us to both hear and trust your Word for us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

18:30 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 1, especially pp. 19-26.

Session Two

Revelation 1-4

One of the best kept secrets about Revelation is that it is a letter that was written to seven churches. Revelation 1:4 says, “John to the seven churches that are in Asia.” A letter is a form of communication. People write letters in order to be understood. When John wrote Revelation to seven congregations in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), he used language that would have been meaningful to them.

The first readers of Revelation were Christians who experienced several kinds of challenges to their faith. Their situations are reflected in Revelation 2-3:

Persecution – Christians in Smyrna and Philadelphia were denounced because their faith commitments set them apart from the wider non-Christian context. Their challenge was how to persevere in the face of open conflict.

Assimilation – Christians at Pergamum, Thyatira, and Ephesus struggled with issues of compromise. Their challenge was what to do when their faith interfered with their social and economic life.

Complacency – Christians at Laodicea and Sardis were affluent, but their prosperity took the vitality out of their faith. Their challenge was how to maintain a vital faith in circumstances where they were too comfortable.

After looking at the situations of the readers in Revelation 2-3, John invites them into the presence of God in Revelation 4. This majestic vision of God seeks to draw readers into the circle of worshipers who gather around the throne and sing “Holy, holy, holy” to the Lord God Almighty. Regardless of whether readers come from situations of persecution, assimilation, or complacency, Revelation invites them to join their voices with those of the heavenly host in worshiping the one true God.

Music: “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Lutheran Book of Worship #165) is a hymn based on Revelation 4. As people today sing the hymn they do what Revelation invites them to do: Praise the one true God. Many people are not aware that passages from Revelation inspired many of the hymns that are sung today. If the setting is appropriate, you might sing several verses of this hymn in your study group.

Questions for Discussion:

- Do these challenges of persecution, assimilation and complacency exist for the church today? How?
- Where do you see examples of each in the world today?
- Which of the churches is closest to your situation?
- Where might God be calling you?

Opening Prayer

O God of history, help us hear your Word for us today. Calm our fears, awaken us from our apathy, and give us courage to be your people in a world that doesn't always honor your name. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

13 minute video

Additional Resource:

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 2.

Session Three

Revelation 5-7

Revelation 4 introduced readers to God. Now in Revelation 5, readers meet Christ. John communicates something about who Christ is by using “word pictures” to get his point across. In Revelation 5:5 John hears one of the heavenly elders tell him that the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah has conquered. The image of a lion brings to mind images of power and majesty. It sums up the Old Testament hope that the Messiah would be a powerful ruler who would build the kingdom of God.

When John turns to look at the lion, however, what he sees is a **Lamb** standing as if it had been slaughtered (Revelation 5:6). The Lamb is another word picture that brings to mind images of meekness and sacrifice. This image points to Christ crucified. The promise of the lion is fulfilled in the lamb. The two images together help us understand who Christ is. You might want to make a chart of your own to help participants see how both images point to Christ:

Lion	Lamb
Strength	Weakness
King	Meekness
Predator	Victim

The Four Horsemen in Revelation 6 present another series of word pictures. The woodcut of the four horsemen pictures the first horseman farthest away from the viewers. That horseman represents conquest and points to threats along one’s borders. The second horseman comes a step closer. He represents the kind of violence that people do to each other. The third horseman comes closer yet. He stands for economic insecurity. Finally, the fourth horseman is in the front of the picture. This horseman, who represents death, brings the threat right up to the viewer.

Would the threats represented by the horsemen have been real for readers in the first century? It would seem so. Are these threats real for people today? Again, it would seem so. The horsemen point to things that are real, not only for one moment in time but for people living at many times and places.

The threats unleashed by the **seven seals** continue unfolding until the sun becomes dark and the earth trembles. By the end of the chapter people ask “Who can stand?” (Revelation 6:17). In response to this question, an angel interrupts the movement toward judgment to give readers an answer.

Those who can stand in the face of such threats are those who belong to God. John hears that there will be 144,000 preserved out of the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4), but when he turns around what he sees is a countless multitude from every tribe and nation (Revelation 7:9). God keeps his promise to preserve a remnant out of Israel by preserving not just a limited number but a countless number. God preserves 144,000 and more.

The vision of Christ in Revelation 5 and the vision of the people of God in Revelation 7 work in the same way by contrasting what John hears with what he sees. You might create a simple chart to show the pattern:

Opening Prayer

Dear God, we often feel threatened by events and circumstances beyond our control. Bring us into your comforting presence and give us your peace. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

10 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 3.

Session Three

	Rev 5	Rev 7
John hears	Lion	144,000 from 12 tribes
John sees	Lamb	Countless multitude from every tribe

Music: “You Servants of God” (Lutheran Book of Worship #252, vv. 3-4). The previous session concluded with praise. This session does as well. The final verses of the hymn “You Servants of God” paraphrase Revelation 7:10-12. This hymn invites people today to join in giving praise to God and the Lamb. If the setting is appropriate, have the group sing several verses of this hymn.

Questions for discussion:

- How were the threats represented by the horsemen real for people in New Testament times?
- How were they real for people of our parents’ and grandparents’ generations?
- How are they real for us?
- How does being claimed by God enable people to stand in the face of such threats?

Session Four

Revelation 8-11

The visions of the plagues that occur when the **Seven Trumpets** are blown in Revelation 8-9 have often generated speculation about current events. Some have tried to connect the plagues with volcanic eruptions or nuclear disasters in order to determine where we are on God's timeline. A problem with this approach is that the visions in Revelation do not move in a straight line. At the end of Revelation 6, the sun had become dark, the stars had fallen, and the sky had vanished. But in Revelation 8 the sun, stars, and sky must be back because they become dark all over again. The repetitive quality of the visions makes it impossible to use them as a road map for determining how the future will unfold in any step-by-step way. The visions present threats, but they do not offer us the security of knowing where we are on God's timeline.

A better way to understand these visions is to ask what they are supposed to do. The visions present readers with threats or warnings that are intended to bring change. After six of the seven trumpets have blown, we learn that the tragedy is that people do not repent (9:20-21). So what will God do next?

We might expect the seventh trumpet to blow and complete destruction to come, but it does not. Instead, an angel appears and thunder sounds, but the angel tells John not to write down what the thunders said (Revelation 10:4). Instead, John is to prophesy again (Revelation 10:11).

John's next vision during this period in between the sixth and seventh trumpets focuses on the image of the **temple** (Revelation 11:1-2). Many have speculated that John must be referring to the temple in Jerusalem, and since the temple was destroyed centuries ago, they assume that the temple must be rebuilt for this vision to take place. A more plausible interpretation of the temple image, however, reads it in context. John has already spoken of a temple that has pillars made of people (Revelation 3:12). In Revelation the temple is not a building, but a way of speaking about the worshiping community. The lamp stands within this temple are also people – the two figures that bear witness faithfully during a time of oppression (Revelation 11:4).

The vision of the temple and the witnesses points to the role of the community of faith giving faithful witness in the face of adversity. In the end there is a limited judgment on the opponents of God, but many more turn and give glory to God (11:13). Only after many have been brought to give glory to God does the seventh trumpet sound, ushering in another vision of praise.

Music: The Hallelujah Chorus, which is part of the musical composition "The Messiah" by George Frideric Handel, recalls Revelation 11:15: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." You might play a recording of the Hallelujah Chorus for the group.

Questions for discussion:

- What are the conditions or circumstances that make it difficult for you to witness to God and Christ?
- What would faithful witness look like in your situation?

Opening Prayer

Dear God of power and might, we often feel vulnerable and weak in the face of dangers in our world. Keep us steadfast in your Word that carries us to your throne of grace we we can praise and glorify you Holy name. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

11:30 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 4.

Session Five

Revelation 12-13

The image of the **Beast** in Revelation 13 has generated an enormous amount of speculation. People have wondered whether the beast might be some figure that is to arise and take control of a new world government, forcing people to conform to a new economic system. Significantly, almost everyone agrees that the Beast is one of Revelation's word pictures. Although the Beast is said to have seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 13:1), almost no one takes this as a physical description of evil. But if Revelation does not give us a physical description of the Beast, what does the word picture communicate?

Clues to understanding the Beast's identity come from the previous chapter. Revelation 12 is a vision of Satan, who is described as a **Dragon** with seven heads and ten horns, just like the Beast. Satan the Dragon opposes a woman, who represents the people of God, but Satan is defeated by Michael and the angels. Satan is thrown down out of heaven and therefore seeks to persecute the faithful on earth.

The vision of the fall of Satan does not tell us about things that can be located neatly on a map or a calendar, but it does tell us about evil. Because evil seems to widespread in the world, people wonder if evil might be the supreme power. Revelation, however, has a different view. Evil does not rage on earth because it is so powerful, but because it is so vulnerable. Satan is not an unstoppable animal but a caged and wounded animal that prowls the earth because it has already been thrown out of heaven. Satan, the seven-headed Dragon is thrown out of heaven in Revelation 12 and takes on a kind of "incarnate" form in Revelation 13 as a seven-headed Beast.

The Beast is the opposite of the Lamb. Revelation uses these two contrasting word pictures to convey something about the nature of evil and the nature of God, not to confuse readers. The Lamb is pictured in Revelation 5 and the Beast is pictured in Revelation 13. When read together, these two chapters confront readers with two kinds of power: that of evil incarnate and that of God incarnate. You might make a simple chart to review the contrasts:

Beast	Lamb
Slain yet lived	Slain yet lived
Conquers by war	Conquers by faithful suffering
Oppresses all	Ransoms all
Marks followers	Seals followers

The point of these two contrasting images is that everyone belongs to someone. The only question is whether one belongs to the Beast or the Lamb. The images press readers for commitment. The crowds in Revelation 13:4 ask, "Who is like the Beast and who can fight against it?" They assume that evil is all-powerful. Revelation, however, wants readers to give a different answer. The forces of God and the Lamb are more powerful than the Beast and they will prevail.

Questions for discussion:

- How can it be dangerous to identify evil in one's own time?
- How can it be dangerous not to identify evil in one's own time?
- How can Revelation's images of beast and lamb help us in our discernment between good and evil?

Opening Prayer

Dear God, at a time when evil seems to rule the earth, help us to cling to the victory of Christ over all evil forces, a victory won at a great price. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

12 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 5.

Session Six

Revelation 17-18

The second half of the book of Revelation traces the rise and fall of the powers of evil. In the previous session we considered Satan the Dragon and the Beast. In this session we add another image to this array of evil powers: **the Harlot**. The general flow of the story in the second half of Revelation moves easily across the boundaries of time and space. Here is a diagram of the main events:

Satan the Dragon thrown from heaven to earth	(Rev 12)
Beast and false prophet conquer	(Rev 13)
Harlot rides on the Beast	(Rev 17)
Harlot destroyed by the Beast	(Rev 17)
Beast and false prophet are conquered	(Rev 19)
Satan the Dragon thrown from earth into the abyss	(Rev 20)

The Harlot is one of Revelation's word pictures. The Harlot is a woman who is identified as the city of Babylon. Babylon was a power that oppressed Israel in Old Testament times. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and destroyed the temple that Solomon had built. Interestingly, the Harlot also includes some of the traits of Rome, the ruling power in New Testament times. The Harlot rides the Beast, whose seven heads are said to represent seven hills or mountains (Revelation 17:9). Rome was known as the city set on seven hills and Rome was the power that destroyed the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70. By using traits of Babylon and Rome in this same image, Revelation points to a form of power that was active over many generations of time.

The Harlot personifies the powers of wealth, power, greed oppression and violence that were associated with Babylon and Rome, but were not limited to any one time or place. The people who read Revelation in the first century would have recognized the power of the Harlot. Those who see seductive powers of wealth, violence, and oppression today also see signs of the Harlot.

Earlier Revelation contrasted the Beast with the Lamb to show readers the differences between two forms of power. Here we find a similar contrast between Babylon the Harlot and Jerusalem **the Bride** (19:7-8). You might make a simple chart to show the contrasts:

Harlot/Babylon	Bride/Jerusalem
Clothed in scarlet	Clothed in linen
Full of impurity	Bright and pure
Drunk on blood of the saints	Clothed in the righteous deeds of the saints
Wrong relationship	Right relationship

Revelation contrasts these two cities in order to turn readers away from the seduction of wealth, violence, and injustice toward life in right relationship with God and other people.

The Harlot is finally destroyed by her own ally, the Beast (Revelation 17:16). This points to the self-destructive side of evil. Those who ally themselves with the Harlot link their future to a power that not only destroys others, but finally destroys itself.

Music: Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's composition, "The Messiah". In session 4 we noted that part of the Hallelujah Chorus was taken from Revelation 11:15. This famous

Opening Prayer

Dear God of justice, we witness the power of greed, violence and oppression in our time. Give us a glimpse of your coming kingdom where all will live in right relationship. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

13 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 6.

Session Six

piece of music also draws its “Hallelujah” from Revelation 19:6. You might play a recording for the group to show how the fall of evil leads to celebration in this portion of Revelation.

Questions for discussion:

- How would this image of the bride and the harlot have affected people in the different kinds of churches? Then and now?
- How would persecuted churches have seen the fall of the oppressive ruling power?
- How would assimilating churches have seen the fall of the ruling power?
- How would wealthy and complacent churches have seen the fall of the ruling power?
- What warnings do we find for our time?

Session Seven

Revelation 19-22

The final chapters of Revelation contain visions that have found a prominent place in people's imaginations. Popular treatments of the battle of Armageddon, the Millennial Kingdom, and the New Jerusalem take elements from Revelation's visions but transform them in ways that often depart from Revelation's message.

The battle of Armageddon is usually envisioned as a nuclear war that will lead to the annihilation of the world. The name "Armageddon" is given in Revelation 16:16, but the battle itself begins in 19:11 where Christ returns. Note that Christ's "uniform" for this battle is a robe dipped in blood. The blood is there before the battle starts because it is his own blood – the blood of his self-sacrifice which ransomed people for life in God's kingdom (see Revelation 5:9-10). Revelation's description of the battle mentions no nuclear warheads. The only weapon mentioned is the sword that comes from Christ's mouth: it is the sword that represents the word. In the end, the battle of Armageddon is about the triumph of the word of God.

The Millennial Kingdom is described in Revelation 20:1-6. The word "millennium" means "one thousand," and this passage describes a thousand year period in which the saints reign. In popular thinking the millennial kingdom is often pictured as an earthly paradise, because people combine these verses from Revelation with many passages from elsewhere in Scripture. But the vision itself keeps the focus on Christ, rather than the location of the kingdom. The vision does not say where the saints reign. It only says that they will reign "with Christ and be "with him" for a thousand years (20:4 and 6). This assurance of life "with Christ" is the heart of the message.

The New Jerusalem descends in Revelation 21. This famous passage is the source of many popular images of heaven. The city has gates of pearl and streets of gold. In many cartoon images the pearly gates are usually pictured as a single gate or pair of gates that are closed. Saint Peter is positioned outside the gates in order to determine who gets to go in. In Revelation, however, we find that the city actually has twelve pearly gates, three on each side of the city (Revelation 21:21). Moreover, the gates are open, not closed, because the gates invite people in (Revelation 21:25). There is no sign of Saint Peter in Revelation's vision. If he is there, he will be with the rest of the saints who worship before God's throne in the city (Revelation 22:3).

A clue to understanding Revelation's message comes from a refrain that appears in the opening and concluding chapters of the book.

God:	I am the Alpha and the Omega	1:8
Christ:	I am the first and the last	1:7; 2:8
God:	I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end	21:6
Christ:	I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end	22:13

According to Revelation, the end of all things is God and Christ. They are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The spiraling movement of the book fits this description. The visions pose challenges, then bring readers into the presence of God and the Lamb, then pose challenges and bring readers back to God and the Lamb.

Opening Prayer

Dear God of all creation, give us a vision of your will for this earth and a picture of the glory that is to come. We thank you for your unending love that welcomes us into your presence now and for eternity. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Video Length

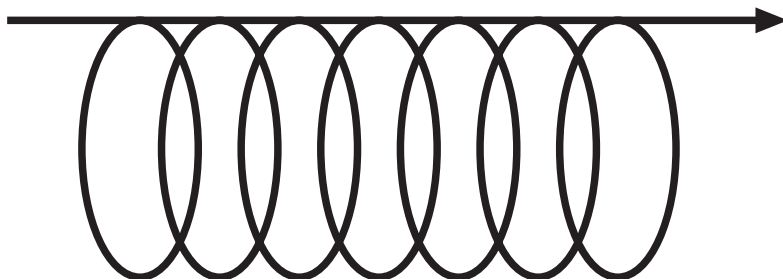
13 minute video

Additional Resource

Revelation and the End of All Things, chapter 7.

Session Seven

The cycle repeats itself a number of times, unsettling readers by the ominous visions and encouraging them by the visions of heavenly praise. When the disturbing visions and the encouraging visions are read together, they move people back to God and the Lamb again and again.



Music: “For All the Saints” (Lutheran Book of Worship #174). This hymn uses imagery from the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22. The final verse speaks of the saints coming in through gates of pearl to sing praises to God. This puts the accent in the right place. The visions culminate in praise of God and Christ. You may invite the group to sing some of the verses from this hymn to conclude your study.

Questions for discussion:

- What have you found in Revelation that challenges you?
- What have you found in Revelation that gives you hope?

Is This The Time? Interpreting the Mystery of Revelation

was created and produced by:



2481 Como Avenue • St. Paul, MN 55108
(651) 646-5526
www.lutherproductions.com



1568 Eustis Street • St. Paul, MN 55108
(800) 733-3413
www.seracomm.com