

New Testament Explored: Revelation

Week 2: What kind of literature is the book of Revelation?

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(1) Revelation is not primarily answering the *how* question, but the *who*, *what*, and *why* questions.

- Revelation is putting the whole Bible together, giving you a glimpse into the heavenly realm, and calling you to live out the heavenly reality in your earthly life.
- Our interpretive questions must be led by Scripture's intentions – by the communicative desire of God.

(2) Revelation is a form of literature (genre) called “apocalyptic” literature.

Revelation 1:1-4: ¹ *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,* ² *who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.* ³ *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.* ⁴ *John to the seven churches that are in Asia:*

- **Apocalypse** – A highly symbolic communication that unveils/reveals heavenly truths for earthly life.

“The language of the book is primarily pictorial, symbolic language. It is not the language of science or logic. Rather, it is evocative, powerful, emotive language, at times more akin to poetry than to prose. Like the language of poetry, the language of Revelation sometimes is mysterious and slippery, teasing its reader to make connections and see possibilities that one has never made or seen before. The language of Revelation ‘works’ not by imparting information, but by helping the reader experience what John experienced.” (Michael Reddish, *Revelation*, 29)

- **Prophecy** – A message of comfort and challenge to God's people.
- **Letter** – A contemporary form of communication that was a pastoral tool and shared among churches.

Video: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/apocalyptic-literature>