

# Christian Ministry 1 Module 3 DVD Course

## Revelation 4-22 Assignment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Revelation Overview

**Author:** John the Apostle wrote the book of Revelation (1:1,4,9). He also wrote the gospel of John and the three letters of John.

**Date:** Revelation was probably written in the late 80's or early 90's A.D. – at the beginning of Emperor Domitian's persecution of the Christian movement. Since John was born at the beginning of the first century, he would be an old man and the last surviving apostle. He wrote while he was a prisoner in exile on the island of Patmos, probably performing slave-labor in the salt mines.

**Recipient:** Its original recipients were the seven churches of Asia Minor. John's later ministry was based in Ephesus, so he was familiar with each of these churches. But like all New Testament letters, this book is ultimately inspired by God and therefore relevant to all Christians, including us.

**Style:** The title of the book (see 1:1) is the “apocalypse” of Jesus Christ. “Apocalypse” means an uncovering of something – in this case, an uncovering of Jesus in his glory and of the things accompanying his return. Apocalyptic style involves revelation about the end of the age through symbolic visions that are usually explained by angels. In this regard, Revelation is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament book of Daniel. Much of the symbolism in Revelation is rooted in and builds on the visions of Daniel. This means that your understanding of Daniel will help you as you read.

**When do the events described in Revelation occur?** Revelation 1:19 provides us with a simple outline of the book of Revelation:

"Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

“The things you have seen” refers to the vision of the glorified Jesus in 1:12-18.

“The things that are” refers to the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor in chapters 2 and 3.

“The things which shall take place after these things” refers to the visions of the rest of the book.

In other words, the rest of the book is a prophecy of events that were yet future to John – specifically, the end of this age and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. This is confirmed by the repetition of the phrase “after these things” at the beginning of chapter 4.

But what are we to make of statements like “the things which must shortly take place” (1:1) and “the time is near” (1:3) and “I am coming quickly” (3:11; 22:7, 20)? It has been nearly 2000 years since John wrote this book, and Jesus still hasn't returned. Was John mistakenly expecting Jesus to return in the late first century? Are we mistaken in interpreting these visions to be about the end of the age? Or should we understand Jesus' promise to come quickly differently?

Jesus was well aware that there would be long delay between his first and second comings (see the parables Matthew 25 and read Matthew 24:14; 28:20), but he also taught us to be ready and anticipate his return. The authors of the New Testament saw the entire period of time between Jesus' first and second coming as the “end of the age.” Jesus announced “the kingdom of God is at hand,” but we look forward to the coming of the Son of Man in glory. As God surveys all of salvation history, the time is comparatively short.

**Structure:** The book of Revelation is organized around four visions. Each one begins with John saying that he was “in the Spirit” and includes a command by Jesus or an angel to see or write something.

**VISION 1 (Revelation 1:10-3:22)** – The glorified Jesus and his message to the 7 churches.

**VISION 2 (Revelation 4 – 16:21)** – God's judgments and redemptive activity at the end of this age. This is a long series of visions, with many interludes that introduce key personalities. This is also the most complicated and difficult part of the book.

**VISION 3 (Revelation 17:1-21:8)** – God's judgment on “mystery Babylon” and the victorious return of Jesus to establish God's kingdom on earth.

**VISION 4 (Revelation 21:9-22:5)** – The “Bride of Jesus” and the New Jerusalem (21:9-22:5)

**Purpose:** By giving us a vision of Jesus’ authority over human history, John hopes to fortify Christians to be effective witnesses for Jesus in a hostile world. This is the blessing referred to in 1:3. If you understand what Revelation teaches (“hear”) and respond to this truth (“keep”), you will be richly blessed in this sense.

**Major themes:** Contrary to early 20th century utopian expectations, evil will intensify as this age draws to an end (human warfare, demonic activity, antichrist), but Jesus—not evil—will have the last word. He is sovereign over evil, limiting its degree and duration, mysteriously using it to accomplish his ends, and guaranteeing its ultimate defeat. This has a stabilizing effect.

The end of the age will be a time of intense judgment on those who persist in their rebellion against him (e.g. seal, trumpet & bowl judgments) —but it will also be a time of intense evangelism (e.g., 144,000 & international multitude in 7; 2 witnesses in 11; angelic evangelism in 14:6). This has a motivating effect.

Christians throughout this age and especially at the end of the age can expect not health, wealth and security, but persecution and even martyrdom. Jesus will enable us to be “overcomers” protected from God's judgment. He will empower us to discern and resist Satan’s tactics, witness faithfully, and remain faithful to him.

God will fully compensate us when he establishes his kingdom by delivering us from all sin and sadness, communing with us, and rewarding us for

our service to him. This enables us to be realistic optimists.

Above all else, Revelation is “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). Nothing will fortify us to be faithful witnesses for Jesus like a full-orbed understanding of who Jesus actually is. And this is exactly what these visions provide by portraying Jesus as both the Savior who serves us and the King whom we serve.

**Your assignment:** Read Revelation 4-22 and write three short statements that summarize the content of each chapter.

Chapter 4

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 5

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 6

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 7

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 8

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 9

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 10

- 
- 
-

Chapter 11

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 21

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 12

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 22

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 13

- 
- 
- 

In chapters 4 and 5, instead of immediately receiving visions of the end of the age, John sees scenes of a worship service in heaven – complete with an increasingly large crowd singing praises to God, starting with 4 living creatures (4:4) and ending with everything in the universe (5:13)! Throughout, God is depicted as an awesome king who is worthy to rule. The emphasis on God’s power, glory, and worthiness to rule prepares the reader for the terrible visions of chapters 6-19.

Chapter 14

- 
- 
- 

In chapters 6-19, we read how God forcibly invades history to judge humanity. These judgments involve God's direct punishment of unrepentant rebels, but they also involve God removing his restraint of evil so that “all hell breaks loose” from his enemies (warfare, demonic attack, antichrist, etc.). The judgments will also involve terrible damage to nature. Like all invasions, there will be terrible destruction and many casualties. Then God will try and execute his enemies as he takes control of human affairs.

Chapter 15

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 16

- 
- 
- 

This raises an obvious question: **Does God have the right to interrupt and invade and impose his will on humanity? Does God have the right to exert his rule over everyone else?**

Chapter 17

- 
- 
- 

Review chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation. Provide three reasons why John says God is worthy to rule.

Chapter 18

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 19

- 
- 
- 

- 
- 
- 

Chapter 20

- 
- 
-