

the Venues Go Deep

Wrestling with Revelation The End Time: Keep Calm and Carry On

What genre of literature do you most enjoy reading? Prose, Poetry, History, Sci Fi, Other?

41% of folks agreed that “the world is currently living in the ‘end times’ as described by prophecies in the Bible.”

How about you? Do you agree? Disagree?

What do you think about Martin Luther (The guy who started the Protestant Reformation) wanting to cut Revelation out of the Bible? Are you surprised? Disappointed in him? No problem with him?

1. If “Revelation” means to reveal, why is this book so hard to understand?

“Revelation” is a translation of the word “apocalypse” meaning “to unveil.”
It’s about “disclosure,” not “destruction.”

What is God revealing, unveiling, disclosing?

There are 4 views on how to read Revelation:

- 1) Futurist. This is the view seen in the “Left Behind” approach. Revelation is a play-by-play preview of how the world will end.
- 2) Historicist. The chapters of Revelation correspond with different periods through history. No one has held this view since 1800.
- 3) Preterist. That word means “past.” So, this view holds that most if not all of the prophecies in Revelation were already fulfilled.
- 4) Idealist. This view sees Revelation as a metaphor for the struggle between good and evil.

Which view best describes the way you read Revelation?

2. What did it mean then, to them, the people who received this letter?

Read Revelation 1:4

What does this verse tell us about the letter?

There is a principle of Bible Interpretation that says, “The passage or book cannot mean to us what it didn’t mean to them.”

Consider the historical and cultural context of the letter. Persecution, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, forced worship of Caesars.

The following inscription from Caesar Augustus was found, “Divine Augustus Caesar, son of god, imperator of land and sea, the benefactor and savior of the whole world, has brought you peace.”

What does that inscription tell you about how the Caesar’s saw themselves?

What conflict would this present to those who followed Christ?

In light of the historical context, how do you think the original readers interpreted the letter?

3. What does it mean now?

If we’re not the intended audience, what do we do with it?

Options:

- 1) Yes, it was written originally for another audience, but it still offers a blueprint for what will happen before the end of the world.
- 2) Revelation is best understood when we read it in its historical context.

What lessons can we learn from the experience of the original readers?

How are we tempted to follow the values of the “state”?

Compare the values of the “state” with the values of Jesus.

Could the application be: “Will we worship God, following Him and His values or will we give our allegiance to the values of the state?”