

the end...

exploring the book of Revelation.
questions answered.
and more questions raised.

Purpose: *To explore the book of Revelation as a group, and to enlighten teenagers to the ideas that Revelation can be interpreted in a number of ways, none of which are salvation issues.*

Recap

The types of writing styles used in Revelation – Epistle and Jewish Apocalyptic

The four methods of interpreting Revelation – Historic, Preterist, Idealist, Futurist

A Look at the Book Itself

In this segment we will invite teens to split up into groups who will then read the passages given and attempt to determine how each major school of thought would interpret said passage.

The rapture

One of the most popular events that is argued to take place within Revelation today is the Rapture of the Believers. What can you tell me about the Rapture? What can you tell me that Revelation says about the Rapture?

Let's watch this video clip together (if you have access to the Simpsons episode "Thank God It's the Apocalypse", run from the point that Homer begins watching *Left Below* to the first commercial break).

Let's take a look at some Scripture that is used to make this argument.

Revelation 3.10; 20.4

After having the groups read the passages together, invite them to share their findings with the large group.

Matthew 24.29-31; 36-44, 1 Corinthians 15.51-53

Have one group look up one of the four passages above passages. After discussion and sharing with the large group, share with them the following information:

Revelation 3.10 – Could speak of God removing His people from the earth before a tribulation period. However, this was a letter to a specific church, and if God were to remove people before a Tribulation period that has yet to come, then He lied to the church in Philadelphia.

Revelation 20.4 – Refers to a bodily resurrection of believers who did not give in to the Beast. But no mention of a rapture.

Matthew 24.29-31 – *Speaks of Jesus coming back, but no mention of a Rapture of the Believers before a Tribulation Period.*

Matthew 24.36-44 – *Talks very boldly about waiting and watching for Jesus' return, but when it speaks of the days of Noah, who was taken from the earth in the days of Noah? The evil were wiped from the earth. It does not say who is taken from the two walking in the field or grinding at the mill, merely that one is taken and one is left.*

1 Corinthians 15.51-53 – *Speaks of a flash that changes us. But in context, it is really referring to how we need to be changed and purified (completed?) in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven completely.*

The word "rapture" is an English transliteration of the Latin word rapio, rapere, raptum, meaning "to seize and carry off." The Greek of the same passage is harpagesometha and means "will be seized."

One last thought: There is a case to be made that the Tribulation happened while John was writing this (or shortly thereafter). In Revelation 1.9a – John says that he is living in the Tribulation.

The Beast

Another popular interpretation is that the beast in Revelation 14 is the Antichrist who will unite the world, but ultimately dash it to pieces. What can you tell me about this Antichrist?

Let's dive in to the Scripture. Each group open your Bibles and read Revelation 13. Take a few minutes to talk it out. Assign one Interpretation method to each group (there are 4 groups) to try and figure out how that Interpretation method would view **Revelation 13**. After about 10 minutes of discussion, invite the teens to share their findings with the large group.

Then read **Daniel 7.1-14** aloud to the group. Ask them for thoughts that they have about the two chapters when placed side-by-side.

Antichrist Thoughts

One thing that you must know about Revelation is that there is not direct mention of the Anti-Christ anywhere in the book. In fact, the word Anti-Christ only shows up in Scripture four times. They are found in

1 John 2.18, 1 John 2.22, 1 John 4.3 and 2 John 1.7

Read the four verses aloud, sharing that half of the four do not speak of a specific person at a specific time, the other two speak of someone who is coming, but there are already other Antichrists in place in the world. Now John did indeed write Revelation, so there is the possibility that he is writing about the same person when he is writing about the beast, but if he was, then solid Biblical interpretation would dictate that it would have had to have been fulfilled within a handful of years after being written. Not 2,000 years plus later.

Next week: Numbers, Cataclysmic Events and The End...