

GUIDEBOOK

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND GROUP DISCUSSION

GUIDELINES

This guidebook is designed to help you maximize learning and growth from your study of the book of Revelation. The questions on the following page can be used for personal reflection or group discussion, whether in a single group or in a church-wide study.

For group discussion, we recommend allowing at least 50 minutes and at most 90 minutes to run through all of the questions and to watch the video. Alternately, if participants are watching the videos on their own, a group time of about 30 to 45 minutes will suffice. Our recommended format when the videos are included is:

- Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 to 15 minutes)
- Opening Questions/Discussion (15 to 35 minutes)
- Watch Video (25 minutes)
- Closing Discussion (5 to 15 minutes)

An ideal group size is from about eight to fifteen people. If the group is over fifteen, consider forming two groups. If several groups are gathering, such as in a larger church study, welcome the entire assembly at the start with announcements and a prayer, and then break into groups for the Opening Questions, coming back together for the video and closing discussion.

The group facilitator should not teach but rather guide group discussion around Scripture, using the questions as the primary tool. Encourage group members to go through the questions ahead of time but not to use commentaries—let them wrestle with the words of Scripture. The group members should also be reminded from time to time to remain sensitive to those who are quiet or don't think they have much to say. Every person's perspective, insights, and questions should be encouraged.

SESSION 1, "UNVEILING CHRIST"

Revelation 1:1-8

This opening session highlights the truth that the book of Revelation was first and foremost written to help us to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Based on knowing Him, we learn to trust the teachings of the book about God's plan to use everything on earth, even difficult times, to accomplish His grand purposes on earth and in our lives.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read aloud Revelation 1:1-3.
 - a. Why was this book written?
 - b. What promise is given to those who listen to and respond to its truths? Why?
 - c. Do you believe we are living in the "end times"? On what basis?
- 2. Read Revelation 1:4-6.
 - a. From what you know, why was John writing to seven churches in Asia (Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey)?
 - b. Identify the three parts of the Triune God in Revelation 1:4-5. What do we learn about God the Father, Son and Spirit in this salutation?
 - c. Revelation 1:5-6 give special focus to Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. What question or insight from these verses would you like to explore more with the group?
- 3. Read Revelation 1:7-8.
 - a. What period in time do verses 7 & 8 seem to be describing? Explain.
 - b. What do we learn about Jesus Christ from these verses?
 - c. What is likely represented by the "tribes of the earth" mentioned in verse 7? (See also Zechariah 12:10). What is the significance of this statement?

Watch Video

- What did you learn from the video that especially challenged or encouraged you?
- 2. Close with final thoughts and a prayer for God's help to continue learning and growing.

SESSION 2, "GEM FROM HEAVEN"

Revelation 1:9-20

Revelation 1 reveals Christ to us in a manner that is more graphic and profound than almost any other chapter in the Bible. The symbolism used must be comprehended, however, for us to fully appreciate what is being taught. This chapter sets the stage for the seven letters that follow.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 1:9-11.
 - a. Describe John's situation
 - b. What might be implied by a "voice like a trumpet"?
- 2. Read Revelation 1:12-16.
 - a. What did John see? (Write down the symbols and what you think they mean.)
 - b. What thought or insight most inspires you from these verses? Why?
- 4. Read Revelation 1:17-20.
 - a. How did John respond to the vision? Do you think you would have done the same?
 - b. From these closing verses and the entire chapter, how does the Lord view His people, His Church? Does this encourage you? Explain.

Watch Video

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SESSION 3, "YOUR FIRST LOVE"

Revelation 2

Revelation 2 contains the first four of seven letters to the seven churches. These letters, written to actual congregations in Asia Minor, carry relevant messages for the Church of today. The first, the letter to Ephesus, carries insight that is foundational to them all.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 2:1-3. What positive qualities of the Church in Ephesus are listed here? Why is it important, before rebuking others for doing wrong, to acknowledge what they have done right?
- 2. In Revelation 2:4-5, what warning is given to the Ephesians? How is this same concern relevant for our lives today?
- 3. Revelation 2:6 commends the believers for not buying into the teaching of the Nicolaitans, who apparently mixed truth with compromise and sin. Are there areas of your life in which you have stood against compromise? Areas in which you need to take a stronger personal stand? Explain.
- 4. What promise is given in Revelation 2:7 for those who overcome? What does this mean to you?
- 5. What warnings and promises are found in the letters to the Church in:
 - a. Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)
 - b. Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17)
 - c. Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)

Watch Video

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SESSION 4, "HOT & COLD"

Revelation 3

Revelation 3 contains the final three of seven letters to the seven churches. Each focuses on areas in which we need to learn and grow. The final letter, to Laodicea, especially reflects our age—almost as though it was written today.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 3:1-6.
 - a. For what did the Church in Sardis need to repent?
 - b. What did God promise to those who chose to repent?
- 2. See Revelation 3:7-13:
 - a. The letter to the Church in Philadelphia was the most favorable of all. What hope and encouragement did God give to this church?
 - b. What open doors has God placed in your life for ministry to others?
- 3. From Revelation 3:14-22:
 - a. Describe the problems and sin God confronted in the Laodiceans?
 - b. In what ways does this sound like the Church of today?
 - c. What words of hope did God give to the Laodiceans? How does this hope encourage you?

Watch Video

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SESSION 5, "THE THRONE"

Revelation 4

Revelation 4 describes a vision of God's throne. When we see the world from the vantage point of God's sovereign rule, we can find peace despite our problems and reason to trust God even as the world changes around us.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 4:1. How does this verse bring us back to Revelation 1? Why do you think we are invited, again, to remember the book's opening chapter?
- 2. From Revelation 4:2-6a, what does the imagery suggest about these aspects of the throne?
 - a. The Person seated on it.
 - b. That which encircled and surrounded it.
 - c. The eminence proceeding from it.
- 3. Revelation 4:6b-8 describes the mighty angels surrounding the throne.
 - a. What does the imagery suggest to you about these angels?
 - b. What do you learn from their expressions of praise?
- 4. Revelation 4:9-11 focuses on the elders around the throne.
 - a. What was their primary focus and occupation?
 - b. What does this tell you about God?
 - c. Complete this thought: "If we could really see and understand how God reigns over the affairs of heaven and earth, it would change us in the following ways":

Watch Video

- 1. What did you learn from the video that especially challenged or encouraged you?
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SESSION 6, "THE SCROLL"

Revelation 5

Revelation 5 is a picture of Jesus, the Lamb of God, as the only one who is able to open the scroll containing the names of the redeemed. This glorious picture of His sacrifice for our salvation caused John to weep; it should stir within us a similar sense of unending gratitude for the gift of our redemption.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. From Revelation 5:1, what was in the right hand of the almighty God? What does the description of it suggest to you?
- 2. Read Revelation 5:2-5.
 - a. What problem caused John to weep so profusely? Why?
 - b. Why was Jesus able to open the scroll and to provide our salvation? What do the descriptive phrases about Him tell us?
- 3. In Revelation 5:6-10, what do you learn from the unusual imagery describing the Lamb? What do we learn from this imagery about our prayers?
- 4. Note the level and continuance of praise in Revelation 5:11-14.
 - a. What do you learn about worship and praise from this scene in heaven?
 - b. How can your learning impact your own life of worship?

Watch Video

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SESSION 7, "BIRTH PAINS"

Revelation 6-7

Revelation 6-7 describes the breaking of the scroll's seven seals and the sealing of God's people on earth. These chapters remind us God works through even the worst of circumstances to accomplish His purposes, all of which center around His people.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

1. In Re	velation 6:1,	who opened	the seals?	What can	we learn	from this	fact?
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2.	Revelation 6:2-17 shows the results of the first six seals being opened. Describe							
	each in a word or phrase:							
	First seal:	Second seal:	_ Third seal:					
	Fourth seal:	Fifth seal:	Sixth seal:					

- 3. Revelation 7 reminds us that even as God judges the world, He protects His people. Consider:
 - a. In Revelation 7:1-8, the numbers 12 and 144 (a multiple of 12) represent that which is complete. What comfort do you find in the promise that God watches over each of us as His own?
 - b. Revelation 7:9-15 moves us from earth to heaven, from those protected from damnation to those blessed for having persevered. How, even as we face trials, can the hope of eternity with God encourage our hearts?
- 4. We *naturally want* an easy life on earth. Why do you think, in the end of time, God will allow such trials and challenges as suggested in Revelation 6-7?

Watch Video

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SESSION 8, "PROTECTED"

Revelation 8-9

Revelation 8-9 shows the blasting of the first six of seven trumpets, ushering in God's judgement on a deeper level. Mixed into this apocalyptic vision, we find a subtle and yet profound promise of hope...God is working on behalf of His people to bring justice against evil.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 8:1 opens with silence. What do you think is signified or encouraged by the silence?
- 2. Revelation 8:2 reminds us that God works through His servants the angels. What do you know about angels? Why do you think God choose to use them in this manner?
- 3. Revelation 8:3-5 shows that God brings judgments on earth in answer to the prayers of His people. Why might this be the case?

4.	l. From Revelation 8:4 through 9:19, attempt to describe succinctly the first s			
	trumpets and what they might represent.			
	1st trumpet:	2nd trumpet:		
	3rd trumpet:	4th trumpet:		
	5th trumpet:	6th trumpet:		

5. In Revelation 8:20-21, how did those who survive the trumpets respond to God's judgment? What does this tell you about the condition of the human heart?

Watch Video

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SESSION 9, "HIDDEN PICTURE"

Revelation 10-11

Revelation 10-11 focus on another, smaller scroll, two witnesses, and the seventh trumpet. These chapters remind us that God is always at work and what He begins He completes. We may not always understand His workings and His ways, however, even when we are in the midst of it.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 10:1-4 mentions the seven thunders. John was told not to write down what the thunders revealed. Are you sometimes glad that God doesn't show you everything to come or tell you everything He knows? Explain.
- 2. In Revelation 10:5-11:
 - a. How did John experience the scroll?
 - b. What might this signify?
- 3. Revelation 11:1-6 describes two witnesses. Based on your knowledge of the Bible, do you have an idea of whom they might represent? Explain.
- 4. In Revelation 11:7-12, what happened to the two witnesses? In what way were they like our Lord and His resurrection?
- 5. Revelation 11:13-19 brings us to the time when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord.
 - a. What does this mean to you?
 - b. How might it encourage you?

Watch Video

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SESSION 10, "THE MARK"

Revelation 12-13

Revelation 12-13 describe two beasts, one from the sea and one from the land. Working together and giving life to an "image of the beast," Satan creates an unholy trinity to oppose God and His people. Thus will the world become filled with evil to a level unparalleled since the days of Noah.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 12:1-9. What clues do we find in this text about whom the woman represents?
- 2. The same text introduces a dragon. What does this beast attempt to do to the woman and her offspring? Whom does the dragon represent in Revelation 12:9?
- 3. According to Revelation 12:10-11:
 - a. What does the dragon do all of the time?
 - b. How do we overcome the dragon's lies and accusations? What does this mean to you personally and practically?
- 4. Revelation 13:1-10 describes a beast out of the sea who, in Revelation 13:3, overcame a fatal wound, capturing the world's attention. How was this an imitation of our Lord? Why do you think Satan attempts to mimic Christ?
- 5. Revelation 13:11-18 describes the beast from the earth, who supports the first beast and who makes an image of it. From Revelation 13:12-15, what is the main focus of this second beast?
- 6. Revelation 13:11-18 describe the "mark of the beast." What do these verses tell us about the mark?

Watch Video

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SESSION 11, "BOTH/AND GOD"

Revelation 14

Revelation 14 tells of God's coming victories over darkness through the vision of 144,000 redeemed, three pronouncements by three angels, and a proclamation of the End Time harvest of the earth. All of this is possible because God is both loving and just.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 14:1 describes our Lord standing on Mount Zion with 144,000, a multiple of 12, signifying a full and complete number. These saints have His name and His father's name written on their foreheads, showing that they are set apart and protected by God. How do these truths encourage and strengthen your faith?
- 2. What else do we learn about the 144,000 from Revelation 14:2-5?
- 3. In Revelation 14:6-7, what did the first angel proclaim? How does this focus on God's salvation encourage you?
- 4. The second declaration, in Revelation 14:8, is a judgment from God over Babylon. Thus do we see God both as gracious (Revelation 14:6-7) and just (Revelation 14:8). What if He were solely loving? What if He were only just?
- 5. The third declaration is a call for everyone to make a decision: Will you trust in God and come out of the world system? The option is to worship the beast and receive the mark of the beast, thus falling under God's judgment. If you are alive when the mark of the beast is forced on people, do you think it will be difficult to choose God instead? Explain.
- 6. In Revelation 14:14, we see "one like a son of man" about to reap the harvest of the earth—apparently a harvest of the righteous that they might receive their reward.

 Describe that harvest from Revelation 14:15-16.
- 7. Revelation 14:17-20 describes the harvest of God's judgement. Describe that harvest. Do you have a difficult time accepting that God is both fully just and fully loving?" Explain.

Watch Video

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SESSION 12, "GOD'S WRATH"

Revelation 15-16

It may seem difficult to reconcile the grace of God in the New Testament with the wrath of God in the Old Testament. Revelation 15-16, however, describes the seven bowls of God's wrath, reminding us that God has not changed and that His judgments are conditioned by His wisdom and grace.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. In Revelation 15:1, we are introduced to the wrath of God "completed." It is as though, in these two chapters, we are seeing the fulness of God's fury, and the rest of Revelation is just the aftermath. How do you respond to the idea of God's wrath? Why?
- 2. Notice the song of the Lamb and of Moses (Revelation 15:2-4). Pick a phrase from this song that is especially meaningful to you and explain why.
- 3. Revelation 15:5-8 sets the stage for the release of the "bowls of God's wrath." What filled the sanctuary and for how long (Revelation 15:8)? Why is this significant?
- 4. From Revelation 16, list each of the bowls of God's wrath/judgment, describing what was impacted.
- 5. What justification for the release of the bowls is given at midpoint (Revelation 16:5-7)?
- 6. Notice in Revelation 16:15 the warning and promise of blessing given for those who remain ready for Christ's coming. Why is His coming a bigger factor for people than experiencing hard times on the earth?

Watch Video

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SESSION 13, "BABYLON"

Revelation 17-18

Based on the history of Israel and her captivity, Babylon is a fitting symbol for a world system bent on destroying the people of God. But she will ultimately be judged by God and made to fall, giving way to the greater, eternal purpose of God to reward those who chose His ways and His eternal kingdom.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 17-18 focus in on God's judgment against the corrupt world system symbolized as Babylon. She is introduced in Revelation 17:1-5. What does her outer appearance tell you about her heart and actions?
- 2. Notice in Revelation 17:6 a particular quality of Babylon that justifies her judgment all the more. What does the idea of her drunkenness suggest about her actions against God's people?
- 3. Notice in Revelation 17:15-18 how the kingdom of darkness will turn in on itself with those being ruled by Babylon choosing to war against her. What does this tell you about the foolishness of choosing darkness and greed over light and goodness?
- 4. Revelation 18 describes the ultimate destiny of the world's evil empire. How does this ultimate outcome encourage you to remain true to God and His Word?
- 5. Describe some of the specific goods of this world that will be destroyed from Revelation 18:11-13. Why must there come a time when even the good things of this world will be destroyed? How does this influence the way you think about material possessions?
- 6. The closing verse of this section (Revelation 18:24) reminds us once again of the reason for God's swift and sure judgment against the corrupt world system. What was that reason? Why do you think God will allow the world to become overwhelmed by its own wickedness before He destroys it and makes everything new?

Watch Video

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SESSION 14, "THE WEDDING"

Revelation 19:1-16

Weddings through history have been times of great celebration. But never has a celebration occurred such as is described in Revelation 19. The Bible foretells what is coming to help us live patiently and faithfully for God today.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 19:1 opens with what sounded like "the roar of a great multitude." What does this image or sound bring to mind for you? Have you ever heard such a roar?
- 2. The praising throng in Revelation 19 repeatedly uses the word "Hallelujah." Rich with Hebrew history and Biblical meaning, this expression of praise reminds us that God is fulfilling in the end through the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb, what He foretold through Old Testament sacrifices. How does the idea that all of history will be fulfilled in God's eternal victory make you feel or think about the future? Explain.
- 3. Read Revelation 19:1-8, noticing the progression of thought and the growing crescendo of praise between hallelujahs, leading up to the wedding of the Lamb. How does what you know about weddings and perhaps even the Biblical promise of our marriage to God motivate your sense of personal praise about what is coming?
- 4. In Revelation 19:9-10, John is so overwhelmed by the wedding of the Lamb that he falls down to worship before the messenger angel. How does the angel respond? What does this tell you about angels? About God?
- 5. Read Revelation 19:11-16.
 - a. Who do you think is the rider on the white horse? Why?
 - b. How does this closing scene cause you to think or feel about all of the evil in the world today and God's ultimate promise to make everything right in the end?

Watch Video

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SESSION 15, "TWO MILLENNIUMS?"

Revelation 19:17-20:6

Revelation tells of a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Christian scholars have long debated whether or not we should take the number of years (a thousand) literally, but overriding the debate is the wondrous Biblical promise of God's victory for and with us!

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Revelation 19 closes with a reminder of who will be victors in the end. Read Revelation 19:17-21 and note:
 - a. Who is standing against God (Revelation 19:19)?
 - b. What is the fate of the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 19:20)?
 - c. How should our knowledge of the final outcome of evil motivate us today?
- 2. From Revelation 20:1-3, what is the initial fate of the dragon (Satan)? For how long?
- 3. Revelation 20:4 describes those seated on thrones who are ready to bring judgment on Satan, fallen angels, and evil. Compare with 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.
 - a. What do you think Paul meant when he said we, the saints, will judge angels?
 - b. See Revelation 2:26-27. What does this tell you about the authority that God will share with His faithful followers at the time of final judgment?
 - c. Can you think of any reason God would share His authority with us? Explain.
- 4. Revelation 20:4-6 describes those who will be especially rewarded during the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. What do you learn from this about the importance of trusting God, even when the whole world is against us?

Watch Video

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SESSION 16, "THE GREAT WHITE THRONE"

Revelation 20:7–15

Revelation 20 closes with the majestic vision of God's Great White Throne of Judgment before which everyone will give account. We have the privilege of a preview that we might prepare ourselves for that final, awful, glorious day.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. In Revelation 19:3, we learned that Satan was bound for a thousand years, after which he "must be set free for a short time." Now, in Revelation 20:7, he is released for the final time.
 - a. Why is he released (Revelation 20:8)?
 - b. Can you think of other places in Scripture where Satan or evil people mean to harm others, but God uses their evil intentions for good? Explain.
 - c. Read Revelation 20:8. What good might come out of a final world battle?
- 2. From Revelation 20:8, notice how swiftly God puts an end to the stratagem of Satan.
 - a. Considering the millennia with which saints fought against Satan on earth, why do you think God made this final battle so decisive with His own hand?
 - b. What is the ultimate fate of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet (Revelation 20:9)?
- 3. From Revelation 20:11-15, who will stand before God for the final judgment (Revelation 20:11-12)?
- 4. Revelation 20:12 mentions the books and the "book of life." Compare to Philippians 4:3.
 - a. From your understanding, what is the "book of life"?
 - b. What hope do we have before God if we are judged by the books, by records of our good and bad deeds throughout our lives, if we are not forgiven by the grace of God (Romans 3:23-24)?

Watch Video

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SESSION 17, "YOUR TRUE HOME"

Revelation 21

Revelation 21 describes our new, eternal home. As you read and ponder what awaits you allow your mind to engage fully. To do so is not "pie in the sky" dreaming, but rather wise reflection and preparation for all that God has promised us.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. What does Revelation 21:1 introduce?
 - a. Does the word "new" mean anything special to you in this situation? Explain.
 - b. What happened to the first heaven and earth? Why?
- 2. In Revelation 21:2, how does the Bible describe the new city, the coming together of God's people? What do these symbols tell you about God's plan?
- 3. Summarize God's announcements in Revelation 21:3-5. Which part of God's promise encourages you the most? Why?
- 4. Revelation 21:6-8 describes the contrasting future for those who follow the Lamb versus those who refuse to believe. Do you think we, God's people, should be more serious, as was Jesus, about teaching people how their choices today impact their eternity tomorrow? Explain.
- 5. Revelation 21:9-21 is packed with symbolism, helping us to understand the Bride, the gathered saints of God in eternity. What do you learn from this text and how does it encourage your faith?
- 6. Revelation 21:22-27 draws stark contrast between what will be in our eternal home and what will not be allowed in. Summarize what you learn. How does this impact your view of your eternal home to come?

Watch Video

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SESSION 18, "QUICKLY"

Revelation 22

Revelation 22 serves as the final call for us and all people to prepare for the Lord's return when He will "quickly" usher in the new heaven and earth. Therefore, now is the time to get ready, while we have the time.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Opening Questions/Discussion

- 1. Read Revelation 22:1-5 and compare with Genesis 2:8-10.
 - a. How does Revelation 22:1-2 describe the river of life and the tree of life? Compare with Genesis 2:8-10.
 - b. Notice, from Revelation 22:3, the stark difference between the original paradise in Eden and this final paradise. When thinking about the fall in the Garden of Eden, what is the great significance of the words in Revelation 22:4-5?
- 2. In Revelation 22:6-7, John tells us that we can trust the book of Revelation and reminds us of the blessing of those who read and heed it (compare with Revelation 1:3). What has been the greatest blessing for you in this eighteen-week study?
- 3. In Revelation 22:8-10, John falls down before the angel and is told two things he must not do. What are these two things and what are the implications for our lives today?
- 4. Revelation 22:11 gives the sense that the way we respond to God's Word today may seal our fate for tomorrow and forever—we don't know how much time we have to live. Reflect on this truth and list people close to you for whom you should pray and, if given opportunity, encourage to believe. Consider how Revelation 22:12-17 provide words of challenge and encouragement that your loved ones may need to hear.
- 5. Revelation 22:18-19 warns us of the danger of diminishing or adding to God's Word. What are ways we might do so?

Watch Video

- 1. What did you learn from the video that especially challenged or encouraged you?
- 2. Close with final thoughts and a prayer for God's help to continue learning and growing.
- 3. Prayer: Thank God for our study of the final book of the Bible, asking for grace to apply what we have learned.