

1. Book of Revelation scare to some, but more hymns and art come from the book than any other.
2. Explain how we are going to study this: a) look at how to interpret scripture b) look at revelation in that backdrop c) look at the history of the book d) view the various ways it has been interpreted and keep with this throughout.
3. Look at 3 questions:
 - a. **World Behind the Text-** 1) why this would be important (*explain how a letter written to a Jew in Germany today would be interpreted diff. then in WW2.*) b) Look at the diff thing we look at w/ this: politics, geography, economics, history or region and people, customs and values of the day, etc.
 - b. **World of the Text-** 1) This looks at the text itself: what kind of literature is it (impacts expectations! Horror vs. Comedy); looks at the text in context of passage, looks at the narrative characters and plot, etc.
 - c. **World in Front of text-** 1) Looks at what we bring to the text. No one reads scripture from same point of view (makes bible so great is that we read same text and say powerful things to diff. people)
4. **World Behind the Text for Revelation:**
 - a. **Rome is an Empire.** All of the Med. World, Europe and Northern Africa, and Middle East was part of the Roman Empire. They would conquer, then always remind of Roman rule. They built temples, buildings, festivals, telling about the great Roman rule. You are so lucky to have Rome ruling over you. (the gods were on our side, that's why we are so successful.)
 - i. And in Asia Rome was welcomed in and not resisted, and fights were made over who would host the temple. So the Roman government was popular.
 - b. **Emperor Cult was a grassroots effort,** (3 of the 7 churches had temples to Caesar). It was also a way that brought all other religions of the conquered people into one unit (kept old, but include this one), it grew and emperor Domitian took it to a new level.
 - i. He decreed that all government proclamations start with "Our Lord and God Domitian commands"
 - ii. In crowds, he urged them to say, "All Hail to our Lord (same word used for Jesus)"
 - iii. He had folks killed for atheism, failure to worship the gods of Rome.
 - c. **Explain how everything was tied together, the economy, politics, and religion.**
 - i. The act of "emperor worship" would be considered an important formality like pledging allegiance to the flag. It was an act of solidarity with the empire and gratitude for what it had done. Also, all the trades were involved in pagan worship so to work was involved w/ Roman religion.
 - ii. If you wanted to fit it, you did all. And not to do so made you seem unpatriotic and unliked.
- d. Now also remember that the Christians were composed of mainly poor people who had no say in society. The Roman Guilds (Like Unions) all had pagan gods they were dedicated to so to work you would have to participate in pagan rituals.
- e. **So the Christians were mistrusted.** They were considered unpatriotic and irreligious, with strange practices (cannibalism, work day worship, leader criminal)
 - i. Treated as outcast. Victims of mob violence and discrimination. Heb 10:34, (compare to Jews pre-WW2)
- f. **Jews enjoyed a favor of long history.** Nero tried to blame Jews for fire before he blamed Christians but people didn't buy it. They had agreement that they would pray for Caesar not to him. By this time Christianity was more gentile than Jew and was being kicked out of synagogues. So Christians out on own!
- g. **So to some it up,** we have Christians to where the culture around them is saying Rome is nice and compassionate, the gods are on their side, you face not only enjoyment in life (roman baths, theater, etc.), but being looked down upon by others, to being persecuted even to the point of death.
 - i. No wide spread persecution yet. (handout).
 - ii. So here were their options: Quit, Lie, Fight, Change the Law, Adjust, or Die.
 - iii. So the easy thing for a Christian to do, is to deny Christ and go along with the Roman way of life.
- h. How would this play out in our world today and why would this be relevant to us today?