

Dear Revelation,

When I was younger I would sneak a peek into your chapters—you seemed like the forbidden fruit of the Bible. In part, because you're the last book, I thought you must have some special significance as the "last word." Your wild images and mysterious numbers seemed like an "adult-only" type of reading (plus, I had heard all sorts of racy rumors about you....with the numbers, codes and predictions of THE END). So, I would open you to a random page and dive into the vivid imagery.

I wonder what it was like for John (your author) to have a vision of other-worldly things, Heaven, and then face the task of putting it to words? I think it is this other- worldly nature of the vision which ignites my own imagination. The images of judgment and God's wrath are scary and sound horrible. The beasts described I would never want to meet, and I think you are the only book in the New Testament with explicit language.

Really, you are not as intimidating as everyone thinks. Chapters 2 and 3 speak a message of challenge to seven different churches. A call to forge on! To wake up! And to take heart. For each church there is a promise. If we persevere we will be able to eat from the Tree of Life, not be harmed, receive a white stone, be given the morning star and be clothed in white. These words speak to me, as words of hope, promise and mystery. I find I can relate to each of the challenges that face the seven churches. In many ways – they are us.

I do appreciate how you are organized in thematic groups of seven:

You speak of seven:

- churches (Ch 2 & 3)
- pictures of Heaven (4 & 5)
- seals (6 & 7)
- trumpets (8 - 11)
- signs of judgment (12-14)
- plagues (15-16)
- final visions (17-21)

Admittedly, I do have a few favorite parts. The Tree of Life in the City of God with leaves for the healing of the nations is an inspiring image of hope for all time. Then... the no more hurt or tears and the promise that all things will be made new is also something that gives me hope.

There is so much more I could say about why I think everyone should get to know you and spend time with you; you are a unique genre and complex for sure! But you are worth it.

Love,

Jill