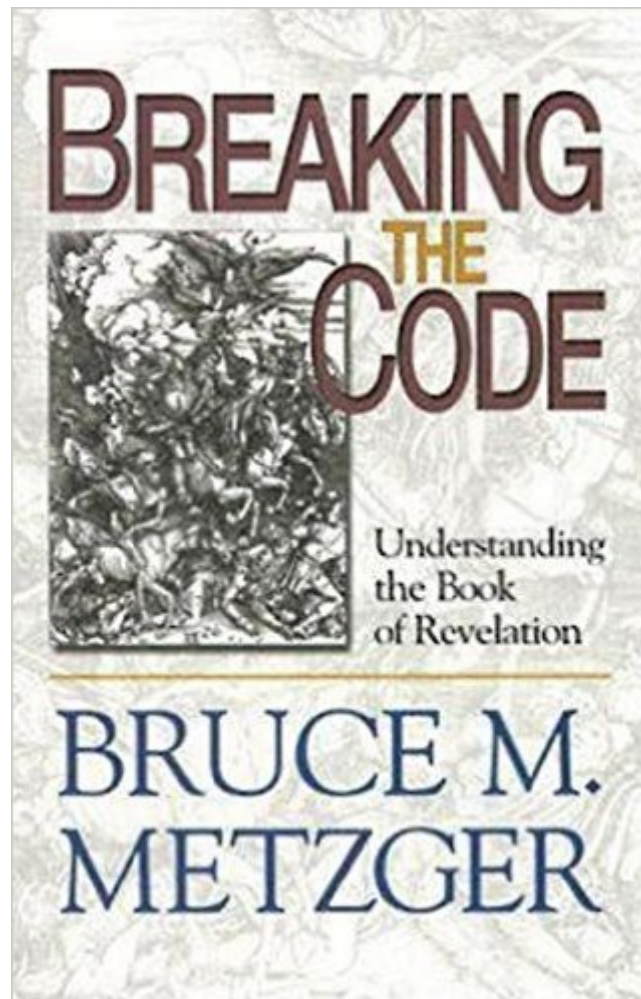


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Breaking The Code - Participant's Book: Understanding The Book Of Revelation



Synopsis

The Book of Revelation contains passages of great beauty and comfort, as well as passages that strike the casual reader as bizarre, bewildering, and sometimes frightening. How are readers today to discern God's message in this peculiar part of the Bible? Breaking the Code provides a trustworthy guide to the rich symbolism of this important biblical book. Noted biblical scholar Bruce M. Metzger presents the fruits of solid scholarship in a non-academic style. Breaking the Code serves as a key for understanding this powerful and puzzling book from the first century of the Christian Era. Topics include: Introducing the Book of Revelation/John's Vision of the Heavenly Christ (Revelation 1:1-20) Letters to Churches/More Letters to Churches (Revelation 2:1- 3:22) John's Vision of God and the Lamb (Revelation 4:1-5:14) Opening the Seven Seals of God's Scroll (Revelation 6:1-8:2) Sounding the Seven Trumpets (Revelation 8:3-11:19) The Satanic Trinity: The Dragon and the Two Beasts (Revelation 12:1-14:20) The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath (Revelation 15:1-18:24) The Final Victory and the Last Judgment/John's Vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 19:1-22:21)

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Customer Reviews

Are you intimidated by the book of Revelation? Are you confused by the many views people hold about this amazing book? Looking for a book that will help you understand what John saw and what his readers would have understood in the late first-century? If you are, then this book is for you. Metzger makes sense of this special book we call Revelation. From the beginning Metzger

claims that this book has been mistreated by two extreme views: those who concentrate all of their study on this one book and those who are fearful to even attempt to read and interpret it. Many have carelessly ignored the literary genre in which it was written... that being apocalyptic literature. This little book works much like a commentary. It is easy to read as it is primarily a guide to understanding the "Code" or symbols John uses in this type of literature. I highly recommend this book to those who are concerned with the historical-grammatical approach to studying and interpreting the Scriptures. It is a wonderful book to use in a small Bible study group. (You can also purchase a video and a leaders guide) I have used this in a small group. My class loved it! It is no secret that Metzger's book is for the common man. Meaning: those who have not spent their entire lives at school, do not have knowledge of Greek, nor have had the opportunity to study theology in an educational institution. Metzger has the common man in mind. I have had the privilege to do these things... yet I find this book to be a great little resource when doing introductory study on the book of Revelation. There are plenty of books on the market for those who want to further explore the first-century world of John to our modern day. This book is for those who want a historical approach to the book. It is plain and simple. And this is what Metzger wanted to accomplish. Get this book and learn of the great hope that Revelation presents to those who are called "the overcomers!"

The first thing one must admit in reviewing one of Metzger's work is that next to no one is qualified to review one of Metzger's works. One of the most noted biblical scholars of a century, it's unlikely that any casual reader can take aim at him. That said, the book is written for the casual reader, and in that sense is very accessible and unimimidating. There are even points at which, for the scholar or preacher, one might wish he would go into more detail concerning the first century context. The details of the eruption of Vesuvius and the threat of the Parthians are eye-opening, but Metzger gives them each only a passing notice. Nonetheless, for an introduction to the Book of Revelation from the perspective of one who is not anticipating a literal, science-fiction fulfillment of the book in the future, this is a perfect read. What is strongest about the book is that Metzger unpacks some of the most significant images of the text: the beast, the prostitute, the dragon and the lamb. He shows the first-century implications for the Roman Empire and lets us into the heart of one of Jesus' disciples, comforting a persecuted congregation. He interprets the symbols the way apocalyptic literature should be interpreted, as cosmic projections of present-day events. And all of this is done within the realm of Christian orthodoxy. In the end, it's a solid, reliable, insightful, brief book by a humble and talented scholar.

It is hard to say much on such a tiny, abbreviated book. Metzger strives to place Revelation in its historical context, and thus reads it as it would have been read in the first century, specifically in light of its many Old Testament references. He does this spectacularly for the first 30 pages of the book or so, as he explains the subtle messages to the Anatolian churches and many of the Old Testament references therein. However, the book starts to fall apart somewhat after this. It seems that at that point Professor Metzger was reminded of his page limit and popular audience, and as such it becomes extremely abbreviated and somewhat dumbed-down. A lot of the images are left unexplained, as are many of the historical references and Old Testament allusions. In sum, I was rather disappointed because I expected a lot more from a scholar as eminent as Professor Metzger. However, I'm still giving it four stars because it is a good, easily available overview of Revelation and dismisses many of the fantastical elements that various crackpots have attributed to it over the years. If there is anything to be learned from this book, it is Metzger's own explanation that Revelation "means what it means, not what it says."

Metzger looks only at what the Bible says and not, like many prophecy teachers today, what the news says. Teachers today try to make the events they see fit with what scripture says instead of just reading in the sense of when it was written. Metzger uses language that new learners and scholars can understand, thus opening the Word to all who will read and hear. People such as John Hagee and Jack Van Impe would do well to learn from this man and his Biblical writings.

This is a good study book to go along with reading Revelations in the Bible. It was used as part of my Sunday Bible Study class. It reads very well, and the author is exceptionally good at explaining this interesting part of the Bible. I recommend it to anyone who would like to better understand Revelations.

Understanding the book of Revelation is not an easy task, but this book does an adequate job of presenting the author's views and theories on Revelation in an easy to understand and non-academic way. Non-academic is probably a big key here. If you are looking for a definitive commentary on the book of Revelation, this is definitely not it. But what it does do it does fairly well. There will undoubtedly be things in this book the reader disagrees with, and I found myself disagreeing with a lot, but I sometimes find that to be a good thing and makes me think about a subject. The book is inexpensive and is worthwhile to use as a Bible Study or in a group format.

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