Revelation Bible Study © Calvin College 2016
Lesson 1: Revelation 1

3
In these lessons, “Wright” refers to the book Revelation for Everyone, authored by N. T. Wright and published by Westminster John Knox Press,
2011. All quotations used with permission.
fought in Gaul (68), Germania (69), and Judea (66-70). The tyranny and death of Nero in
68 was followed by further wars and three “emperors” in two years. Mount Vesuvius
blew in 79, wiping out Pompeii and spreading a cloud of dark ash. In the early 90’s,
there were famines throughout the empire.

So we can look around in 2016 and wonder if we are living in “the end times,” but the
Church has asked this question in every age, because there has been no extended
season of peace, health, and bounty anywhere for very long. This is what makes this
letter in some ways timeless and applicable ever since it was written.

Opening of the Letter

It's important to note that this book was written to be heard. Because of that, through this
study we will take turns reading aloud. (Please know that if you’d rather not read aloud, you’re
free to say “pass.”)

Read aloud Rev 1:1-3.

Here’s the big theme of Revelation: Jesus is Lord, and he has won, is winning, and will win.

Read aloud Revelation 1:9-20

Wright says: “For some, Jesus is just a faraway figure of first-century fantasy. For others,
including some of today’s enthusiastic Christians, Jesus is the one with whom we can establish a
personal relationship of loving intimacy. John would agree with the second of these, but he
would warn against imagining that Jesus is therefore a cozy figure, one who merely makes us
feel happy inside. To see Jesus as he is would drive us not to snuggle up to him, but to fall at his
feet as though we were dead” (7).

 Optional Discussion Questions:
1. How does the “snuggly Jesus” get promoted in 21
st
 century worship, devotional
books, and bible studies?
2. What correctives may be needed, and how could they be implemented?