

## Week 2. Spiritual Learning Journal Questions

Exploring “**intertextuality**.” In Biblical studies, those who study Scripture in schools across the world use technical terms they will all use to explain common things they see within a biblical text. **Intertextuality** is used to describe how a biblical text’s meaning is shaped by another text. For example, when we discussed the name of God as “the one who was, who is, and who is to come” many commentators refer to Exodus 3:14 where God first identifies Himself to Moses by the name “I AM.” It is a literary device that creates interrelationships between different biblical texts and can generate understanding in separate works based on those shared meanings. “**Intratextuality**” is used to describe how a biblical text’s meaning is developed within the same Biblical text. From beginning to end, Revelation is a carefully crafted message with later parts continually building on earlier parts. For example, the descriptions of Jesus in the messages to the 7 churches in Rev. 2-3 build on the vision of Jesus in Revelation. And the remainder of Revelation constantly builds on, fleshes out, and drives home each of the messages to the churches in Rev. 2-3. Recognizing these regular inner-connections between things will help you discover the message of Rev. 4-22 which would have spoken loud and clear to the original audience.

**Let’s look at the following two examples and choose either one or both (A or B, depending on your time and interest) to explore:**

**A. What does “blessed” mean in the following contexts, and what are the reasons for being considered blessed?**

The Greek term **Makarios** (blessed) refers to “being especially favored, blessed, fortunate, happy, and privileged.” *For John, the blessing is pronounced on humans privileged to receive divine favor in a variety of situations recorded in Revelation.*

1. **Read through the following verses in your favorite Bible:**

**Rev. 14:13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!" (NLT)

-In this verse, the Blessing comes from submitting to the Lord, dying to what they want and accepting Jesus and the way He laid out for us. But the biggest thing here I see is that if we do, it will lead us to a life full of beautiful fruit, and without strife because our good deeds follow us (meaning we lived according to His ways and not ours, and it paid off!)

**16:15** "Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed." (NLT)

-This has a similar vibe as 1 Peter 1:13, encouraging us to be ready, not distracted, focused on Him. The blessing here is rescue from falling into a position of “naked and ashamed”, in other words being caught in an embarrassing and compromising position because we failed to obey therefore we missed out on living a blessed life (or in this case, maybe a blessed afterlife)

**19:9** And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God." (NLT)

-Receiving salvation in Jesus makes us His "bride", and entering covenant relationship with Him is certainly a blessing!

**20:6** Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them, the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

-Ooh, I like the "blessed AND holy" part! If we receive salvation in Jesus, we are blessed and made holy because we "share in the first resurrection", which to me means we are grafted in and share in His power over death because He brings us there if we accept Him

**22:7** "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book." (NLT)

-Seems to me the blessing here comes from obedience, and it looks like safety and proximity to God, when all of the wild scenes spoken of in the book play out in reality

**22:14** "Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life." (NLT)

-I read this one in the Amplified, and it showed that washing our robes means cleansing ourselves in the blood of Christ so that we may have the right to partake from the tree of life. Again, a lot of the "blessings" described in this whole assignment seem to be completely free blessings through Jesus if we just obey and follow Him and His Father!

2. **Using the chapter and sectional headings, consider the context. What is going on in the verses or paragraph sections just before this blessing and what is going on in the verses or paragraph sections following the blessing? How does considering the surrounding context give you insight into what being blessed means?**

I have always felt the need to look at the few verses before and after a scripture whenever being given a reference in a sermon or in an assignment. I like to have my bearings as to where we are reading so that I can extract more responsible sense of meaning and application out of the verse being referenced. But chapter and section headings like the ones identified in this assignment, such as "The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mt Zion", "Six Bowls of Wrath", "The Fourfold Hallelujah", "Satan Bound", and "The Perfect Life", give it even broader context and understanding while we examine not just a single scripture reference in a sermon, but and in depth class on a huge section of an entire book.

B. Several times throughout Revelation John describes God as the "one who is and who was and who is to come" (1:4).

1. Read through the following verses in your favorite Bible translation.

**Rev. 1:4** John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him **who is and who was and who is to come**, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, (NRS)

**1:8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, **who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty. (NRS)

**4:8** And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, **who was and is and is to come.**" (NRS)

**11:17** singing, "We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, **who are and who were**, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. (NRS). *Note that this verse and the next has only 2 of the elements of being.*

**Revelation 16:5** And I heard the angel of the waters say, "You are just, O Holy One, **who are and were**, for you have judged these things; (NRS)

2. Using the chapter and sectional headings, consider the context. What is going on in the verses or paragraph sections just before this title is used and what is going on in the verses or paragraph sections following the mention of God in this way? How does considering the surrounding context give you insight into (a) why God is described in this way and (b) why John varies the name from 3 elements to 2 elements of being?

**C. Summary statement:** What did you learn about the importance of recognizing inner connections within a biblical text is for understanding a particular book of the Bible? Explain briefly.