

Murder Mystery **God's best-selling "Whodunnit"**

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.
Revelation 11:7

There are all types of books, for all types of readers. Some readers prefer non-fiction. Others prefer adventure stories or love stories. Some prefer a gripping murder mystery, while others prefer a picture book. The multi-faceted Book of Revelation is all of these.

John's Revelation is a true, adventurous mystery about God's love rejected. It tells of a loving Christ, who pursues the affection of His bride (i.e. His people), only to be repeatedly rebuffed and insulted. The bride who promised to be faithful to him ignores his voice, belittles his love notes, and slays the troubadours sent in His name. In the Book of Revelation, that message is conveyed with compelling, memorable imagery.

The Book of Revelation was clearly written to engage, intrigue, and beckon each of us, regardless of our reading preferences. It is a compelling murder mystery, a true picture book, an adventurous love story, and a call to God's altar.

We don't have to go far to see that a murder mystery is at the heart of Revelation. Early in the book (Chapter 6), a cry from the victims tells us that the slaughter of God's servants is under way, and that more murders are yet to come.

A few chapters later (Chapter 11), in a mysterious city, the bodies of two prophets are discovered on Main Street. A forensic investigator makes careful measurements of the temple, of the altar, and of those near the crime scene. It's as if heavenly detectives are seeking clues to identify the responsible parties, and to unravel the mystery. Affidavits are issued. A court date is set. And of course, everyone piously claims innocence.⁷¹

The Book of Revelation clarifies that the end-time judgments in Revelation pivot around the murder of God's servants. Right away, we know that the butler is innocent, because he is among the slain servants.

I like the appeal generated here by recognizing the diversity in Revelations

⁷¹ See Matthew 23:29-30

The key characters, events, and props have fascinating code names, like “the Great Whore”, “Armageddon”, and “the Mark of the Beast.” Even their identities are wrapped in an inviting puzzle.

At first glance, we don’t know who the two latter-day victims are. Initially, they’re simply John Doe’s. The identity of the guilty parties is also concealed. Who are the suspects? What was the motive? We don’t even know when the murders took place (at least, not at first). To keep the mystery engaging, the Author of Revelation embeds enticing clues throughout His book. It is a fascinating treasure hunt.

The mystery includes an extended courtroom scene, with an imposing Judge, surprise witnesses, and shocking last-minute evidence. It has great visual and audio effects, thunder, earthquakes, a massive asteroid, hordes of locusts, stampeding, fire-breathing horsemen - you name it. Its message is more intriguing than anything Hollywood could ever dream up.

But what’s really puzzling about the Book of Revelation is that while most Christians view this Book as God’s last recorded message to mankind,⁷² they still can’t agree about the plot or the main characters, even after centuries of research and discussion. That disparity alone is a fascinating riddle worth exploring. But for now, let’s plunge into God’s best-selling mystery. May those who study this message be galvanized to hold fast to the truth, and to continually press forward.

*THIS PASSAGE IS USED IN THE OBJECTIONS SECTION
THIS IS OK AS LONG AS THE OBJECTIONS ARE MOVED
TO THE BACK OF THE BOOK – OTHERWISE REPLACE
ONE OF THE TWO INSTANCES*

And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, ...and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them--

Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith...

Helaman 15:7-8

⁷² The LDS Church clearly teaches that God still has more to say to His children. We find this message confirmed in the New Testament, especially in the Book of Revelation.