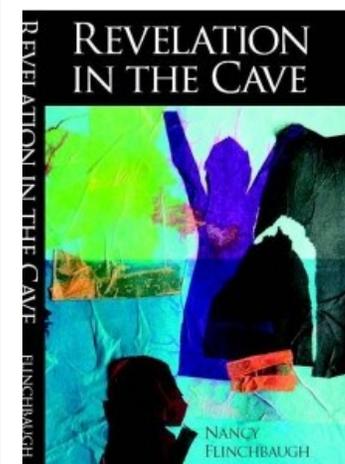




Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: *Revelation in the Cave*

Author: Nancy Flinchbaugh

Published by Spiritual Seedlings, 2012

Author Website: www.spiritualseedlings.com

Available on: Amazon, Kindle

Discussed at the MAMs Book Club Springfield in March, 2013

Questions for Discussion

1. What did you enjoy about this book?

2. Which of the characters in *Revelation in the Cave* do you most identify with and why? Which of the characters did you like or not like and why:

Thecla

Thecilla

Emily

Ursula

The MAMs: Abigail, Jane, Katharine, Molly, Priscilla and/or Sallie

Moses Sun

Dan Parks

Balaban

Others

2. What was the message of this book for you?

3. Following are some themes of the book. Which one was most important to you and what did you draw from this aspect of the book?

The book of Revelation as a challenge to the Rapture Theory

Nonviolence and Reconciliation.

Contemplative Spirituality in Christianity and other religions

Thecla, Priscilla and Women in the Early Church

Transformations and Change

4. Did the book raise any issues that you'd like to explore more?

5. Read over the MAMs and Flinchbaugh's comments on the book to learn more about the authors and the characters

6.. Flinchbaugh plans to write additional books of adventures of the MAMs. Where would you like them to go and what would you like them to explore in future books?

There is a more extensive Revelation in the Cave Study Guide on the Spiritual Seedlings Website. You might also want to download this PDF for background information and to explore themes in the book in more depth. at: <http://www.spiritualseedlings.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Final-Revelation-in-the-Cave-Study-Guide.pdf>.

Nancy and the MAMs discuss the book...



NANCY: What can I say? I wrote my first book and published it! Voila! I'll never disparage an author again! What a journey. I believe it's important for each person to find a voice and proceed on a path of growth and personal transformation. That's what my book is about, and that's what happened for me as I wrote it. The book morphed quite a few times and so did I. Expressing voice was my motivation and continues to nudge me on this path of leading my emerging effort – "Spiritual Seedlings," a little business I created in the process.

The life of a Creative is a meandering road, full of serendipities and challenges, opportunities and miracles. The experiences and joys of this project have surpassed my wildest imagination. I sat down each morning, determined to co-create with God a book that would be a voice for peace; a message that Jesus preached love and nonviolence – choosing to suffer if necessary rather than kill. I hoped to lift this message of the Book of Revelation up and out to my readers. Overtime I began to say I was trying to write a cross between the *Ya Ya Sisterhood* and the *Da Vinci Code* to challenge the *Left Behind interpretation of scripture*. The audacity of that statement continues to humor me. Did I accomplish this? You tell me!

In the process, I learned a lot about writing – and also learned there is much I don't know. I encountered other writers in writing group and at Antioch Writer's Workshop. I traveled to Greece and Turkey, twice. I researched and learned much about life in the early church and the Roman Empire. I developed the discipline to press on, day in and day out until a final draft emerged.

The Reader's Guide expresses some of the themes in the book – nonviolence, women and spirituality, the Rapture Theory exposed, transformation, reconciliation. I've heard a first book is autobiographical. Well, perhaps a lot of "me" comes out in the pages -- fun and spirituality, hopefulness and redemption, laughter and adventure, mediation and the unexpected. Some people get it, some people don't. Some say the message is buried too deeply; others say that it's too obvious. But I have received enough affirmations to be encouraged – and enough critique to help me know I have room for growth.

I hope you enjoy the story and that it pulls at your heartstrings in some way. Perhaps Revelation in the Cave will open your mind to the role of women in the early church; perhaps call you to work at reconciliation and/or forgiveness with someone who has made a huge mistake, perhaps to reach out in love to someone who is different, perhaps to work harder at living your own dream and adventure, perhaps to consider and listen to Spirit's nudges in your own life. If a seed has been planted that suggests the importance of suffering love, a refusal to resort to violence then I will be most pleased.

Since writing, the marketing journey calls me outward. I've been to Iowa and Michigan, to Sertoma Club in New Carlisle, to libraries and book groups, staged events and done readings. Early on, I decided that I wanted it to be a fun journey. So I've been having a good time, and laughing my way through this. I'm willing to come and speak, or sit down and discuss with your group, too. Just email me and let me know and we can work out something (nancyflinchbaugh@sbcglobal.net).

One of my readers said what she enjoyed most about the book was the group of women – the MAMs; how they didn't let their differences divide them, but enjoyed each other. She wanted to be a part of a group like that. And so, I decided to start a MAMs Book Club Springfield which began meeting in my home in March. A new community of wonderful women have entered my life, because of my writing project. And, since the MAMs will live on in future books, I decided to create their own book club on the Web. I hope to create a place other book clubs and readers can go as they look for books to read.

So here we are – the MAMs Book Club on the web. And each month, I hope to continue to express my voice, commenting on the books we read. The MAMs will each have a voice, and I encourage you to share your voice, here, also. The wonderful world of reading unlocks personal doors into new possibilities for life. I hope each book I read changes me in some way – and I'd love to hear about the changes for you.



ABIGAIL: I loved this book! Thank you, Nancy, for creating me. Since I didn't get to go on the Archaeological Expedition in Search of Thecla, I was glad Nancy wrote it up. I love to reread it and laugh at my friends on this adventure. I especially like Katharine's transformation and choice to forgive Moses Sun. As crazy as it sounds, that's exactly what I believe God calls us to do. As a lifelong Quaker, I applaud a book that shows it's possible for a victim to forgive. I love Moses' humility and transformation, too. This book gives me hope.



PRISCILLA: Well, you probably noticed that my Christian and political beliefs are a little more conservative than some of the other MAMs. I go to a nondenominational church and we follow Jesus, which means the straight and narrow. Moses Sun and I saw eye-to-eye about most things before the trip, but I didn't expect him to go crazy on me that way. He's back on the straight and narrow now, and God has forgiven him. We both were surprised to learn that some of the teachings in our church may not be as Biblical as we thought. So we've been on a speaking circuit to discuss this with other churches. So, wow, *Revelation in the Cave*, really surprised me. I knew baby killing was wrong, but why I never considered that war might be wrong, too? I hope the church will listen to this message.



SALLIE: Yes! Yes! Yes! I never thought I'd get to be a character in a novel, much less cruise through Greece and Turkey or become an archeologist. So I loved this experience of *Revelation in the Cave*. I could have done without the shooting, but I guess that was part of the story, and some good things are coming out of this, even if Moses Sun should have been locked up. You'll never get me to say that was God's will, but I see how bad things can be transformed into good. The best part for me was getting out of the luke warm orientation of retirement days and into a rather exciting new phase of my life. You'll never believe what I'm up to now! Nancy is casting me again in her next book – *Revelation at the Labyrinth!* Stay tuned.



MOLLY: Well, do you want me to comment on the Book or the experience? About the book, I think Nancy did a fairly good job capturing our trip. As a writer, I would say she's off to a good start. As a character in the journey, I would say this was a helpful journey for me personally. With my son in Iraq, I was getting really frustrated with the Christians who turn God into a war lover. The scrolls and their message, helped confirm for me the message of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesus – that we are called to love and not kill. It's always seemed rather obvious to me, and I just don't get why my country arms the world. I don't get why all these people right now are buying up all the guns and fighting to have as many as they want in their homes. Did you read that story about a child killing another child with a gun - a birthday present? What were the parents thinking? So, I hope Nancy accomplished something with this book, but at least it helped me. My son is home from Iraq now and is studying to be a preacher. Praise God!



JANE: I don't do much reading, so I can't say I have really read this book, but I did live the adventure. If you think that some of the scenes are not plausible, I can tell you it was definitely a trip! I encourage you to take opportunities to travel and experience new things, too. When I packed my spelunking tools for this cave dig, I never thought I'd be waltzing down to the water with some mystics and monks for a second baptism! I can say I've never regretted joining the MAMs Book Club and I'm ready for our next adventure. Stay tuned.



KATHERINE: Oh my, you want me to comment on *Revelation in the Cave*? Well, my shoulder still aches from time to time, but with the yoga and dance practice I've begun, I'm opening it up and keeping it flexible. I can say it has enlivened my classes quite a bit. I now include a spiritual reflection during each lecture. My students love the senior seminar on dance and spirituality and I must say, I love teaching it. A profound experience, very profound. Right now, I'm preparing to take a group of students to Ephesus and Patmos next year. I never dreamed when I joined a Closet Romance Readers Book Club that it would lead to this. Ursula and Joe are coming to visit next week and hope to join me on the trip with the students next year.