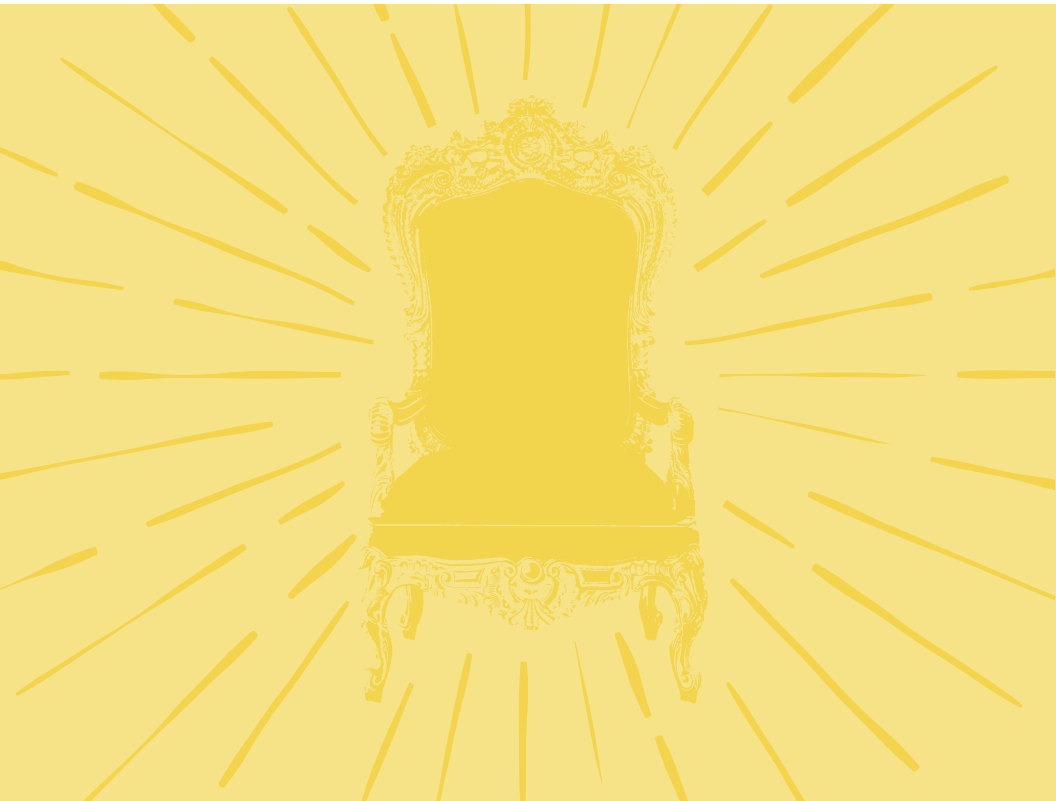




DISCOVER

REVELATION 1-3

God Speaks to the Church - Lessons 1-3





DISCOVER

REVELATION 1-3

God Speaks to the Church

We thank Carol Van Wyk for an early draft of Revelation 1-3; and a team of DYB leaders who read through the material. We thank those who continue to send in comments. Thank you to Dr. Jeff Weima of Calvin Theological Seminary for the theological review.

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How to Study

The questions in this study booklet will help you “do it yourself” and discover together what the Bible says.

Questions are the key to Bible discovery. Through questions you search for the writers’ thoughts and ideas. The questions in this study guide are designed to help you in your quest for answers. You can and should ask your own questions too. The Bible comes alive with meaning for many people as they uncover the exciting truths it contains. Our hope and prayer is that this guide will help the Bible come alive for you.

The questions in this study are designed to be used with the New International Version of the Bible, but other translations can also be used.

Step 1.

Read through each Bible passage several times. Allow the ideas to sink in. Think about the meaning of the passage.

Step 2.

Answer the questions in the “Discovering Together” section of the study guide lesson, drawing your answers from each passage. Write answers in your own words. If you use Bible study aids such as commentaries, Bible handbooks, or Internet sites, do so only after completing your own personal study. Answering the questions before the group meets enables you to remember what you have discovered and to prepare for the group conversation.

Step 3.

Fill in the “Conversation” boxes with your questions and thoughts. Include questions that you would like to discuss with the group, topics that you would like to learn more about, and ideas from the passage that have made an impact on you. For example, in the “Conversation” boxes, you might include answers to questions like these:

- What is this passage saying to me?
- How does it challenge me? Comfort me?
- Is there a promise I can claim?
- For what can I give thanks?

Step 4.

Have fun talking with others about what you have discovered!

1 Revelation 1:1-20
See and Hear

Getting Started
The apostle John had walked, ate, and drank with Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry. After Jesus left, John eagerly shared and wrote about the good news of Jesus, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). Here, Jesus reveals himself to John again - John once again sees Jesus, hears Jesus. Yet transformed. Let's look, see, and hear with John.

Discovering Together

1. Revelation 1:1-3
a. How is this book described?
How is the revelation given?

Glossary: angel, Jesus Christ, revelation

b. Whom is the blessing for? How might this book bring a blessing?

Glossary: blessed

2. Revelation 1:4-8
a. Who is the audience?

Let's talk about ...

Step 1. →

Step 2. →

Step 3. →

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Introduction

The study on Revelation is divided into two parts. This book will focus on chapters 1-3. Most of the material in these chapters are letters (or more accurately, sermons) to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Chapters 4-22 are closely related. They focus on John's visions. We will discuss the apocalyptic and prophetic nature of Revelation further in the next study book.

Revelation 1 indicates who this book is from – you'll explore this more in lesson 1. It is recorded by John, who calls himself a “servant,” and “your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus” (1:1, 9). Who is this John? It is likely John the apostle. You might read Matthew 4:21-22; 17:1-6; and John 19:26-27 for some background about this important disciple of Jesus.

The type of writing in Revelation is apocalyptic, prophetic, and a letter. What does this mean for us as we read? **Apocalyptic** means “unveiling.” It shows us two different perspectives on our lives right now: the present in light of the coming future; and the present earthly circumstances in light of what is presently going on in heaven. As you read the letters to the churches, ask yourself **how are these two perspectives inviting us to see our world differently?**

Revelation is also full of images (like other apocalyptic writing). Our mind, emotions, and imaginations are captured. You will encounter symbols and numbers that have additional significance outside their literal meaning. See the vision as a whole, rather than trying to see significance in every tiny detail. **What big picture are these images trying to convey?**

Prophetic means it is a message of warning and hope from God. The prophetic deals with the present also, and is not just about the future. Thus, the book is not arranged chronologically. There are also many references to the Old Testament prophets and other books, drawing on how God spoke to his people in the past. As you read, ask **how is God speaking to his people?**

It is also a **letter**. It is written to specific readers in the early 90s A.D. Thus, Revelation is first and foremost addressed to the specific situation of John's original readers in Asia Minor in the early 90s. It is not just a word about a future that they could not understand, but it is a message

they needed to hear in their present circumstances. Yet, as Jesus speaks to them, he speaks to us too, like other books of the Bible. In addition, you will find mention of things these readers would have recognized from their cities. As you read this, ask yourself, **how would they have understood this message?**

Yet, what God spoke to his people then is also a message to us today. The same themes resonate with us today: a warning against complacency and blindly following the world; a call to faithfulness; encouragement to persevere and patiently endure in suffering; God's control over his people and history; Christ's victory and return; and his people's victory in Christ. You may want to come back and explore how you see these themes in what we study. **Let us hear what the Spirit says to the churches. What will God say to you?**

How does this compare or contrast with what you have heard previously about Revelation?

What are your hopes as you approach this study? What would you like to learn?

What are your hesitations about studying Revelation?

Historical Snapshot

The Old Testament shares how God was working in the world. It pointed to a coming Savior: Jesus. The gospels recount Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The book of Acts recounts Jesus' ascension, and tells of his continuing work in the early church. The letters in the rest of the New Testament encourage and build up the young churches. Revelation comes after these books – it is both the last book in the Bible, and also the last book chronologically.

When was Revelation written? Scholars look at the development of emperor worship, the level of persecution, and the background of the churches. It likely was written during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68) or Domitian (A.D. 81-96). Evidence leans more toward the reign of Domitian, with a writing date of around A.D. 95.

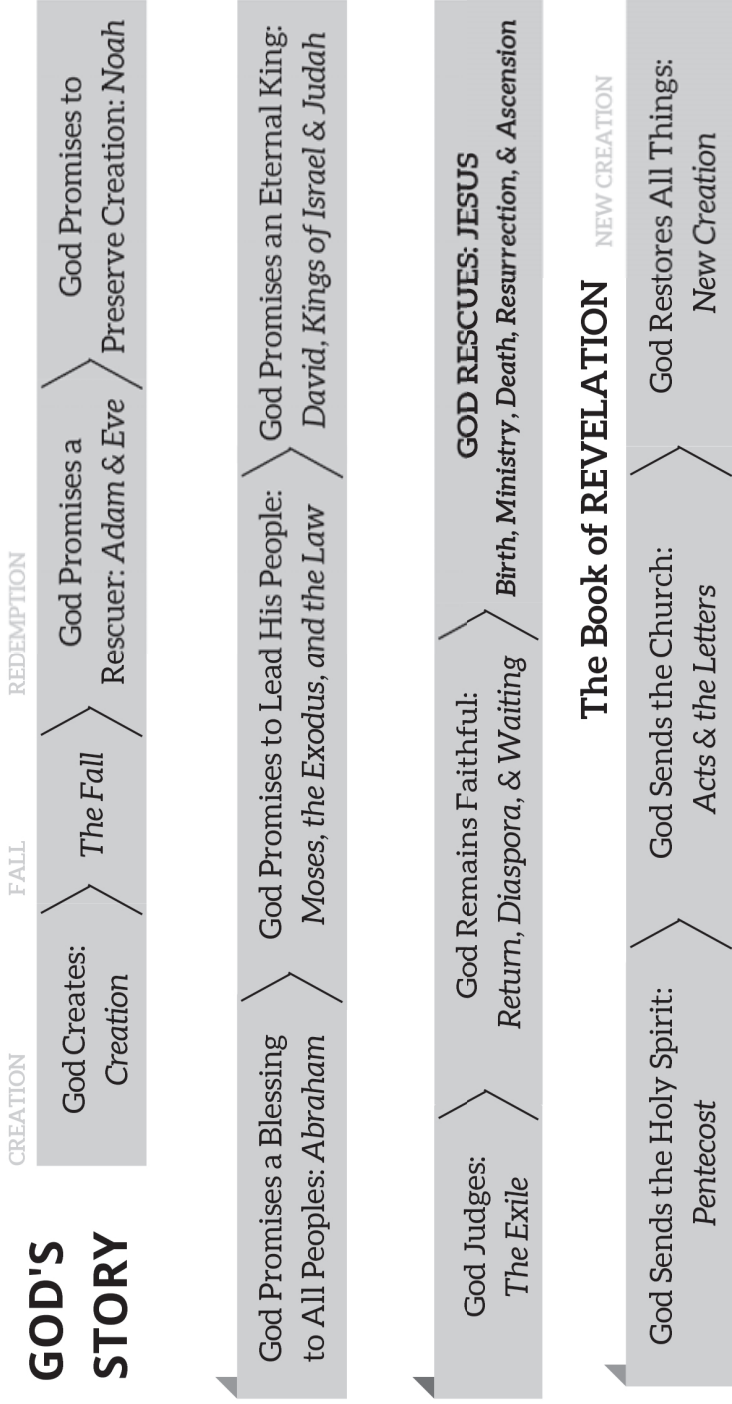
The original recipients of Revelation lived in the Roman Empire, a world rich with Greek and Roman influence. It was a time of religious pluralism: it was not necessarily punishable to worship Jesus; it was punishable by death to worship Jesus alone. All citizens must honor the numerous Roman and local gods, and the emperor. Jews might charge Christ-followers with treason before the Roman authorities since Christians refused to participate in the Imperial cult and demonstrate their loyalty to Rome. Roman authorities might accuse the Christians of being atheists, since they refused to worship the various Greek, Roman and Egyptian gods. Emperor worship was growing, with demands to declare Caesar as lord and a divine son of god after the emperor's death. It included worship to the Roman state, often personified by a female figure, Roma. Christians faced economic and social pressure, often unable to earn a living, unable to participate in the core social events, and excluded from civic life because of their faith. The author, John, also suffered. Perhaps John wrote from Patmos (Revelation 1:9) because he was exiled due to his faith. Churches were usually small, meeting in houses. Kicked out of the Jewish synagogues, they had no formal place to meet and little standing. As you read, see how often mention of suffering comes up.

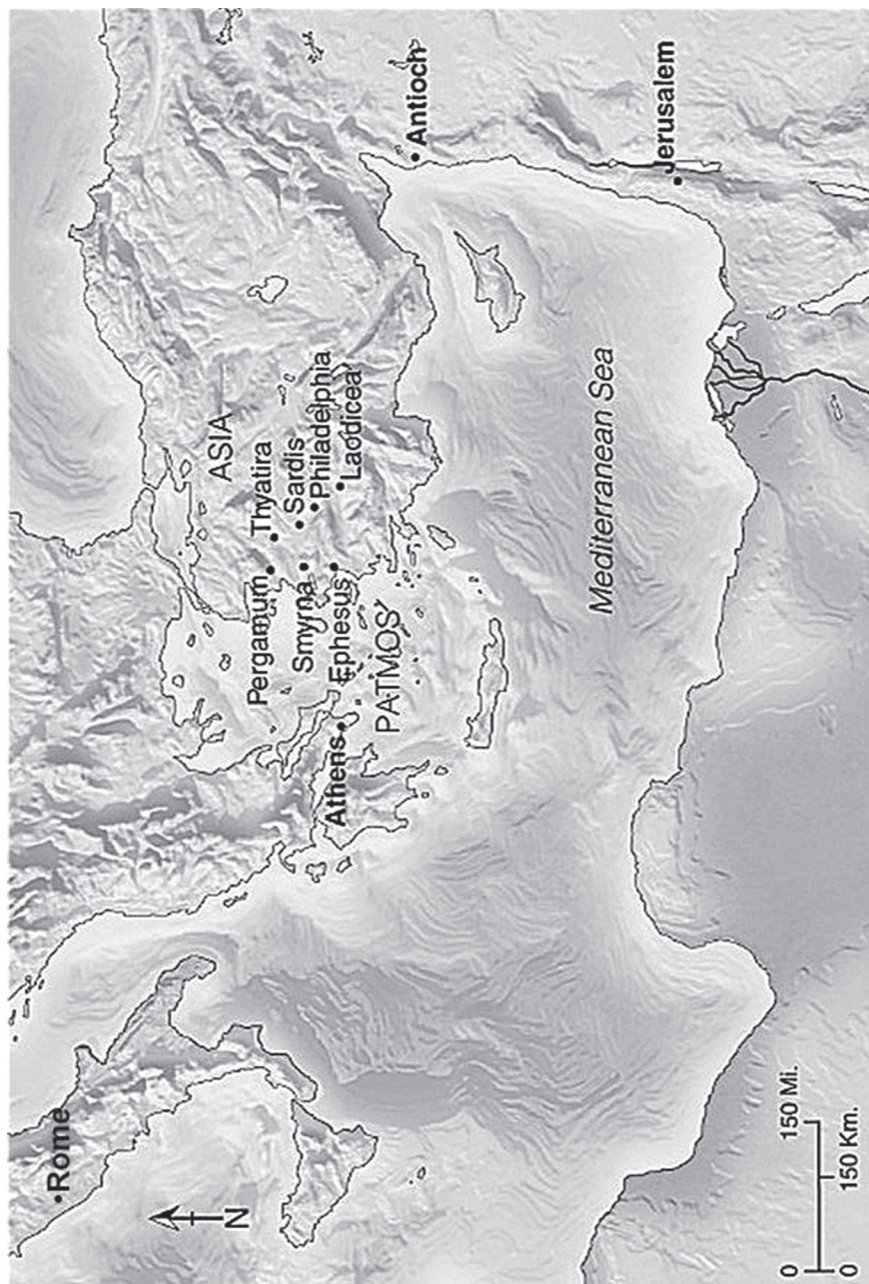
Because of the pressures, many Christians were tempted to compromise, or be complacent about their faith. The power of Rome offered many promises. Everything they saw and heard – from the surrounding buildings, marketplace offerings, and to the conversations

at work – touted the power of Rome and honor to the gods. As you read, you may also ask yourself how this counters the promises that earthly powers hold out. There is more to our world than meets the eye. Revelation asks us: What will we see? Whom will we hear?

What might you share in common with a Christian during this time period? What might be different?

GOD'S STORY





Glossary of Terms

Alpha and Omega: Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter.

Amen: A Hebrew word meaning “true” or “so be it.” It is usually used in praise or prayer, although Isaiah 65:16 uses it as a title for God, literally “the God of the amen.”

Angel: A messenger of God who carries out his will in this world and serves those who belong to God (Daniel 6:22; Luke 1:19; Hebrews 1:14).

Balaam: In the Old Testament, Balak, the king of Moab, hires Balaam to curse the people of Israel. Balaam is unable to curse God’s people because God has blessed them (Numbers 22-24). Balaam offers a different way to come against God’s people, see Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16. Balaam’s name in Hebrew means “one who consumes or rules over the people” (Weima, 108-109). See 2 Peter 2:1, 15 and Jude 4, 11 for how the New Testament speaks of Balaam.

Blessed: Enjoying the favor of God. There are seven statements of blessing in Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

Book of life: The book of life is a biblical concept (Exodus 32:32-33; Luke 10:20; etc.). Those who are unworthy to enter heaven at the final judgment will have their names blotted out. It also likely has a Roman context. Citizens are recorded in a public registry. Their names might be blotted out if they committed a crime. Sardis, as a capital of the former Persian and Seleucid empires, would have had many of these books.

Children: A word used to describe followers (John 8:44).

Clothes: The Bible uses white clothing as a metaphor for moral purity (Daniel 7:9; Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 7:9). Similarly, in Roman thought, a white toga might signify virtue, honesty, and religious purity.

Crown: In Revelation 2:10 and 3:11, “crown” refers not to a royal diadem of precious jewels but a wreath of laurel leaves given to the victor in athletic competitions. It represents the eternal blessedness given to genuine servants of God and Christ. See also 2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4.

Firstborn: Can refer to either first in birth order, or first in rank.

In Colossians 1:15-17, Jesus’ title as firstborn refers to his rank over and above creation. He is the author of creation.

Grace: God’s kindness, undeserved favor, and forgiving love.

Heart: In biblical thought, the heart refers to the very center of a person. Desires, will, intellect, and feelings are centered in the heart.

Holy: An important concept throughout both testaments. The key idea is separate, set apart, distinct. In reference to God, this word means “pure, faultless, perfect.”

Holy Spirit: The third person of the Trinity. The other two persons are God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ). They are three persons in one being. For more on the Spirit’s work, see Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; Psalm 139:7; Isaiah 32:15; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:1-2, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Peter 1:21.

Jesus Christ: The sinless Son of God, who gave his life as a payment for human sin. *Jesus* means “Savior,” and *Christ* means “Anointed One.” Jesus is true God, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit (the three persons of the Trinity) (Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:30-33; John 1:1, 14; 5:18; 8:58).

Jews: The people from Israel. By the time that Revelation is written, Jews live all over the Roman Empire. They have special permission to not worship the Roman emperor or other gods. While Jesus is a Jew and Christianity honors its Jewish roots, those following Judaism reject Jesus as a Savior or as divine.

Jezebel: In the Old Testament, Jezebel is the wife of wicked King Ahab. She introduces the people of Israel to worship of a foreign god, Baal. Baal worship involves both sexual activity and idolatry (1 Kings 16:30-32; 1 Kings 21:25; 2 Kings 9:22).

Key of David: The “key of David” comes from Isaiah 22. In the ancient kingdom of Israel, a descendant of the famous King David, King Hezekiah, is ruling. God takes away from proud Shebna the authority of directing the king’s palace and household. God promises this position to Eliakim. This is represented by the key of David. Ancient keys are very large – thus in Isaiah 22:22, the key is placed on his shoulder. There is also usually only one key; the owner has sole authority.

Lampstand: A stand on which lamps were set. God instructs the Israelites to make a lampstand to place in the ancient Jewish tabernacle and temple (Exodus 25:31-40). It is a common symbol for God’s people. See Zechariah 4:2, 10 for further Old Testament background. Revelation 1:20 defines these in the vision.

Name: “Name” represents the character, all that a person (or God), is.

Nicolaitans: This group is mentioned in Revelation 2:6, 15. It is probably the same group spoken of in 2:14, 20-23 as well. This group likely encourages compromise in idolatry by eating food sacrificed to idols, and in sexual immorality. The Greek name Nicolaus means “one who conquers the people” (Weima, 109).

New Jerusalem: Represents the final kingdom of God and the renewal of the heavens and earth in purity and peace. It is the final dwelling place of God’s people (Revelation 21:1-22:5).

Patmos: A small island off the western shore of Asia Minor. John is likely exiled there for his testimony (Revelation 1:9).

Peace: Drawing from the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, peace is wholeness. It is not just the absence of conflict, but a full relational well-being with God, others, creation, and self.

Pillar: Used to support temples in the Greek and Roman world. It is a common metaphor to represent the honor and importance of a person (Galatians 2:9). For a possible Old Testament allusion, see King Solomon’s construction of the Jewish temple (1 Kings 7:21).

Priest: A priest is dedicated to serve God. They represent God to the people, and the people to God.

Refining: A process in which precious metals such as gold are heated to purify them. It removes the impurities. This is often used as a metaphor for cleansing and purifying of one’s moral and spiritual life (Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 2:3-4; 1 Peter 1:7).

Repentance: In Hebrew, the word for repentance refers to both a sincere sorrow for sin and turning back to a committed relationship with God. In Greek, it signifies a change in one’s heart and mind. Revelation uses both concepts. See 2 Corinthians 7:10; Acts 26:20.

Revelation: The English title and the Greek title *Apocalypsis* both mean “unveiling” or “revealing.”

Right hand: The right hand indicates power and control.

Satan: This name means “adversary” or “accuser” (see Zechariah 3:1). Satan is an evil spiritual being described in many ways throughout the Bible. Satan tempted humanity to sin and wants to destroy God’s kingdom (John 8:44; 12:31; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:2; 6:10-12, 16; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:7-12).

Servant: The Greek word translated as servant, *doulos*, means slave. Many apostles use it for themselves as it conveys the giving up of one’s own will and attitude of humility before God, the King

(2 Corinthians 4:5). Christ identifies himself as a slave (Luke 22:27; Philippians 2:7).

Seven: A number that often represents fullness or perfection. In apocalyptic writings like Revelation it does not always refer to the literal number seven.

Sin: Understood as “missing the mark” in thought and action. It misses the mark in how God designed humans to act and be in relation to him (Romans 3:23; 6:23; 4:6-8; Colossians 1:13-14).

Son of Man: Jesus often referred to himself as “the Son of Man” (for one example, Matthew 16:13-16). The title comes from Daniel 7:13-14, indicating the coming figure who would save, and is closely connected with God.

Spit: In the Greek, the word for “spit” has the meaning of “vomit” (Revelation 3:16).

Sword: Roman authorities carried swords as a symbol of power (Romans 13:4). There are two Greek words for “sword”: *machaira*, which is a short sword carried by Roman soldiers (Revelation 6:4; 13:10, 14). Secondly, there is the *rhomphaia*, a longer, more powerful symbol that became especially representative of Roman power (Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21).

Synagogue: A Jewish place of worship. Many Christian churches originally began in synagogues (John 9:22; 12:42; Acts 14:1).

Ten: A number that represents completeness.

Test: To check the quality or reliability of someone and his or her character; to show forth or prove one’s character.

Trial: The expectation of a worldwide trial right before God’s final victory and reign is a common belief to the Jews and Christians, and a known concept to the churches (Daniel 12:1-3; Mark 13:7-20).

Victorious: Victory or victorious is a key theme in Revelation; it is repeated throughout the book. Likely, the chief image is one of military victory, as the Greek word comes from the same Greek root as the name for Nike, the Greek goddess of victory (1 John 5:4-5).

Wake up: Has the idea of being alert, or in constant readiness (Matthew 24:42-43; Luke 12:37-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6; Revelation 16:15).

White: White in the Bible is often associated with purity and holiness (Isaiah 1:18; Daniel 7:9).

In My Own Words

Which church is being addressed?	What title would you give this church?	What do you learn about Jesus ?
Revelation 2:1-7		
Revelation 2:8-11		
Revelation 2:12-17		
Revelation 2:18-29		
Revelation 3:1-6		
Revelation 3:7-13		
Revelation 3:14-22		

What is Jesus' praise for this church?	What problem does Jesus point to?	What counsel does Jesus have for the church?	What promise does Jesus offer to this church?

1 Revelation 1:1-20

See and Hear

Getting Started

The apostle John had walked, ate, and drank with Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry. After Jesus left, John eagerly shared and wrote about the good news of Jesus, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). Here, Jesus reveals himself to John again – John once again sees Jesus, hears Jesus. Yet transformed. Let's look, see, and hear with John.

Discovering Together

1. Revelation 1:1-3

- a. How is this book described?
How is the revelation given?

Let's talk about ...

Glossary: angel, Jesus Christ, revelation

- b. Whom is the blessing for? How might this book bring a blessing?

Glossary: blessed

2. Revelation 1:4-8

- a. Who is the audience?

- b. Who gives the greeting?
Why might they be described this way?

For conversation...

Glossary: firstborn, grace, Holy Spirit, seven,
peace

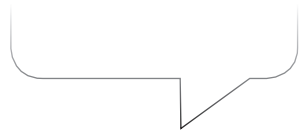
- c. To whom is the statement of praise?
What has he done?

- d. How are his people described?

Glossary: amen, priest, sin

- e. Who is coming and what will be
the response?

Glossary: Alpha and Omega



3. Revelation 1:9-16

- a. Who commands John to write?

I wonder about...

Glossary: Patmos

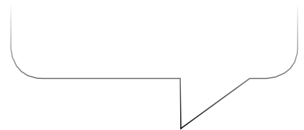
- b. How is the one speaking described?
Visualize what John saw and heard.

Glossary: right hand, Son of Man

4. Revelation 1:17-20

- a. What is John's response?
Why might he respond in this way?

- b. How does the one like the son of man respond, and why might he choose these titles?



d. This is my take away or next step as a result of this study:

More to Discover

John 7:15-16; Hebrews 1:1-2 (question 1a)

Exodus 3:14-15; Isaiah 41:4; 44:6 (2b)

Exodus 19:4-6; John 17:1-5, 20-26; 1 Peter 1:9 (2d)

Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 24:30 (2e)

2 Peter 1:21; Ephesians 5:18-19 (3a)

Exodus 28:4; 39:29; Ezekiel 43:2; Daniel 7:9; 10:5-6; Isaiah 11:4; 49:2;
60:19-20; Matthew 17:2; Hebrews 4:14 (3b)

Joshua 5:14; Daniel 10:8-11; Matthew 4:21-22; John 13:23-25 (4a)

Matthew 5:14; Ephesians 5:8 (4c)

2 Revelation 2:1-7

Ephesus

Getting Started

We begin our trip to Ephesus (near modern Selçuk, in Turkey). It is a port-city on the Aegean Sea; its harbor brought great wealth. However, it also brought problems: the city has had to relocate three times due to the silting of the harbor. We are amazed at its size – with 200,000 citizens, it is either the third or fourth largest city in this time period.

Ephesus is one of the most prominent cities politically and for the worship of the Roman emperor. As we enter the city, temples to the emperor loom large with their white pillars. For truly, the citizens tell us, his power is great, extending even to the planets and stars. We note this as we stop and buy something to eat: a common image on Roman coins was the emperor's image on one side, and the seven stars or planets on the other side. Even the coins subtly proclaimed that Roman control extended beyond the earth to the heavens. A local artisan we talk to is proud to proclaim that the Greek goddess Artemis is Ephesus' patron deity. He tells us about the history of her worship, including a local garden or "paradise," and a tree-shrine dedicated to her. As we stand in its shadows, we understand why the grand Temple of Artemis in Ephesus will become one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

We are welcomed into the church, which is also very prominent among the early churches. We know how Paul invested himself so heavily in this church (Acts 19). Other prominent church leaders also nurtured this church, such as Timothy, Paul's disciple (1 Timothy 1:3). We have heard church tradition say that the apostle John pastored there, and brought Mary the mother of Jesus, whom he was caring for (John 19:26-27). That was in the past, but we are eager to sit with our brothers and sisters and worship together.

What do you note? Underline what stands out to you from the above paragraphs.

Discovering Together

1. Acts 18:19-21, 24-26; 19:8-10, 18-31

a. What do you learn about the early church? What helps them grow? What challenges are there?

b. In Acts 20:17, 28-31, what advice does Paul give the church leaders of Ephesus?

For discussion...

2. Revelation 2:1

Who is speaking? How is he described, and why?

Glossary: lampstand

3. Revelation 2:2-3, 6

How does Jesus commend the church? What do we learn about Jesus?

Glossary: Nicolaitans

3 Revelation 2:8-11

Smyrna

Getting Started

Smyrna is located just a little north of Ephesus, as we head there next on our journey (in modern day Izmir in Turkey). It had been destroyed previously in its history around 600 B.C., but it was rebuilt in 290 B.C. When we arrive, it is a thriving city. As we enter, we are welcomed to the “First of Asia.” When we inquire, we are told it often refers to itself by that title (in competition with Ephesus and Pergamum). A woman in the market makes sure we see its circular cluster of beautiful buildings on Mount Pagos, the city’s acropolis. She calls it the “wreath” of the city. Like many other Greek cities, they also host their own athletic games.

The atmosphere is thick with Roman loyalty, and we wonder how our Christian friends are faring. We pass a synagogue as we walk through the city, and learn there is a large population of Jews. The Jews are exempt from emperor worship – yet it is a status fragilely maintained. Christians are still often perceived as a subset of Judaism by Roman neighbors, yet they are increasingly coming under persecution. The Jews thus view the Christians as endangering their protected status and are all too ready to act against the Christians. We have heard many reports of Jews turning Christians in to the authorities, and excluding them from the synagogues.

As we sit down with the church in Smyrna, they share some of their concerns. In Roman culture, artisans are expected to be a member of a trade guild. However, belonging requires participation in its idolatry and feasts to its patron god. However, not belonging to a guild means no job or no living. Another Christ follower chimes in: “Everyone in your community knows that you are a Jesus-follower and therefore haven’t offered any sacrifice to Demeter, the female god of agriculture. Since your produce has not been blessed by Demeter, potential customers are worried that your food may rot before its due date or will not taste good, and so they choose to buy produce from a non-Christian farmer instead” (Weima, 84). The faithful believers here are suffering socially and economically.

What catches your interest about Smyrna?

Discovering Together

1. Hebrews 10:32-37

What are the Christians experiencing?

I wonder about...

2. Revelation 2:8

What are the two titles Jesus uses to identify himself to the church in Smyrna?

3. Revelation 2:9

a. What is the first thing Jesus knows about the church in Smyrna, and how does he counter that?

b. How do the Jews act toward the Christians? How does Jesus describe the Jews?

Glossary: Jews, Satan, synagogue

4. Revelation 2:10

a. What attitude are the Christians to have?
Why?

For discussion...

b. What does Jesus warn will happen?

Study Note: The Roman prison system does not keep prisoners incarcerated for long. Prisoners are either released or executed.

Glossary: ten, test

c. How does Jesus expect the Christians of Smyrna to respond to their suffering?
How will he reward them?

Study Note: The church in Smyrna is faithful, even unto death. One notable example is the Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp. Years after Revelation is given, around 160 A.D., Polycarp is arrested. The proconsul gives him a chance to renounce his faith, yet he says, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?” He is burned to death for his faith.

Glossary: crown

5. Revelation 2:11

- a. Who is the “one who is victorious”?
How might one be victorious?

My thoughts about ...

Glossary: victorious

- b. What does Jesus promise to the one who is victorious?

Discovering Our Stories

- a. How do the titles that Jesus uses for himself encourage you this week? How do they relate to what you are facing?

- b. How can you use what you have learned this week to encourage you when you are afflicted?

- c. Use Psalm 16 as a closing prayer. How might those in Smyrna have clung to this psalm as well?

d. This is my take away or next step as a result of this study:

More to Discover

Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 17-18 (question 2)

2 Corinthians 6:10; 8:9 (3a)

Ephesians 6:10-12; Revelation 12:9-10 (3b)

Isaiah 41:10; John 14:16-18, 26-27; Romans 8:31-39; 1 Peter 1:6-7;
4:12-16 (4a)

Job 1-2; Jeremiah 32:17; Daniel 1:3-16; James 1:3, 12; 1 John 1:5; 4:8 (4b)

Luke 9:23 (4c)

Zechariah 4:6; Ephesians 6:10-12; 1 John 5:4-5 (5a)

Revelation 20:14-15; 21:1-22:5 (5b)

An Invitation

Listen now to what God is saying to you.

You may be aware of things in your life that keep you from coming near to God. You may have thought of God as someone who is unsympathetic, angry, and punishing. You may feel as if you don't know how to pray or how to come near to God.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5). Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross to save us from our sins. It doesn't matter where you come from, what you've done in the past, or what your heritage is. God has been watching over you and caring for you, drawing you closer. “You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13).

Do you want to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord? It's as simple as A-B-C:

- **Admit** that you have sinned and that you need God's forgiveness.
- **Believe** that God loves you and that Jesus has already paid the price for your sins.
- **Commit** your life to God in prayer, asking the Lord to forgive your sins, nurture you as his child, and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Commitment

Here is a prayer of commitment recognizing Jesus Christ as Savior. If you long to be in a loving relationship with Jesus, pray this prayer. If you have already committed your life to Jesus, use this prayer for renewal and praise.

Dear God, I come to you simply and honestly to confess that I have sinned, that sin is a part of who I am. And yet I know that you listen to sinners who are truthful before you. So I come with empty hands and heart, asking for forgiveness.

I confess that only through faith in Jesus Christ can I come to you. I confess my need for a Savior, and I thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay the price for my sins. Father, I ask that you forgive my sins and count me as righteous for Jesus' sake. Remove the guilt that accompanies my sin, and bring me into your presence.

Holy Spirit of God, help me to pray, and teach me to live by your Word. Faithful God, help me to serve you faithfully. Make me more like Jesus each day, and help me to share with others the good news of your great salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Evaluation

discover Revelation 1-3

Please complete this evaluation. Your input is important. Send the evaluation to Attention: Discover Your Bible, 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. Or email your evaluation answers to info@discoveryourbible.org. Thank you.

1. Was this a home group ___ or a church-based ___ program?
2. Was the study used for
___ a community evangelism group?
___ a community faith-nurture group?
___ a church Bible study group?
3. How would you rate the materials?
Study Guide: excellent very good good fair poor
Leader Guide: excellent very good good fair poor
4. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the study?
5. What would you suggest to improve the material?
6. In general, what was the experience of your group?
7. Other comments

Your name (optional) _____

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