

TO: Whoever has ears,
let them hear...

Letters to the CHURCH

FROM (the):
Book of Revelation

STUDY GUIDE

Week 1

WEEK 1 - INTRO. TO REVELATION

The churches in Revelation weren't navigating abstract spiritual tests, they were in real cities with real political, cultural, and spiritual forces pressing on them. So are we. If Revelation is a letter from Jesus to His Church, then what would He say to the Church in our city today? What pressures are shaping us? Where are we standing firm, and where are we being slowly seduced into compromise?

This study unpacks the Revelation, a vision from God that was given to encourage and strengthen the 7 churches in the 1st century AD. While it was written to a specific people in a particular time in history, its encouragement, and challenge its truth is as true for us today. The point of the book of Revelation is to stir faith and faithfulness, no fear - you can know if you are reading it with the correct lens by the fruit in your life.

Monday

Read: Revelation 1:1-3 & 9-16, John 15:19-20

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. These beginning verses introduce John, who is writing about a vision from Jesus. Though it is debated about who specifically the author is, there are two prevailing ideas. The traditional school of thought is that the writer is John the Apostle, likely the last surviving disciple of Jesus who was persecuted and exiled. The scholarly think it's John the Elder. Either way, John is a man who knows what he's talking about. His identification as a 'partner in suffering' is important because Revelation was likely written in 95 AD during Domitian's reign, a time of great persecution for the church. We may think that Revelation is no longer relevant to us because the times are so different, but the truth is, walking as a believer in Jesus always has and will continue to have challenges, trials and persecutions as we live in a kingdom not our own. We are not promised an easy life with Jesus, but rather a fulfilled one. In his persecution, John listens to what Jesus is telling him and actively seeks to encourage these persecuted churches, so that they, and we may be more like Him and discover a deep strength and hope in our reigning Saviour – no matter what we face.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Can you think of a time where you've avoided sharing the Gospel or speaking Godly truth, because of comfort or fear?

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity today to share God's truth without fear of 'what if'.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you that your Word is alive, active and relevant to each of us, today and always. Thank you for the people throughout history who have fought persecution to build your Church, regardless of the natural consequences. God, I pray you might give me that same courage to stand on your truth and preach it boldly. God, use me as your mouthpiece to see your kingdom come here in my city as it is in Heaven.



This week in your Discipleship Group discuss how you can be more intentional about listening to God and bringing His word to people and places where it might be difficult - being in the world but not of it.

Tuesday

Read: Revelation 1:12-20

The book of Revelation is 'apocalyptic' literature, which was a very popular style of writing in the 1st century. The apocalyptic style of writing was often used in times of persecution and crisis to give hope, and it doesn't mean apocalypse in the way we understand but it's translated literally as 'Revelation'. It contains visions and imagery, conflict between good and evil, and speaks God's word to us even now. The imagery in this passage is used to identify Jesus, the 'Son of Man' as standing in the middle of 'lampstands'. These lampstands are tall and emit light, representing the seven churches that Jesus is at the centre of and speaking to.

The 'seven stars in His right hand' represent the messengers, human ministers, and leaders of the seven churches symbolic of the character and individual identity of each church. With all this vivid imagery, we learn from this passage that Jesus is the centre and the source and reigns in power over not only the Church, but over its leaders and all authority and we cannot think of our destiny or the church as separate from Him.

What do these scriptures reveal about Jesus?

**Is there anything in your life that you have believed is more powerful or has more influence than Jesus?
How does this passage of scripture change your view?**

Prayer: Lord, thank you that there is more insight in your Word than we could ever hope to fully comprehend. Please help us to always seek to find you in your Word, that we might know you more intimately, not just more about you intellectually. Holy Spirit, search my heart and reveal any idols that I have been putting above you, or looking to for guidance, so that I can lay them down and look to you instead. Amen

Wednesday

Read: Revelation 18:1-8

One of the key themes in Revelation is the fall of man-made structures such as the city of Babylon. A lot of the churches John is writing to, such as the church in Ephesus were in cities where industry and money reigned supreme. Through the revealed word, Jesus is trying to teach us that anything built by man will eventually fall, because God is mightier - 'She will be completely consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her is mighty'. The world we live today shares many traits with Babylon. Western society in particular, is capitalist and individualistic, to the point where many people are isolated, lacking community and support. The world says that this is how life is supposed to be - that independence is more important than community, wealth is more important than generosity, immorality is more attractive than following God's word. But Jesus shows us that these man-made systems are not sustainable, or profitable for our souls. They will eventually fall, and those who rejected God in favour of these systems will fall too.

What do these scriptures reveal about Jesus?

Are there any areas in your life where you've been listening to or following what the world says over what God says?

How can you start today in untethering yourself from man-made systems and beliefs around wealth, maintaining status, or popularity and tie your heart afresh to the Word of God?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that your Word teaches us how to live. Thank you for the church you have placed me in and that this community and the wisdom it offers is part of your plan for my transformation. Please help me to follow your way over the world's way, and reveal to me any areas where I am following man-made advice rather than your guidance. Amen.

Thursday

Read: Revelation 22, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 6:20, Revelation 21:4

In Revelation 22, John talks a lot about the future - specifically, what Jesus says about the future. John says that Jesus is coming soon, bringing His reward to repay 'all people according to their deeds'. Now, 'soon' is a relative term, but Revelation promises that this time is coming. Those who 'wash their robes', or repent for their sins, will be allowed into 'the city', or Heaven. Those who are immoral, who worship false gods, who sin without repentance, will be 'outside the city'. In the book of Revelation, John reminds us that all earthly things are flawed. Our lives on Earth are not our end goal and we should live everyday with the Heavenly Kingdom to come in mind.

What do these scriptures reveal about Jesus?

Ask Holy Spirit – Am I living my life with eternity in mind? How can I today live with a greater sense of hope and expectation of the reality of a kingdom to come?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you that this fallen world is temporary and we as those who know you live with great hope and expectation of one day spending eternity with you. Until that day, help us to live for you while here on earth, showing people your light so that they too might know this hope through relationship with you. Highlight to me the people in my world that I shine your light on and grace and empower me to use my gifts to build your kingdom. Amen.

Friday

Read: Revelation 4

Revelation chapter 4 is John's description of his vision of Heaven, where God, 'the one sitting on the throne', is surrounded by thrones with elders, and four living beings. The living beings represent different aspects of God's kingdom - the human face represents man, while the other animals can represent different creatures in God's creation. Together, they represent God's creation in its entirety, showing that He has dominion over all the earth, and that all bow down to Him. The 'torches with burning flames' in front of God's throne can represent the seven churches John writes to in Revelation, and by extension all the different churches here on earth.

In verse 9 and 10, the same descriptor is given to God twice in a row - 'the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever)'. We humans have short memories, and we often need constant reminding that God is greater than anything we come up against; He and He alone reigns above our circumstances, our experiences, even our thoughts. Sometimes we need reminding that God reigns over all, and that when we meet Him face-to-face in heaven we will join the choir in Heaven, giving all honour and glory to Him and Him alone.

What do these scriptures reveal about God and His holiness?

What does this picture of God as 'the one sitting on the throne' make you think about?

How would your life look different if you lived fully in that truth? Is this truth something you live in every day? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live in the confidence of this reality.

Prayer: God, I am so grateful that you are seated on your throne and that you have authority over everything. I trust that your plan for me is greater than I could imagine, and I give you full permission to reign over my life. Please help me to live like I believe that you are in control, because you are and to trust in you when times are hard and my feelings don't line up with the truth your Word declares. Teach me to worship and give you honour in everything I do, that I might be part of the creation that sings Your praises. Amen.

Saturday

Read: Revelation 11, Genesis 1:31, Psalm 104:24, Psalm 148

While the book of Revelation can take time to understand, and John's letters to the seven churches are challenging, it is important to remember that God gave us the book for a reason - because He loves us. Let's focus on the end of the chapter we read yesterday: 'For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased'. God doesn't do anything by accident. He designed us exactly the way He wanted us. He loves us so much, and He loves us too much to leave us the way we are. He points out our flaws and inconsistencies because He wants to teach us, and He loves when we seek Him for guidance. There are countless verses in the Bible that point to God's love and care for us. As we continue to learn more about the Revelation, let's keep that important point in mind: God's desire to teach us to be better isn't a condemnation but rather a sign of His unending love for us.

What do these scriptures reveal about God's heart for us?

Are there parts of yourself that you struggle with or even dislike?

How would your inner world change if you treated yourself like God's greatest treasure, someone that He loves and wants help strengthen and grow, rather than someone that needs to be condemned or squeezed into submission?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for how you love us, and treasure me. Thank you that your love is greater than any of my weakness, and that you want nothing more than to do life with me and teach me how to walk with you and become like you. Please help me to bring my weaknesses into the light, so you can speak truth and reveal your heart for me. Amen.