

# REVELATION

INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

## WORSHIP & WITNESS

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, LEST  
YOU TAKE PART IN HER SINS..."

REVELATION 18:4



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**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, AND FROM JESUS CHRIST THE FAITHFUL WITNESS, THE FIRSTBORN OF THE DEAD, AND THE RULER OF KINGS ON EARTH. TO HIM WHO LOVES US AND HAS FREED US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS BLOOD AND MADE US A KINGDOM, PRIESTS TO HIS GOD AND FATHER, TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.**

**REVELATION 1:4B-6**



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# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

At the very heart of this study is intentional discipleship. The intentional transformation of a person into the character of Christ *...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood (womanhood), to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:13 (ESV)*

We desire for you to be maturing spiritually, having both the spiritual life and spiritual skills of a disciple. To be a mature and equipped follower of Christ. A person who is living consistently under the control of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 6:33], the direction of the Word of God [JEREMIAH 15:16], and the motivation of the love of Christ [Galatians 2:20].

Our prayer is that you will not just acquire a lot of Bible knowledge. Although understanding the Bible is a significant factor that drives spiritual growth, simple head knowledge is not sufficient in itself. There is a difference between knowing and living God's word. Therefore, our focus in this Bible Study is on applying God's truth, not merely understanding it (head knowledge).

This is not a Bible Study you simply do as a group. It requires your engagement in three components before you meet with your small group:



## READ SCRIPTURE

In preparation and continued engagement in studying the passage, take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage each day across the week. We would encourage you to use at least two different versions of the Bible (ESV – English Standard Version / NIV New International Version / CEV – Contemporary English Version).



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Bring your study book along to church family and listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message. If you miss a message you can listen online to the recorded sermon. This allows us to each be under the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit as he speaks through gifted preachers.



## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Across the week, work through the study guide questions assigned to each passage. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group. The questions aim to engage you more and more deeply in the truths of the Word. Don't rush this process, give yourself plenty of time.

The study is broken up into sections...

**EXPLORE:** What are some of the key aspects of the passage. This section will seek to get you into the passage.

**LAUNCH:** Going deeper in what God is revealing for us to know, understand and obey. From hearing and learning truth, this section will seek to grow our understanding and usability in our lives.

**APPLY:** What is the passage asking me/us to do? Truth leading to obedience and transformation.

**SUMMARY:** An important chance to review and confirm the key learning from the passage.

**ENGAGE WITH GOD:** Engaging in conversation with God. This will include praying with and for the other members of your small group as we seek God's work in and through us.

Additional tools (Overview and Commentary) have been provided to support you in your study of God's Word.

# GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Being part of a small group, is about working with a small group of people for the purpose of seeing them grow spiritually and mature in their walk with Christ [Ephesians 4:12-13]. The aim is to allow each other to be mutually engaged in our lives with the intention of imparting one's life, God's Word and the gospel in such a way as to see each of us becoming more mature and equipped followers of Christ.

## VISION

We are a church "of" small groups that is seeking to...



Through the enabling of the Holy Spirit we are to be mutually growing in a Christ-like attitude...

Love (Rom; 1 Thes 4:9, 1 Jn 3:14)  
Forgiveness (Col 3:13)  
Humility (Eph 4:25, Col 3:9)  
Submission (Eph 5:21)  
Encouraging (1 Thes. 4:18)  
Peace (Rom. 12:18)  
Caring (1 Cor 12:25)  
Commitment (Jas 1:12)  
Unity (1 Cor 1:10)

With God as our example and enabler, we, as the body of Christ, are called to mutually minister to one another. Through the realities of everyday life we seek to grow into the fullness of Christ-likeness by building one another up.

Minister the love of  
**CHRIST** to one another

in **ATTITUDE**  
and **ACTION**  
through

**SMALL GROUP  
COMMUNITIES**

Small groups are an integral part of our church life. They emphasize the value we place on biblical community as essential for each member of the body. They are a vehicle for growing community, discipleship and reason.

Through the enabling of the Holy Spirit we are to be mutually growing in Christ-like actions...

Serve (Gal 5:13, 1 Thes 5:15, 1 Jn 3:16)  
Help (Eph 4:2, Phil 2:4)  
Following (Eph 5:18, Heb 12:25, 1 Jn 1:7)  
Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9)

Combat (Jas 1:13, 1 Thes 5:8, 1 Jn 3:14)  
Edification (1 Thes 5:11)  
Teaching (Col 3:16)  
Confession (James 5:16)

It requires a commitment to each other as you encourage one another, share honestly about the challenges you each face, and support one another through the hard times (and victories) as you all grow spiritually.

Join us in studying Revelation within a small group.

If you'd like to know more about available small groups, contact the church office.

[office@kingstoncommunitychurch.com](mailto:office@kingstoncommunitychurch.com)



# INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

The book of Revelation is extraordinary in every way—not least in its hard-to-classify genre. It is prophecy (1:3; 22:19) while also belonging to the genre of apocalyptic writing (1:1), it begins and ends with features that characterize the epistles of the New Testament (1:4–5; 22:21). Like other Jewish apocalypses, Revelation is filled with symbolic images from beginning to end. This allows for numerous possible interpretations of the book, and much diversity of opinion on matters such as the tribulation, the rapture, and the millennium.

Revelation begins with a vision of the resurrected and ascended Christ and his words to seven first-century churches in Asia Minor, that were facing a range of challenges. They faced persecution from without, false teaching from within, temptation to compromise with the surrounding pagan culture, and spiritual lethargy. The book then covers a vast sweep of time, from the first century all the way to the return of Christ. Central to Revelation, is its assertion that Christ has already won the victory over Satan through his death, and has therefore freed Christians from their sins by his blood (1:5). Christ's past, inaugurated (i.e., already begun) victory guarantees his future, consummated (i.e., fully completed) victory (2:26–27). Because Christ has already conquered Satan through his uniquely redemptive suffering, Christians can also “conquer” in the present by holding fast their witness in the face of enticing temptation or violent persecution, even if their faithful witness results in death.

## THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BIBLE

Through its pervasive allusions to the Old Testament, Revelation demonstrates that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment and climax of history. Believers live after Jesus' first coming, suffering as he suffered, but full of hope because of his atoning death and their assurance of his future, victorious return. The entire book strains forward to the new heaven and new earth described in chapters 21–22.

# DATE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Revelation was written by a man named John (1:1), most likely John the son of Zebedee, as suggested by early church tradition and indicated by links between Revelation and the Gospel of John (e.g., Jesus is the “Lamb” of God and the “Word” in both books). This is the John who was one of Jesus’ original 12 disciples, and probably the one identified in John’s Gospel as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 21:20). John likely wrote Revelation in the mid-90s AD, near the end of the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, while in exile on the island of Patmos.

## STRUCTURE

Revelation opens with an introduction (1:1–20) that includes a vision of the Son of Man, a figure that also appears in the Old Testament prophecy of Daniel (Dan 7:13). This figure, Jesus, then dictates to John seven letters—one for each of the seven churches (Rev 2:1–3:22; compare Mark 2:10; 8:31). The majority of Revelation (Rev 4:1–22:5) consists of a series of visions disclosing unseen realities concerning the future yet with implications for the present time. These visions unfold as three sets of seven—seals, trumpets, and bowls. Each time a seal is broken, a trumpet is sounded, or a bowl is poured out, John witnesses a new scene of apocalyptic imagery. After the seventh bowl unleashes cataclysmic destruction, John has visions depicting the fall of “Babylon,” the defeat of Satan, and the renewal of heaven and earth (17:1–22:5). In the closing scene, Jesus assures John that He is coming soon, a promise that confirms the urgency of John’s message (22:6–21).

## OUTLINE

- Prologue and vision of Christ (1:1–20)
- Messages to the seven churches (2:1–3:22)
- Vision of heaven and the seven seals (4:1–8:5)
- The seven trumpets (8:6–11:19)
- The powers of evil attack the Church (12:1–14:20)
- The seven bowls (15:1–16:21)
- The fall of Babylon (17:1–19:10)
- The final victory and the new Jerusalem (19:11–22:5)
- Epilogue (22:6–21)

# THEMES

Revelation conveys the reality of evil using images that can be disconcerting and even terrifying, but that is not the book's ultimate message. Jesus wants His Church to know that, despite opposition and persecution in the present, His purposes will prevail in the end. God reigns on the throne of the universe, and the slain Lamb, Jesus, has triumphed through His sacrificial death and resurrection (5:6, 9). No matter how much the forces of evil might appear to be victorious, their defeat is a foregone conclusion.

John's visions in Revelation deliver the same message of hope today that they gave to his original audience. Jesus has already prevailed, and He will one day come in power to fully vindicate His people and dwell with them in the renewed heaven and earth. Assured of this truth, believers can have hope. All of God's people have a part to play in the cosmic battle between light and darkness; we are not to sit on the sidelines and wait for the end of history. Jesus Himself calls us to be conquerors with Him (2:7; 17:14; 21:7).

## HOW TO READ REVELATION

We need to read Revelation less as a coded text to be interpreted, and more as a text that imposed a Christ-centered interpretation upon the everyday activities, landscapes, and stories encountered by the members of the seven congregations addressed by John in their setting.

Some people get caught up in the imagery of Revelation and become led astray by three basic fallacies—three myths, if you will—about Revelation.

### **MYTH #1: REVELATION IS ABOUT US**

This misconception may spring from a wholesome desire to find the relevance of this book for us. Or perhaps it springs out of that general self-centeredness that most of us never quite get over entirely. We often forget, in our rush to turn to Scripture to hear a word “for us,” that all of these texts originally spoke a word “for them,” that is, for communities of faith removed from us by at least nineteen centuries, and that we are the secondary beneficiaries of the pastoral guidance initially intended for them.

As a pastoral letter, Revelation addresses that which is of concern to seven specific congregations that have grown up within the Roman province of Asia Minor in the second half of the first century.



## **MYTH #2: WHAT REVELATION REVEALS IS OUR FUTURE**

As a prophetic word, Revelation announces God’s perspective on the character and challenges of those congregations, confirming loyalty to Christ and his covenant where such loyalty appears, rebuking unfaithfulness to the covenant where it appears, and calling for repentance.

The primary purpose of prophecy is not to give hard and fast statements about an unchangeable future, but to evoke faithful response. Revelation, as prophecy seeks mainly to stimulate faithful response among John’s audience, not to provide an absolute blueprint for an uncertain future.

## **MYTH #3: REVELATION IS WRITTEN IN A MYSTERIOUS CODE**

As an apocalypse (unveiling), Revelation sets before the audience the “bigger picture,” both in terms of space and time, that illumines and interprets what the Christians see happening around them. It helps them identify the “real” challenges facing them in their situation, orienting them to respond to those challenges in a manner consonant with that “bigger picture.”

We would encourage you to read the book of Revelation...

- **Prayerfully.** Jesus Christ is the source of this Book (Rev. 1:1). He alone can give you spiritual eyes and hearts to understand it. Pray to the Lord that he would interpret this book to your heart.
- **Focus on the central theme.** Read Revelation to see what it says about God ruling history and bringing it to consummation in Christ. Read for the big picture. Don't be discouraged when you do not understand some detail. Most people who get into difficulty fail right here. They want to understand the details and to predict future historical pinpricks before they have even begun to absorb the central message. They are doing things the wrong way around. Nobody can properly understand the details of a book without first understanding the main points.
- **Be God-centred.** Otherwise, you will be like someone who takes holds of a knife by the blade instead of the handle. Or you will be like someone who tries to understand a beautiful painting by looking in a magnifying glass at each blob of paint on the canvas.
- **Focus on the hope for the coming of Christ.** Watch how the whole book points forward to Christ's return.
- **Let the images "soak into you."** Get involved in the Book. Don't try to puzzle it out. Enjoy it. Sing about it. Cheer for the saints. Detest the beast. Rejoice in God's power and glory. Praise the Lamb.
- **Pay attention to Old Testament themes and images that are used in a fresh way.** The book of Revelation has many allusions to Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the breadth of the Old Testament. Becoming familiar with the Old Testament will help you deepen your appreciation of Revelation, even though the basic message of Revelation comes through to all the servants of Christ.
- **Recognize that the central part of the book is a prophetic vision given by God to John.** Prophetic visions are full of symbols. They are symbolic representations of spiritual truth, not photographic copies of events.

Reading Revelation as pastoral letter, early Christian prophecy, and apocalypse orients us toward Revelation in a very different way from those who read it as a road map for our future or as a countdown to the end. It orients us to a way of reading that binds us better with how we read the

rest of Scripture. A way of reading that helps us hear more of Revelation's call and challenge to us in our situation apart from the distracting conversation about determining if or when some "countdown" has begun.



## BEFORE YOU START

In light of what you have read so far, let's clarify your current thinking and understanding.

When you think of the book of Revelation, what comes to mind?

Do you think it refers mainly to events in the first century, events in our day, or events in the distant future?

Are you more intimidated or more intrigued by the colourful and often bizarre images throughout Revelation?

Are there areas of confusion you hope will be cleared up through this study of Revelation?

Do you think of Revelation as a book mainly to be understood, or to be obeyed, or both?

Is it intended mainly to give us information, or to change our behaviour, or both?

**BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO READS ALOUD THE  
WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY, AND BLESSED ARE  
THOSE WHO HEAR, AND WHO KEEP WHAT IS  
WRITTEN IN IT, FOR THE TIME IS NEAR.  
REVELATION 1:3**



**TO HIM WHO LOVES US AND HAS  
FREED US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS  
BLOOD AND MADE US A KINGDOM,  
PRIESTS TO HIS GOD AND FATHER,  
TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION  
FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.**

**REVELATION 1:5B-6**



# REVELATION

## 1:1-8

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE HIM TO SHOW TO HIS SERVANTS THE THINGS THAT MUST SOON TAKE PLACE.

REVELATION 1:1a



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### REVELATION 1:1-8 ESV – English Standard Version

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

**1** <sup>1</sup> The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. <sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

<sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. <sup>7</sup> Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. <sup>8</sup> “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

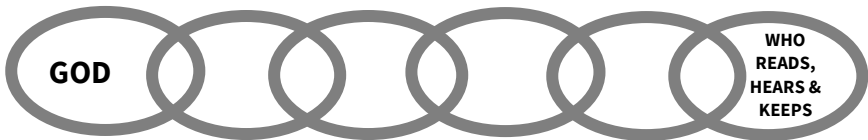
Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

The prologue of Revelation (1:1–8) sets the stage for the rest of the book. John shows that Revelation is not ultimately of human origin but comes from God. He also introduces some key terms (“who is and who was and who is to come,” “witness”) and themes (the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus) to which he will return throughout the book.

### EXPLORE

REVELATION 1:1–3 provides a six-part chain of revelation for the book of Revelation, beginning with God and ending with the one who hears and keeps what is written. Can you identify the four links of the chain in between?



Why do you think John begins the book with this chain of revelation?

What is the meaning of “revelation”?

REVELATION 1:1

What role does Jesus Christ have?

REVELATION 1:1-5

## LAUNCH

In reading REVELATION 1:4-8, what themes are introduced?

Who is the source of blessing?

REVELATION 1:4-5

How is God named and what does this reveal about His nature and character?

REVELATION 1:4; 8

Who are the seven spirits?

REVELATION 1:4

What can we praise God for?

REVELATION 1:4-8

## **APPLY**

What difference does it make to you that God is “him who is and who was and who is to come”? How should this affect the way you deal with your circumstances and the people around you?

What promises to us are implicit in this passage and how should you act in light of them?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God’s Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 1:1-8 stands out as something you are taking to heart, moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”**  
**REVELATION 1:17-18**

## COMMENTARY

**1:1–8** *In the prologue, the book of Revelation is introduced as three types of literature blended into one: an apocalypse (or revelation; Rev 1:1), a prophecy (v. 3), and a letter (vv. 4–5). Here, the author formally identifies his audience, introduces himself as John, and highlights the one who receives glory and dominion—Jesus Christ.*

*Revelation may have been composed in the late 60s AD (during the religious difficulties of the Roman emperor Nero’s reign) or in the 90s AD (during the reign of the emperor Domitian).*

**1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ** This revelation may be understood as being “of” Jesus or “from” Jesus. This phrase may mean that Jesus is the content of the revelation or that He is the revealer of the hidden realities being disclosed in this book. The title “Jesus Christ”—or “Jesus the Messiah”—occurs only in the first five verses, but nowhere else in the book.

**1:1 slaves** The Greek word *doulos* can be translated as “slave” or “servant.” However, the translation “slave” is fitting because it describes a person’s total commitment and devotion to Jesus or another such person or thing (i.e., “slaves to sin”).

**1:1 take place in a short time** The events of the book are spoken of as imminent (vv. 3; 22:10). New Testament writers often speak of end-time events as beginning in their own days (e.g., Rom 16:20; Heb 1:2; 1 Pet 4:7). God’s final victory over evil and the establishment of His kingdom will be completed in the future, but they have also been brought into the present through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**1:3 Blessed is** The first of seven beatitudes in Revelation (Rev 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14), reminiscent of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3–11).

**1:3 those who hear** Many people in the first century were illiterate and received instruction by having it read to them.

**1:3 observe** The blessing is brought about through obedience and adherence to the revelation.

**1:4 seven churches in Asia** While these seven churches were not the only ones in Asia (a western region of modern-day Turkey), they were influential and located on a well-known circular route. The number seven often denotes fullness or completion in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen 2:2; Lev 26:18; Josh 6:4). John uses the number in this way throughout Revelation—most notably in the judgment sequences (seven bowls, seven trumpets). The seven churches would have been understood as representing all the churches of Asia, and perhaps the entire worldwide Church.



**1:4 seven spirits** Possibly alludes to the sevenfold spirit of God in Isa 11:2. The number seven indicates the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s work (compare Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

**1:5 faithful witness** Refers to Jesus, who testified faithfully unto death (compare John 1:18; 18:37; 1 Tim 6:13).

**1:5 firstborn from the dead** Describes the inaugurator of resurrection life.

**1:5 ruler of the kings of the earth** Reminiscent of Dan 2:47 (see Rev 17:14; 19:16).

**1:5 by his blood** Jesus freed us from our sins through the shedding of His blood at the crucifixion (compare Isa 53:10–12).

**1:6 kingdom, priests** In Christ, God has done for the Church what He had earlier done for Israel (compare Rev 5:10; 1 Pet 2:9; Exod 19:5–6).

**1:6 Amen** The Greek word used here, meaning “let it be so,” served to strongly affirm something just stated. It expressed an indication of trust in God’s ability to bring about a desired result.

**1:7 he is coming with the clouds** John applies the imagery of the son of man from Dan 7:13–14 to Jesus. Cloud imagery also recalls the manner in which Jesus left the earth (Acts 1:9).

**1:7 every one who pierced him** An allusion to Zech 12:10.

**1:8 the Alpha and the Omega** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The expression is a merism—a figure of speech that distinguishes opposites in order to accentuate the whole. God is the beginning and the end and everything in between.

**1:8 the All-Powerful** God’s power will be demonstrated in this book.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

God is the main thought of the chapter. He is the Eternal One, “I Am” whom Moses met at the burning bush (v. 4; Ex. 3:14). He is pure, complete spirit, “seven Spirits” (v. 4). He is Jesus Christ, who was what he expects man to be, a faithful witness (v. 5). God is the A to Z, who gave all things their beginning and their purpose, and moves them toward their chosen goal (v. 8). Therefore, he is the standard by whom all people must weigh all values and determine all their actions.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

Would you be better as a king, priest, or a servant? Why?

God’s revelation is both a promise and a demand. It is a promise because it gives us a new way of looking at the world. But this revelation also approaches us as a demand. As God’s servants who receive his message, we, like John, must be “witnesses” of his message.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 1:1-8

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 1:1-8 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Do you think the first phrase of REVELATION 1:1 means “the revelation from Jesus,” “the revelation about Jesus,” or both? Why?

According to REVELATION 1:1-3, why did God give this revelation?

- What responses does He want its hearers to make?

The Jews were used to calling God “him who was, and who is, and who will be.” John changed this to “him who is, and who was, and who is to **come**” (REVELATION 1:4, emphasis added).

- What might be his point(s) in doing this? (Consider 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,12,20.)

What does it mean that Jesus is “the firstborn from the dead” (1:5)?

- How did He become the firstborn? (Cf: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4,20-28.)

How is it personally important to you that Jesus . . .

- is “the faithful witness” (REVELATION 1:5)?
- is “the firstborn from the dead” (REVELATION 1:5)?
- is “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (REVELATION 1:5)?
- “loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (REVELATION 1:5)

What does it imply about us as believers, that Jesus “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father” (1:6)?

How many comings of Jesus are mentioned in verses 5b–8? Note the two references to the cross.

- What do these verses tell us about what Jesus accomplished and will accomplish in these comings?

The book of Revelation calls for believers to be faithful witnesses in the face of persecution, that may lead even to death (Rev. 2:13).

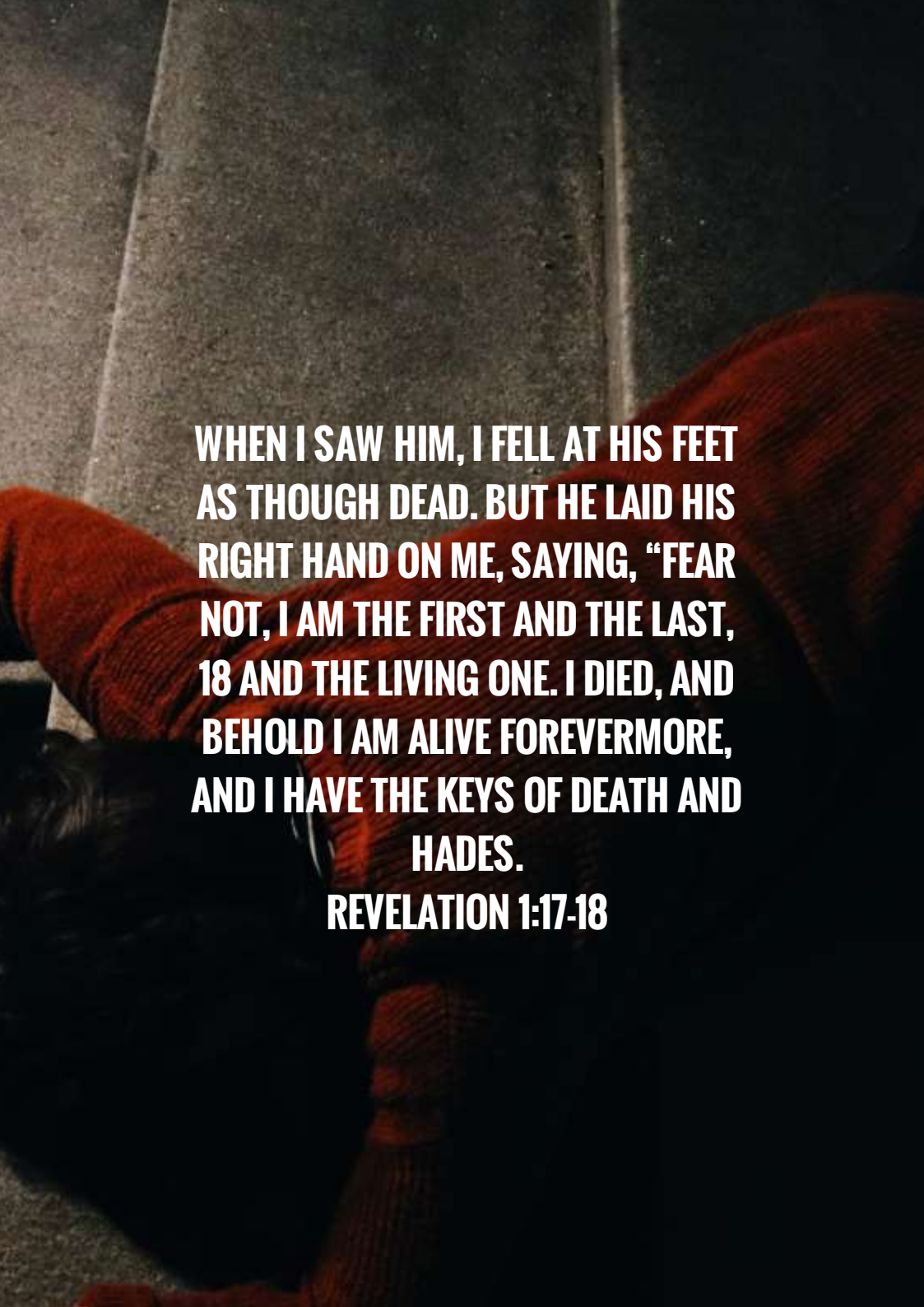
- In light of that, how would the threefold description of Jesus in the first part of verse 5 encourage these believers?
- How does it encourage you as a believer?

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



A person wearing a red sweater is lying face down on a grey concrete sidewalk. The scene is dimly lit, with the person's sweater and the ground being the primary visible elements. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**WHEN I SAW HIM, I FELL AT HIS FEET  
AS THOUGH DEAD. BUT HE LAID HIS  
RIGHT HAND ON ME, SAYING, “FEAR  
NOT, I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST,  
18 AND THE LIVING ONE. I DIED, AND  
BEHOLD I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE,  
AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND  
HADES.**

**REVELATION 1:17-18**

# REVELATION

## 1:9-20

THEN I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT WAS SPEAKING TO ME, AND ON TURNING I SAW SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS, <sup>13</sup> AND IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN, CLOTHED WITH A LONG ROBE AND WITH A GOLDEN SASH AROUND HIS CHEST.  
REVELATION 1:12-13.



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 1:9-20 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**1** <sup>9</sup> I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup> saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the

lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

<sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup> and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup> Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup> As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

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<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES







## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

The prologue of Revelation (1:1–8) sets the stage for the rest of the book. John shows that Revelation is not ultimately of human origin but comes from God. He also introduces some key terms (“who is and who was and who is to come,” “witness”) and themes (the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus) to which he will return throughout the book.

Having introduced his letter/apocalypse/prophecy (1:1–3), and having greeted the seven churches of Asia (1:4–8), John now reports his initial vision of the resurrected and exalted Christ (1:9–20).

### EXPLORE

What is John’s current situation?

What attributes of Jesus are being described in REVELATION 1:12-16

Where is Christ standing and what does this reveal?  
REVELATION 1:12-13

Is there an Old Testament link to these passages? In what way?

**Cf: DANIEL 7:9-10, 13-14; EZEKIEL. 1:26-28.**

## **LAUNCH**

How does John respond and why is it appropriate?

REVELATION 1:17

How does Jesus describe himself and why?

REVELATION 1:1-18

## **APPLY**

How is this whole vision an encouragement to you?

REVELATION 1:12-20

What promises to us are implicit in this passage and how should you act in light of them?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about the Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 1:9-20 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”**  
**REVELATION 1:17-18**

## COMMENTARY

**1:9–20** John describes here the circumstances of his receiving the revelation, drawing on imagery from the book of Daniel to describe the glorified Christ. John then receives the commission to write to the seven churches.

**1:9 your brother** A common term of endearment among first-century believers, highlighting their equality in Christ. The common barriers of status, gender, and rank were done away with in the early church, and a sense of familial obligation predominated.

**1:9 co-sharer** Persecution is a persistent theme of Revelation. John identifies with those undergoing persecution because he likewise endures hardship for the cause of Christ.

**1:9 the affliction and kingdom** The language suggests that the believers to whom John is writing are suffering persecution (or tribulation) and that the kingdom is, through the power of the Spirit’s work in their lives and the world, already present with the Church.

**1:9 Patmos** A small, rocky island in the Aegean Sea. Patmos may have been used as a Roman penal colony.

**1:9 word of God** Church tradition indicates that John was banished to Patmos to hinder the growth of the Church.

**1:10 in the Spirit** Probably describes a visionary state (compare Acts 10:10; 2 Cor 12:2–4). John’s visions are framed by his four experiences in the Spirit (Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

**1:10 the Lord’s day** Sunday, on which believers celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

**1:10 great sound** The voice of the glorified, exalted Christ.

**1:11 seven churches** See v. 4.

**1:12 I turned to see the voice** John received the command to write and looked around to see who issued it.

**1:12 seven gold lampstands** Golden lampstands stood in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and the temple (Exod 25:31–37; 1 Kgs 7:49). Zechariah also had a vision of a golden lampstand (Zech 4:2). The significance of these lampstands is explained in Rev 1:20.

**1:13 midst of the lampstands** Christ is present among His Church.

**1:13 one like a son of man** John draws on the vision of the Ancient of Days in Dan 7 and the vision of the angelic figure in Dan 10 in the following verses (see Dan 7:9; 10:5). During His ministry, Jesus used Daniel’s son of man terminology in reference to Himself (e.g., Matt 9:6; 10:23; 11:19).

**1:13 dressed in a robe reaching to the feet** Perhaps indicative of the high priestly garments in Exod 28 (compare Dan 10:5).

**1:13 with a golden belt** The figure in Dan 10:5 also had a golden belt.

**1:14 white like wool** In Dan 7:9, the Ancient of Days' clothing is white like snow and the hair of His head is compared to pure wool. John combines the two descriptions to describe the head and hair of Christ.

**1:14 his eyes were like a fiery flame** In Dan 10:6, the eyes of the angelic figure are compared to flaming torches. In Daniel 7:9, the throne of the Ancient of Days is compared to fire.

**1:15 when it has been fired in a furnace** See Dan 10:6. In Daniel 7:9, the wheels on the throne of the Ancient of Days “were burning fire.”

**1:15 like the sound of many waters** This is similar to Dan 10:6, where the angelic voice is likened to the sound of a multitude (compare Ezek 1:24; 43:2). Revelation 1:10 ascribes trumpet-like characteristics to Christ's voice. The emphasis is on the force and authority with which He speaks.

**1:16 his right hand** Represents strength and special blessing.

**1:16 sharp double-edged sword** May indicate the power of His words—the words of the Word of God (see John 1:1–5; compare Rev 2:16; 19:15, 21).

**1:16 like the sun shining in its strength** In Daniel 10:6, the face of the angelic figure is “like lightning.” This description also reflects the transfiguration in Matt 17:2.

**1:17 like a dead person** Falling to the ground from reverence and fear is a common reaction to encounters with the divine.

**1:17 Do not be afraid** A common heavenly greeting to people (e.g., Gen 15:1; Dan 10:12; Luke 1:30).

**1:18 the one who lives** Jesus conquered death through the resurrection.

**1:18 keys of death and of Hades** Keys represent authority. Christ has the authority both to confine and release from death (see John 5:25–29; compare Matt 16:19).

**1:19 write** This verse is often viewed as an outline of the book: It contains what John saw (ch. 1), what is (chs. 2–3), and what will take place later (chs. 4–22). However, since there are elements of past, present, and future mixed throughout the book, it is best to take this verse as a directive to John to write down the entire contents of his vision—both present and future (compare ch. 12).

**1:20 the angels of the seven churches** Could refer to angelic beings or human leaders.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

In a vision John saw Christ, the resurrected, glorified, eternal King. In symbols John told what kind of king he is, one totally different from any Caesar. He is holy; he cannot be deceived, for he sees, knows all; his power cannot be broken; his authority cannot be resisted; his judgment cannot be avoided; and his majesty cannot be imitated.

More important, he lives among the churches. He holds them, their leaders and their destiny in his power.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is the most bizarre dream you have ever had? How did it make you feel?

John tells us the story of his vision. A vision of Jesus in His full glory, so awesome that John fell to the ground, stunned. Jesus lifts him up, identifies Himself and tells John to write.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 1:9-20

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 1:9-20 message on Sunday?



# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

When “a loud voice like a trumpet” commands John to “write what you see”.

- What overall impression does REVELATION 1:10-18 give you of Christ?
- What is the significance of each descriptor used for Jesus?

Why do you think John “fell at his feet as though dead” when he saw this Person? REVELATION 1:17

Why does Jesus tell John to “fear not”?  
REVELATION 1:17-18

REVELATION 1:20 makes clear that “the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” So, how might John’s vision of the son of man “in the midst of the lampstands” (REVELATION 1:13) offer comfort to the seven churches of Asia Minor?

We see in this passage that Jesus is present among the churches.  
REVELATION 1:12-13; 19-20

- What does this assure us of?

Johns’ response to the vision of Christ was to “fall at his feet”.  
REVELATION 1:17

- What is your response?

# FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



**HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR  
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE  
CHURCHES.  
REVELATION 2:7**



# REVELATION

## 2:1-11

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT  
SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.  
REVELATION 2:11



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 2:1-11 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**2** <sup>1</sup>“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

<sup>2</sup> ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup> I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen;

repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup> Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

<sup>8</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

<sup>9</sup> “ ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. <sup>11</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’



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## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

For the church in Ephesus, “overcoming” or “conquering” (2:7) requires more than the vigilance of theological watchmen; it requires the internal unity of love

Jesus’ message to Smyrna highlights contrasts: The one “who is the First and the Last,” who was dead but came to life. It speaks to those who are impoverished yet rich, persecuted by those who claim to be Jews but are not. It speaks to those who will, like Jesus, find life in death. Whereas “overcoming” in Ephesus required restoration of love (2:4), in Smyrna it demanded withstanding persecution.

### EXPLORE

Who is the author of these letters?

REVELATION 2:1

REVELATION 2:8

Where does the description of Jesus come from in these two letters?

REVELATION 2:1

REVELATION 2:8

What does this description reveal about Jesus in these two letters?

REVELATION 2:1

REVELATION 2:8



What commendable things, are true of the church at Ephesus and Smyrna?

REVELATION 2:2-3, 6

REVELATION 2:9

What is the failure of the church in Ephesus?

REVELATION 2:4-5

How does Jesus desire the church at Ephesus and Smyrna to respond?

REVELATION 2:5

REVELATION 2:10

What are the consequences for the church in Ephesus, if they don't heed Jesus' warning?

REVELATION 2:5

What promises does Jesus give the church in Smyrna?

REVELATION 2:10

## LAUNCH

Notice also that each of the letters says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches [plural].” REVELATION 2:7; 11. What does this tell us about the scope of the intended audience of the letters?

How then should we read the letters in Revelation 2–3?

In REVELATION 2:9, Jesus is speaking of people who actually are Jews in an ethnic, religious sense. But in another, deeper sense, they are not Jews. What does it mean that they are a ‘synagogue of Satan’?

How does the symbolism of lampstands and stars used in the letter to the Ephesus point us to Jesus?  
REVELATION 2:1

## APPLY

How is our church like or unlike Ephesus?

What temptations and assurances that are mentioned in these letters, apply most forcefully to your life or our churches corporate life?

How is our church like or unlike Smyrna?

How do you see Jesus' promises applying to you and our church?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 2:1-11 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”**  
**REVELATION 1:17-18**

## COMMENTARY

**2:1 Ephesus** Ephesus, the largest city in Asia Minor, was situated where the Cayster River meets the Aegean Sea. Ephesus was both a major port city and the site of many temples, including a large one dedicated to goddess Artemis (see Acts 19:27).

**2:1 the seven stars in his right hand** Christ is identified as the speaker at the beginning of each of the addresses to the churches in

Rev 2–3; this reflects aspects of John’s introduction in 1:9–20.

**2:2 your labour and patient endurance** Probably describes the church’s work for the sake of the gospel.

**2:2 I know Since Christ is among the churches** (see 1:13), He knows their deeds.

**2:2 not able to tolerate evil** Initially, they were zealous for righteousness.

**2:2 you put to the test** Likely a defence mechanism to safeguard the purity and livelihood of the church (see Acts 20:29; they were a discerning group of people).

**2:3 patient endurance** The church was probably encountering opposition, which may have resulted in persecution. Their refusal to conform would have also caused social and political backlash, causing tension in commercial and familial relationships.

**2:3 because of my name** Describes their identification as followers of Jesus.

**2:4 I have this against you** Christ’s commendation now turns to condemnation.

**2:4 you have left your first love** The church was initially zealous and motivated by love, but that love diminished as time passed. This love could be directed at God or brothers and sisters in the Lord. Their love for unbelievers in the city may have also waned under the heavy hand of persecution.

**2:5 repent** Condemnation is followed by an exhortation to repentance: abandon sin and return to serving God.

**2:5 if you do not** Christ moves from exhortation to warning.

**2:5 I will remove** Failure to repent would result in the church’s removal from that place. If a church fails to fulfil its function, it will not continue to exist.

**2:6 you do have this** Christ commends the church for zealously opposing that which is unjust in favour of righteousness.

**2:6 deeds of the Nicolaitans** Little is known of this group; they are probably not connected to the Nicolaus of Acts 6:5. Given John’s disdain for the religious practices of the Roman Empire, the Nicolaitans may have compromised by allowing pagan religious practices into the church, thereby avoiding persecution and social tension (compare Rev 2:14–15).

**2:6 things which I also hate** Christ hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans and presents them as a threat to the church.

**2:7 The one who has an ear** Recalls Jesus' exhortation throughout the Gospels (e.g., Matt 13:9, 43): Hear, understand, and respond accordingly. This is reflected in the closing of each message to the seven churches (Rev 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

**2:7 To the one who conquers** The first letter concludes with a promise reflecting the ultimate promise of the book in 21:7.

**2:7 tree of life** See Gen 2:9; compare Rev 22:2; Gen 3:24.

**2:7 the paradise of God** Paradise represents the ultimate place of rest and refuge with God. The new earth and arrival of the final kingdom of God is later cast in language like that used to describe Eden (Rev 22:1–2; compare Gen 2:8, 10).

**2:8 Smyrna** Smyrna, an important exporting city known for its beauty, was located on a protected harbor of the Aegean Sea next to a major road system. It was the home of a temple to the Roman emperor Tiberius and was a center of the Roman imperial religion. Smyrna is the first of two churches (Philadelphia is the other) that receive no critique from the risen Christ.

**2:8 the first and the last** The phrases identifying Christ here reflect Rev 1:17–18.

**2:9 I know your affliction and poverty** The believers in Smyrna likely faced harsh treatment and scarcity of employment.

**2:9 slander of those who call themselves Jews** This church not only faced pressure from the pagan world but also found themselves in conflict with the synagogues.

**2:9 a synagogue of Satan** As opposed to being involved in the activities of God, they were doing the work of His adversary.

**2:10 ten days** A round number, reminiscent of Dan 1:12. Their testing might literally last for 10 days, or the number may be figurative and indefinite.

**2:10 crown of life** Refers to eternal life as a reward, not a literal crown or wreath.

**2:11 the second death** See Rev 20:14.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed that in the New Testament, God speaks to His people through personal letters more than in any other way? Perhaps this reflects His desire for intimate relationship.

Each of the seven letters was to a “real, live church.” Each letter showed detailed knowledge of the life of the city. Each letter is sent from Christ. Each letter contains a special promise. Each letter comes to a climax with the challenge for the hearer to listen. Each church is challenged to hear what the Spirit says.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

If you were rich, what would you like to do?

Each letter dictated to John identifies Jesus in a special way, reveals an intimate knowledge of the church addressed, pinpoints serious flaws, and then conveys a command intended to correct or warn. The letters closes with a promise. Each promise alludes to some element found in Revelation 21–22.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 2:1-11

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 2:1-11 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Consider the repeated refrain that ends Jesus' word to the church.

REVELATION 2:11; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22.

- Does this suggest that these prophetic words are meant only for the specific church addressed, or for others? Why /why not?

To learn more about Ephesus we can read Acts 18:18–20:38 and Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

- Compare Paul's words in Acts 20:29-31 (about AD 57) to Revelation 2:2-3 (about AD 98). What do you observe?

The rebuke Jesus has for the Ephesian church is "You have forsaken the love you had at first". REVELATION 2:4

- What do you think this means?  
Cf: Jeremiah 2:2; Matthew 22:37-38.

What do you think "I will come to you and remove your lampstand" means? REVELATION 2:5

Jesus begins each letter with a title of Himself that is relevant to the theme of the letter. Why might REVELATION 2:8 have been an especially relevant reminder for the Smyrnan Christians?

Jesus talks about life and death over and over to the Smyrnans.

REVELATION 2:8; 10; 11

- Why do you think He does this?

What does REVEALTION 2:8-11 teach about suffering?



In what ways have you lost your first love?

In what ways are you rich?

## **FINISH**

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?

**HIM WHO HAS THE SHARP TWO-EDGED  
SWORD.  
REVELATION 2:12**



# REVELATION

## 2:12-29

ONLY HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL I COME.  
REVELATION 2:25



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

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### REVELATION 2:12-29 ESV – English Standard Version

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

**2** <sup>12</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup> “ ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you

soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

<sup>17</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

<sup>19</sup> “ ‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup> But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star.

<sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'



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## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

For Christians in Pergamum, to “overcome” means to continue steadfast in the face of opposition (2:13), but especially to stand against teachings of compromise with the world, and to do their best to purge such teachings from their ranks (2:14–16).

If Ephesian Christians were tempted by rigidity and lovelessness, Smyrnan Christians by persecution, and Pergamum’s Christians by persecution and prophets of compromise. Economic pressures were inviting compromise on the part of Thyatira’s Christians.

### EXPLORE

Who is the author of these letters?

REVELATION 2:12

REVELATION 2:18

Where does the description of Jesus come from in these two letters?

REVELATION 2:12

REVELATION 2:18

What does this description reveal about Jesus in these two letters?

REVELATION 2:12

REVELATION 2:18

What commendable things are true of the church at Pergamum and Thyatira?

REVELATION 2:13

REVELATION 2:19, 24

What is the failure of the church at Pergamum and Thyatira?

REVELATION 2:14-15

REVELATION 2:20

How does Jesus desire the church at Pergamum and Thyatira to respond?

REVELATION 2:16

REVELATION 2:21;24- 25

What are the consequences for the church at Pergamum and Thyatira if they don't heed Jesus' warning?

REVELATION 2:16

REVELATION 2:21-23

What promises does Jesus give the church in at Pergamum and Thyatira?

REVELATION 2:17

REVELATION 2:26-28



## LAUNCH

What do you think is the principle difficulty or root problem at the church in Pergamum?

What do you think is the central problem at the church in Thyatira?

Who is Jezebel? REVELATION 2:20

Cf: 1 KINGS 16:31; 18:4, 13; 19:1-2; 21:1-16 and 2 KINGS 9:7-10, 22, 30-37

## APPLY

How is our church like or unlike Pergamum?

How does this letter challenge and/or comfort you?

How is our church like or unlike Thyatira?

How does this letter challenge and/or comfort you?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 2:12-29 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come.**  
REVELATION 1:24-25

## COMMENTARY

**2:12 Pergamum** Pergamum was famous for its civilization and learning. It was home to the pagan cults of Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, and Asclepius.

**2:12 who has the sharp double-edged sword** The phrase identifying Christ here reflects 1:16.

**2:13 the throne of Satan** Probably a reference to the altar to Zeus, located at the top of Pergamum's acropolis, and which hailed him as saviour.

**2:13 Antipas my faithful witness** Though

little is known about this martyr, Antipas is heralded by Christ Himself.

**2:14 teaching of Balaam** The prototypical unethical teacher whose compromise proved fatal to Israel (see Num 25:1–2; 31:16).

**2:15 the teaching of the Nicolaitans** In conjunction with Rev 2:14, this may indicate the Nicolaitans' teaching: compromise with pagan religious practices (see v. 6).

**2:16 I will make war** Although not everyone compromised, the church as a whole was guilty of indifference to those who had. Christ Himself would wage war against them, proving the deadly nature of Balaam's teaching.

**2:16 the sword from my mouth** See 1:16 and note; v. 12.

**2:17 hidden manna** Heavenly nourishment, in contrast to the food sacrificed to idols in v. 14 (compare Exod 16:32–34; John 6:31–35).

**2:17 on the stone a new name written** Possibly refers to an invitation to partake in the banquet of the Lamb (Rev 19:9). This would contrast the pagan ceremonies of v. 14; believers had greater festivities awaiting them and did not need to compromise. See v. 7.

**2:18 Thyatira** This was probably the least significant city of chs. 2–3, but its letter is the longest. Thyatira was a center of manufacturing and trade, and the city's commerce was linked to an assortment of religious practices—posing a threat to the Christians who resided there (see v. 9 and note).

**2:18 Son of God** Occurs only here in Revelation. The other phrases identifying Christ in this verse reflect 1:14–15.

**2:19 last works are greater than the first** Their love for God and one another increased, in contrast to the church in Ephesus (vv. 4–5).

**2:20 Jezebel** The name of the murderous wife of King Ahab (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:4). Like Balaam, Jezebel is one of the villains of the Bible. Her indictment is probably similar to the one against the Balaamites in Rev 2:14.

**2:10 commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols** Refers to practices of religious compromise. See v. 14 and note.

**2:23 her children** Refers to those who follow in her teaching.

**2:23 I will kill** May allude to 2 Kgs 10:1–11, where Jehu kills the descendants of Ahab, Jezebel's husband.

**2:24 the deep things of Satan** Jezebel claims secret knowledge, but her teaching comes from Satan and results in death and destruction.

**2:26 I will give him authority over the nations** Joint rulership with the Messiah was a common feature of Jewish and early Christian teaching (see Rev 20:6; 1 Cor 6:3; 2 Tim 2:11; compare Psa 2:8–9).

**2:28 the morning star** In Rev 22:16, this refers to Jesus. It is probably an allusion to Num 24:17, where it is associated with the tribe of Judah and messianic rule. The act of giving the morning star to believers refers to them sharing in the duty of ruling the kingdom with Jesus (compare Dan 7:27).

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

In his message to the church in Pergamum, Jesus speaks an amazing relevant word to us and to other disciples who seek to be faithful in a post-modern, pluralistic culture. The church in Pergamum was living in the midst of a fierce battle. A battle for the mind.

The letter addressed to Thyatira is the most difficult to interpret. What's clear though, is that Jesus is speaking to a fundamental issue every disciple faces, in every era in every city of the world. We are not to tolerate the spirit of compromise.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is one item you own and value so much you would never give it up?

We need to make sure that we are influencing the world with the kingdom's values, not embracing the world's values where they conflict with those of the kingdom.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 2:12-29

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 2:12-29 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Why do you think Jesus emphasizes to Pergamum that He “has the sharp, double-edged sword”? REVELATION 2:12

Compare REVELATION 1:16; 2:16; 19:15,21.

- What is this sword, and what does Jesus use it for?
- How is it appropriate for Pergamum?

What do you think Jesus means by calling Pergamum the place “where Satan has his throne”? REVELATION 2:13

What significance might there be that the Lord gives Antipas His own title, “faithful witness”? REVELATION 2:13

Why do you think the whole Pergamene church needs to repent, even though only some of its members follow the corrupt teachings?  
REVELATION 2:16

What do Jesus’ “eyes . . . like blazing fire” (REVEALTION 2:18) have to do with Thyatira? Consider REVELATION 2:23b.

How are His “feet . . . like burnished bronze” relevant? REVELATION 2:18

Do you ever run into moral conflicts in your business or social life, as the Christians in Thyatira did? How are we to handling such situations.

The Ephesian church was strong on resisting false doctrine and immorality but weak on love (REVELATION 2:2-4). The Thyatiran church

was strong on love but weak on resisting false doctrine and immorality (REVELATION 2:19-20). Which of these, if either, are you more like?

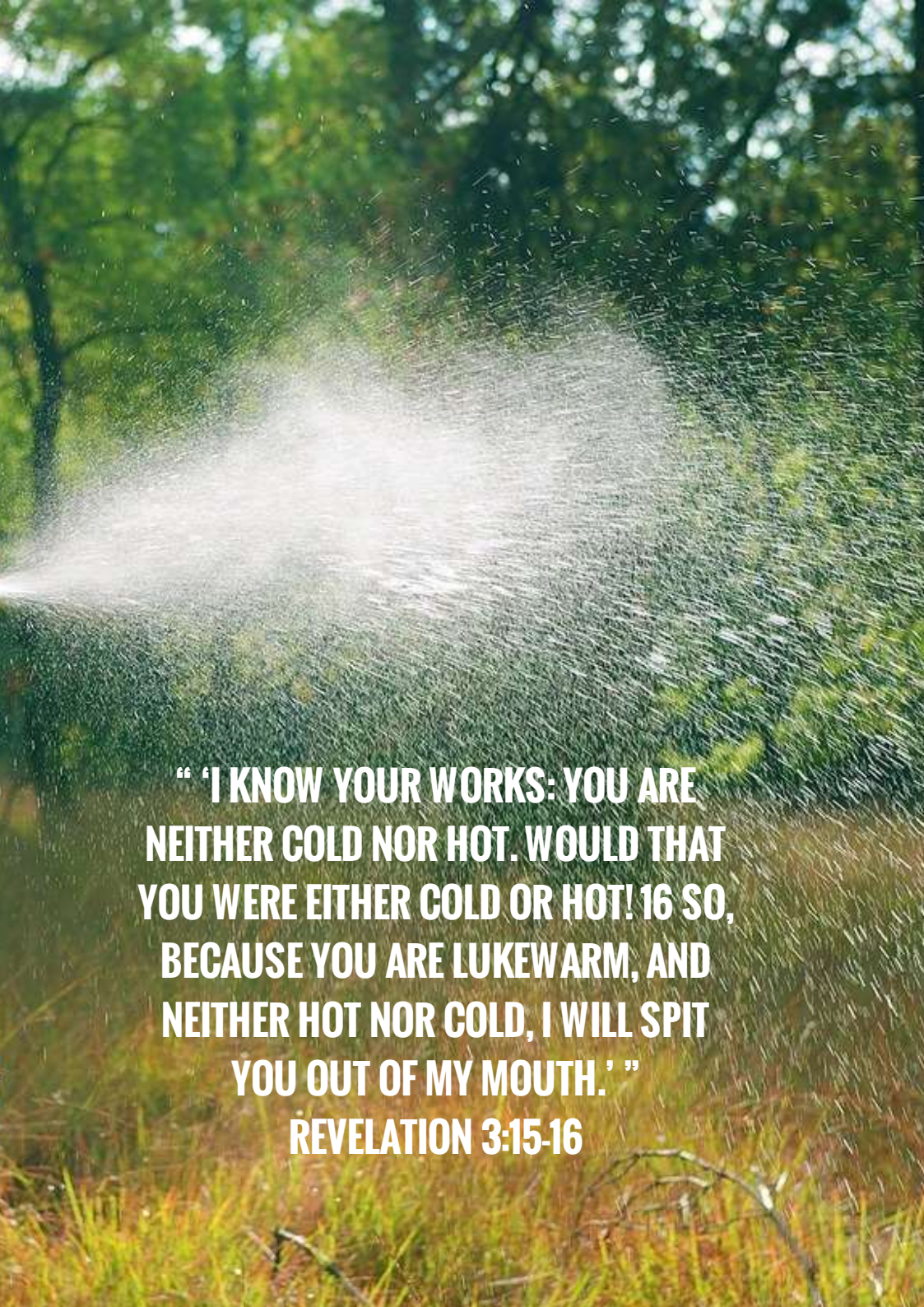
## FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?







**“ ‘I KNOW YOUR WORKS: YOU ARE  
NEITHER COLD NOR HOT. WOULD THAT  
YOU WERE EITHER COLD OR HOT! 16 SO,  
BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM, AND  
NEITHER HOT NOR COLD, I WILL SPIT  
YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH.’ ”**

**REVELATION 3:15-16**

# REVELATION

## 3:1-22

BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY WORD ABOUT PATIENT ENDURANCE, I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL THAT IS COMING ON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TRY THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.

REVELATION 3:10



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### REVELATION 3:1-22 ESV – English Standard Version

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

**3** <sup>1</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

“ ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup> Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup> Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. <sup>4</sup> Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not

soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.<sup>5</sup> The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.<sup>6</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

<sup>7</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

<sup>8</sup> “ ‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.<sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.<sup>10</sup> Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.<sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.<sup>12</sup> The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.<sup>13</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

<sup>14</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.

<sup>15</sup> “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!” <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”



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## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

Jesus' word to Sardis, summons a sleeping church to wake up. Lacking the world's opposition, they may have grown comfortable in their relationship with the world.

The Philadelphian church has only a "little strength," but has proved successful in standing in that strength (3:8). Despite Jesus' praises for the Philadelphian Christians' perseverance to this point, he reminds them that "it's not over till it's over." They must continue to hold fast to what they have (3:11), that is, to continue to keep the message that demands their perseverance (3:10), lest their persecutors seize from them their crown (3:11; cf. 2:25).

Jesus' challenge to the Laodicean Christians' self-sufficiency (3:17-18) reminds us how readily we Christians absorb the attitudes of our culture, without pausing for critical reflection on this behaviour. Jesus is inviting the Laodicean Christians to realize how they have shut him out of their lives with their own self-sufficiency.

### EXPLORE

Who is the author of these letters?

REVELATION 3:1

REVELATION 3:7

REVELATION 3:14

Where does the description of Jesus come from in these two letters?

REVELATION 3:1

REVELATION 3:7

REVELATION 3:14

What does this description reveal about Jesus in these two letters?

REVELATION 3:1

REVELATION 3:7

REVELATION 3:14

What commendable things are true of the church at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea?

REVELATION 3:1, 4

REVELATION 3:8, 10

REVELATION 3:15-17

What is the failure of the church at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea?

REVELATION 3:1

REVELATION 3:8-13

REVELATION 3:15-18

How does Jesus desire the church at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea to respond?

REVELATION 3:2-3

REVELATION 3:8-11

REVELATION 3:15-20

What are the consequences for the church at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea if they don't heed Jesus' warning?

REVELATION 3:3

REVELATION 3:11

REVELATION 3:16

What promises does Jesus give the church in at Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea?

REVELATION 3:5

REVELATION 3:12

REVELATION 3:21



## LAUNCH

What do you think is the principle difficult, or root problem at the church in...

Sardis?

Philadelphia?

Laodicea?

What are some specific ways the church in our day, is tempted to accommodate the broader culture?

## APPLY

How is our church like or unlike Sardis?

How is our church like or unlike Philadelphia?

How is our church like or unlike Laodicea?

How do these letters challenge and/or comfort you?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 3:1-22 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.**

**REVELATION 3:10**

## COMMENTARY

**3:1 Sardis** A military stronghold in antiquity, Sardis had a reputation for being impregnable, though in fact it had been conquered twice in its history.

Archaeologists have uncovered a massive temple there dedicated to Artemis.

**3:1 the one** The phrases identifying the glorified Christ here reflect Rev 1:4, 16, 20.

**3:1 you are dead** Although they appear alive, they are spiritually dead. This church receives the harshest censure among the seven.

**3:2 Be on the alert** Through a series of imperatives, Christ calls this church to repentance.

**3:2 about to die** Because the believers in Sardis were complacent and lacked spiritual vigilance, they were close to death.

**3:3 repent** See 2:5.

**3:4 who have not defiled their clothing** Christ offers encouragement to those few in Sardis who had not compromised with the surrounding culture. The use of clothing imagery may allude to Sardis' prominent garment industry.

**3:4 they will walk with me in white** This is language of purity. It also symbolizes victory: Citizens would wear white clothing in a Roman triumphal procession.

**3:5 the book of life** The record of those who will inherit eternal life (20:12; Exod 32:32–34; Dan 12:1). Eternal life is given to believers in Jesus (John 3:16–17).

**3:7 Philadelphia** Like the church in Smyrna, the Philadelphian church receives praise from the Lord. The city was known for its commercial and agricultural importance, particularly its grape crops. Its patron deity was Dionysus, god of wine. The city received permission to build a provincial temple, earning it the name Neocoros (meaning “keeper of the temple”).

**3:7 one who has the key of David** Describes the right to rule (compare Isa 22:22).

**3:7 the one who opens and no one can shut** Indicates Christ's authority to admit or exclude. In light of v. 8 and 3:12, this may refer to the new Jerusalem (ch. 21).

**3:8 I know your works** Christ's common refrain throughout these letters (see 2:2, 19; 3:1, 15).

**3:8 door that no one is able to shut** May indicate that the believers in Philadelphia had been excommunicated from the local synagogue. The “synagogue of Satan” reference in the following verse, contrasted with the believer's establishment as permanent fixtures in the temple of God in v. 12, supports this conclusion.

**3:8 little strength** The congregation was probably small and of little importance in the city, yet they remained faithful.

**3:9 synagogue of Satan** See 2:9.

**3:9 I will make them come and kneel** The church would be vindicated before nonbelieving Jews in the city (compare Isa 60:14).

**3:10 the hour of testing** Refers to the outpouring of God's wrath on the world (beginning in Rev 6:1). Believers will be spiritually protected from various demonic attacks and plagues (see 9:4; 11:1 and note), and those who persevere will obtain eternal life (see 14:12–16) and admittance to the new Jerusalem (see chs. 21–22).

**3:11 I am coming quickly** While Christ uses this phrase with some of the other churches to indicate judgment, here it refers to deliverance.

**3:12 a pillar** The temple was the dwelling place of God. Paul refers to believers, both individually and corporately, as the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17). The language here describes the believer's permanent residence in the abode and presence of God.

**3:12 I will write on him** As a means of identification and belonging (compare Isa 62:2; Ezek 48:35). The rewards for endurance and perseverance throughout Revelation all point to an abiding presence and relationship with God and Christ (see Rev 21:3–5).

**3:12 the new Jerusalem** See 21:2.

**3:14 Laodicea** Located in the Lycus River valley not far from Colossae and Hierapolis, Laodicea was known for its banking, medical, and clothing industries.

**3:14 the originator of God's creation** The Greek word used here to describe Christ can mean “ruler” or “originator.” Compare John 1:1–5; Col 1:15–18.

**3:15 you are neither cold nor hot** This imagery may allude to the water system at Laodicea. The city had no water supply of its own; it had cold water piped in from Colossae or hot water piped in from the springs at Hierapolis. When the water arrived in the city, it had become lukewarm. Like the water, the church at Laodicea was neither refreshing (like cold water) nor healing (like hot spring water).

**3:17 I am rich** Thanks to its banking industry, Laodicea was a wealthy city. Like the city, the church there had convinced itself that it was self-sufficient—but was deceived about its true spiritual state.

**3:18 gold refined by fire** Describes true wealth, as opposed to the money the Laodiceans made from commercial pursuits. This is a metaphor for removing sin (e.g., Job 23:10; Prov 27:21).

**3:18 eye salve** The Laodicean medical school was known for producing eye salve. Christ prescribes His salve as the cure for spiritual blindness.

**3:20 I stand at the door and knock** Describes a request for a renewal of fellowship (e.g., Song 5:2). In their self-sufficiency, the church in Laodicea had locked Christ out. He wants them to repent and, ultimately, take part in the coming messianic banquet (Rev 19:9).

**3:21 The one who conquers** The one who endures in faith and following Christ. See 2:7.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

In every era, God’s people must wrestle with how to relate to the culture in which they live. We can’t escape culture, nor do we need to. But we must be able to recognize the areas in which satan is working through our culture, and we must “hold fast” to Christ (2:13) rather than “holding” a policy of ongoing accommodation to satan and his work (2:14–15).

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

Who is someone in this world you would follow anywhere without question?

We see clearly in the seven letters of Revelation 2–3 the necessity of persevering in faith and obedience. Christians do not earn eternal life. It is only the blood of Jesus that frees us from our sins (1:5). But our perseverance in faith and obedience proves that our conversion was genuine and that we were actually Christians to begin with (compare 1 John 2:19).

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 3:1-22

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 3:1-22 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

How can a church appear to be alive and thriving, but be dead?

REVELATION 3:1

Does Jesus have anything good to say about Sardis, other than the church's reputation? What does that tell you?

Jesus gives Sardis no promise of glory and authority, only the assurance that overcomers will not be blotted out from the book of life, REVELATION 3:5. What does this say about the way Jesus views churches like Sardis?

What is the significance of the white clothes in REVELATION 3:4-5?

Cf: REVELATION 6:11; 7:9,13.

What is Jesus' point in using the word "name" twice in REVELATION 3:5?

How has lack of persecution related to Sardis' problem?

What does it mean to be a true Jew REVELATION 3:9?

Cf: ROMANS 2:2-29.

What is the significance of the temple pillars? REVELATION 3:12

Cf: 1 Kings 7:15-22.

What encouragements does Jesus offer in REVELATION 3:7-13 to those suffering persecution?

In context, is REVELATION 3:20 addressed to believers or unbelievers?

What is the meaning of the verse, in your own words?



Do you act as though you think you are rich or poor in your own resources? REVELATION 3:17-18

Do you need gold, white clothes and eye salve from Jesus?

What does it imply that Jesus describes Himself as “outside the door” from the Christians at Laodicea? REVELATION 3:20

If Jesus took your spiritual temperature today, what would he find?

## **FINISH**

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?

**AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG, SAYING,  
“WORTHY ARE YOU TO TAKE THE  
SCROLL AND TO OPEN ITS SEALS, FOR  
YOU WERE SLAIN, AND BY YOUR BLOOD  
YOU RANSOMED PEOPLE FOR GOD  
FROM EVERY TRIBE AND LANGUAGE  
AND PEOPLE AND NATION...**

**REVELATION 5:9**



# REVELATION

## 45

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY,  
WHO WAS AND IS AND IS TO COME!”  
REVELATION 4:8b



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 4-5 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**4** <sup>1</sup>After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” <sup>2</sup>At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. <sup>3</sup>And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. <sup>4</sup>Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their

heads. <sup>5</sup> From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, <sup>6</sup> and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup> the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. <sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!”

<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>11</sup> “Worthy are you, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed and were created.”

**5** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on

earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, <sup>4</sup> and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

<sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.



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Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

John is taken up to heaven to be given a vision of “what must take place after this” (4:1). He sees God in His throne, worshiped by 24 persons identified only as “elders” (vv. 2–6a). The “living creatures” seen around the throne are familiar from the earlier visions of Isaiah (6:2) and Ezekiel (1:5–25; 10:1–22), continuously praising God as Creator and affirming His holiness (4:6b–11). Then John sees an angel, holding a scroll representing judgment, sealed with seven seals, calling for someone worthy to break the seals and open the book (5:1–2). When no one is found, one of the elders consoles John: the Lion of the tribe of Judah will open the seals—and when John looks, he sees a bloody Lamb (vv. 3–7). When Christ as the Lamb takes the scroll, the whole company falls down in worship, affirming His worthiness “because ... with Your blood You purchased men for God” (vv. 8–10). Unnumbered thousands of angels take up the chorus, praising the Lord as the universe joins in ascribing “praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever” (vv. 11–14).

### EXPLORE

How does John come to see this vision?

REVELATION 4:1-2

What is central to this vision?

HINT: The most repeated word in REVELATION 4

How do the surrounding elements enhance our understanding of God?

REVELATION 4:3-8



What can we learn about God from the vision in REVELATION 4 as a whole?

How do the 24 elders and 4 living creatures express themselves towards God? REVELATION 4:8-11

What do the songs reveal about God? REVELATION 4:8, 11.

## **LAUNCH**

What individuals and groups are involved in REVELATION 5?

How is the Lamb described? REVELATION 5

What makes the Lamb worthy? REVELATION 5:9-10

What does REVELATION 5:9 reveal about redemption?

## **APPLY**

What is your reaction to the descriptions of worship?

How does this vision in REVELATION 4-5 challenge you in your relationship with God?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 4-5 stands out, as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

... saying with a loud voice,  
“Worthy is the Lamb who  
was slain, to receive power  
and wealth and wisdom and  
might and honor and glory  
and blessing!”  
REVELATION 5:12

## COMMENTARY

**4:1–11** Verses 1–11 introduce the throne-room vision of chs. 4 and 5. These chapters form one scene in which John is invited to behold future events (v. 1). He depends heavily on Moses, Ezekiel, and Daniel to describe the wonders he witnessed. The vision in these chapters includes the introduction of the Lamb and leads to the seal judgments in ch. 6.

**4:1 After these things** Refers to the reception of the letters to the seven churches. The phrase used here indicates that John received this vision after the previous one.

**4:1 former voice** Belonging to the glorified Christ (1:10).

**4:1 Come up here** A summons to behold the visions (compare Ezek 3:12; 11:1).

**4:1 which must take place after these things** See Rev 1:19.

**4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit** This phrase occurs again in 17:3 and 21:10; it functions as a reminder that John is experiencing a prolonged vision. See 1:10.

**4:2 a throne was set in heaven** Suggests sovereignty and power. Various aspects of the vision in this chapter reflect aspects of Ezekiel’s and Isaiah’s visions of God (Ezek 1; Isa 6).

**4:2 seated on the throne God** (see Rev 4:8, 11).

**4:3 jasper and carnelian stone** Ezekiel describes Yahweh in a similar way (Ezek 1:26–27). In Exod 24:10, Moses also describes the divine presence of Yahweh using precious stones. Like Ezekiel and Isaiah, John does not attempt to give a precise description of God. Instead, he describes the overall effect of His glorious presence.

**4:4 twenty-four elders** May symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, together representing the whole people of God. If true, this would fit with the context of Rev 2–3 of shared rulership for believers (see 2:7).

**4:5 which are the seven spirits of God** See 1:4.

**4:6 sea of glass** In Revelation, the sea likely symbolizes forces of chaos (see 13:1; 21:1). A calm sea points to God’s ability to subdue chaos and bring order.

**4:6 four living creatures** Possibly an allusion to the cherubim described in Ezek 1 and 10 (see note on Ezek 1:5), or the seraphim of Isa 6:2–3. The number four often represents the entire created order (e.g., Rev 7:1; Jer 49:36). Thus, these creatures may represent all living things worshipping God.

**4:6 full of eyes in front and in back** The multiplicity of eyes symbolically suggests unceasing vigilance or great wisdom (compare Ezek 1:18).

**4:7 living creature was similar to a lion** While John and Ezekiel both describe four living creatures in their visions, the descriptions vary. In Ezekiel 1, all four creatures are identical. In Revelation, each has only one face and resembles a different creature: A lion, an ox, a human, and a flying eagle. Ezekiel's creatures have four wings, but John's have six, like the seraphim in Isa 6:2. John's creatures are full of eyes, but the eyes in Ezekiel are on the wheels that move the creatures. In both books, the creatures seem to facilitate heavenly worship and attend to the one seated on the throne. Their mention in Revelation may suggest that John wishes his audience would be perpetually vigilant and unceasing in their worship of Yahweh.

**4:8 Holy, holy, holy** This echoes the song of the seraphim in Isa 6:2–3.

**4:10 put down** The phrase describes submission: the 24 elders, though wearing crowns, realize the ultimate source of their power—God Himself, the Great King.

**4:11 our Lord and God** Domitian (who ruled from AD 81–96), who may have been the Roman emperor during John's exile on Patmos, demanded that his subjects call him "our lord and god." John sets up a clear contrast between the true king and the one whose rule will eventually be done away with.

*5:1–14 This continues the throne-room vision initiated in Rev 4. Here, the glorified Christ is reintroduced as the slain Lamb, and He takes the seven-sealed scroll in preparation for judgment. Verse 2 asks who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals; the remainder of the chapter answers that question.*

**5:1 a scroll** The scroll contains God's plan for history, spelled out in the events that are about to come upon the world (see ch. 6).

**5:1 sealed up with seven seals** The number seven indicates completion; the contents were completely inaccessible (see 22:10; compare Isa 29:11; Dan 12:4).

**5:4 I began to weep loudly** If the scroll could not be opened, John would not be able to see the events that were to come (see Rev 4:1).

**5:5 do not weep** John is occasionally corrected or rebuked by bystanders (e.g., 19:10).

**5:5 the tribe of Judah** The royal tribe, or the tribe from which Israel's rulers would come (Gen 49:9–10).

**5:5 the root of David** An allusion to the prophecy of Isa 11:1, 10 (see Rev 22:16).

**5:5 has conquered** An allusion to Christ's death and resurrection—events viewed as decisive victories in the war against evil. Christ's conquering activities give Him the right to rule (see John 16:33).

**5:6 Lamb standing as though slaughtered** John hears about a lion, but turns to see a lamb. Lamb imagery relates to Jesus' death on the cross. The tradition of viewing His death as a sacrifice—like the sheep sacrificed in the OT—arises out of Isa 53 (see Isa 53:4–8, 10–12). The early church applied the title "Lamb of God" to

Jesus, understanding His death to substitute for their sin (e.g., John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet 1:19). The victory spoken of in Rev 5:5, then, was brought about through sacrifice. This concept would have instilled hope in those being persecuted; victory for them would likewise come through sacrifice.

**5:6 seven horns and seven eyes** Horns symbolized power and eyes symbolized wisdom. Christ is completely powerful and wise.

**5:6 the seven spirits of God** See 1:4.

**5:8 a harp** A common instrument in Israelite worship (see Psa 33:2; Rev 14:2 and note).

**5:8 golden bowls full of incense** Here and elsewhere, incense symbolizes the prayers of God's people (e.g., 8:3–5; Psa 141:2).

**5:10 a kingdom and priests** See Rev 1:6.

**5:10 they will reign on the earth** The theme of coregency continues throughout the book, culminating in 20:4 (see 2:26; 20:4).

**5:11 their number** Rather than taking this as a precise number, this was probably John's way of saying they were innumerable (compare Dan 7:10).

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

Christians embroiled in persecution, temptation and complacency need the kind of direct encouragement and rebuke Jesus gives in REVELATION 2:1–3:22. Still, when you are up to your armpits in persecution and temptation, it's easy to forget that the heavenly perspective on this world is different from yours. In REVELATION 4 & 5, God begins to give us such a heavenly view on earthly events. They are given to us to affect the way we deal with our circumstances today.

These chapters show the vital difference between symbols and pictures. The details of these scenes are symbolic, coded ways of stating glorious truths which are the anchor of all Christian hopes. They are visions for the heart and mind, not for the eye. Efforts to paint these scenes on canvas could only veil the truth and change God's glory to hideous nonsense

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

Are you more a lion or a lamb?

REVELATION 4 & 5 are essentially an introduction to the action in chapters 6 through 20. We need to let God transport us to His throne room.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 4-5

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 4-5 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Thrones, especially God's throne, are mentioned forty-five times in Revelation.

- Why do you think they appear so often?
- What do they have to do with the book's message?

What does the association between God and thunderstorms suggest to you about God? REVELATION 4:5

Cf: EXODUS 19:16-19.

Compare the four creatures in REVELATION 4:6-8 to the angels in ISAIAH 6:1-3 and EZEKIEL 1:4-28.

What attitudes do you think are expressed by falling down before God? REVELATION 4:10

- What is expressed by laying one's crown before Him?

What impressions does REVELATION 4:1-11 give you of God the Father?

From REVELATION 4:1-5:14, what seems to be the number-one occupation in heaven?

For what reasons is the Father worthy of worship?

- Which of His deeds and attributes are praised in 4:8-11?

What is the Lamb praised and worshipped for? REVELATION 5:9-10,12-13



How should your actions and outlook be affected by the fact that you are part of God's kingdom and one of His priests? REVELATION 5:10

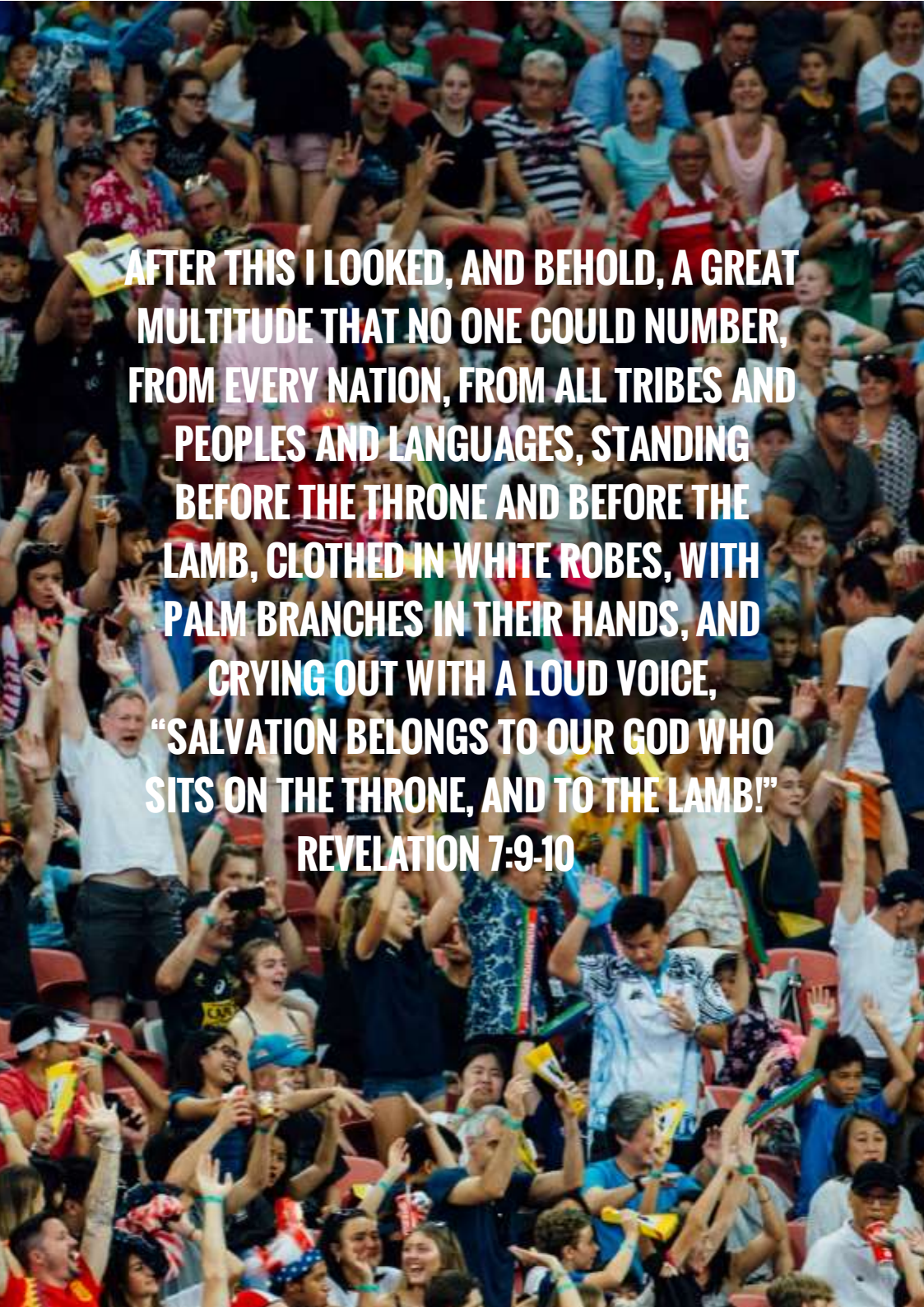
How would you like your worship life to be affected by what REVELATION 4:1–5:14 depicts?

What can we learn about worship (its meaning, nature, reasons) from REVELATION 4:1–5:14?

## FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



**AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT  
MULTITUDE THAT NO ONE COULD NUMBER,  
FROM EVERY NATION, FROM ALL TRIBES AND  
PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES, STANDING  
BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE  
LAMB, CLOTHED IN WHITE ROBES, WITH  
PALM BRANCHES IN THEIR HANDS, AND  
CRYING OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE,  
“SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD WHO  
SITS ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB!”  
REVELATION 7:9-10**

# REVELATION

## 6-7

“... FOR THE GREAT DAY OF THEIR WRATH HAS COME,  
AND WHO CAN STAND?”  
REVELATION 6:17



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 6-7 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**6** <sup>1</sup>Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” <sup>2</sup>And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

<sup>3</sup>When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” <sup>4</sup>And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

<sup>5</sup> When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”

<sup>7</sup> When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

<sup>9</sup> When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. <sup>10</sup> They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” <sup>11</sup> Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

<sup>12</sup> When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, <sup>13</sup> and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. <sup>14</sup> The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. <sup>15</sup> Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid

themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,<sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

**7**<sup>1</sup> After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.<sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea,<sup>3</sup> saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

<sup>5</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed,

12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,

12,000 from the tribe of Gad,

<sup>6</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,

12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,

12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,

<sup>7</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,

12,000 from the tribe of Levi,

12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,

<sup>8</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,

12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,

12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and

peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

<sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

### MESSAGE NOTES



## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

Jesus, the Lamb, now begins to open the seals on the scroll. As the first four are opened: terrible horsemen representing conquest (6:1–2), devastating warfare (vv. 3–4), famine (vv. 5–6), and plague (vv. 7–8). These bear a striking resemblance to signs spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24:1–35, Mark 13:1–37, and Luke 21:5–33. The fifth seal reveals martyrs, crying out for God to judge and avenge them (6:9–11).

When the sixth seal is opened earth and even the heavens are shaken, as if by a great earthquake (vv. 12–14). Humanity then realizes that this is divine judgment. Rather than repent, king and peasant alike seek to hide from God’s wrath (vv. 15–17).

Now there is a pause in the blows that have been striking the earth. The judgments are held back while 144,000 Israelites, 12,000 from each of 12 tribes, are sealed and commissioned as servants of God (7:1–8). When John looks back toward heaven, he sees a vast multitude of the saved, standing before the throne and the Lamb—the source of salvation (vv. 9–10). The angels, elders, and four living creatures join the throng in praising God (vv. 11–12). One of the elders explains the multitude to John, they are those who have believed and are freed from all suffering, they serve God in His temple (vv. 13–17).

### EXPLORE

Who are the principal actors involved in the scenes of REVELATION 6?

Where did the sealed scroll come from?

REVELATION 5:1-3; 7



What is the role of the four living creatures in this scene and where do they get their authority? REVELATION 6:1-8

How might these be fulfilled? REVELATION 6:1-8  
EG: John's time? Just before the second coming? Repeatedly?

What happens to those identified when the fifth seal is opened?  
REVELATION 6:9-11

What happens to creation on the opening of the sixth seal, and how do different people react?  
REVELATION 6:12-17

What do we learn about God and the lamb in REVELATION 6?

## **LAUNCH**

What is the role of the four angels? REVELATION 7:1

What do you think is the meaning behind the sealing, and who is sealed?  
REVELATION 7:2-8

Is the number 12 significant in these verses? If so, how? REVELATION 7:5-8

Out of the tribes listed, what tribe is missing? How is the missing tribe covered? REVEALTION 7:4-8

**Cf: Numbers 1; 3**

What participants are there in the heavenly scene of REVELATION 7:9-17?

What are they all doing?

What have the multitude been rescued from and how?

Who is represented by the great multitude?

## **APPLY**

What should a believer's reaction be to disasters and catastrophes?

How does John's vision in REVELATION 6, serve as a comfort to people suffering persecution on earth?

Where do we fit into the scenes of REVELATION 6 & 7?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 6-7 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

“... for the great day of their  
wrath has come, and who  
can stand?”

## REVELATION 6:17

## COMMENTARY

**6:1–17** *The opening of the first seal in Rev 6:1 unleashes a barrage of judgments that last through ch. 20. In the first series of these judgments (the opening of the seals in 6:1–8:1), John introduces the four horsemen of*

*the apocalypse, the martyrs, and the awesome, destructive power of the Lamb. Rather than bringing about total destruction, these judgments serve to call people to repentance.*

**6:1 one of the four living creatures** Each of the four living creatures summons one of the riders as the first four seals are broken.

**6:2 white horse** Christ Himself rides a white horse in 19:11–13, and it is sometimes argued that He is also referred to here. However, it is more likely that this rider represents evil in its pale imitation of Christ. In Mark 13:5–6, Jesus speaks of those who falsely come in His name, and the forces of evil in the NT are sometimes depicted as imitating Christ (compare Rev 13:1 with 19:12; and 5:6 with 13:3).

**6:2 a crown was given** This rider is given a crown (a symbol of political power) by God to execute His judgments.

**6:2 he went out conquering** Perhaps related to Mark 13:7–8 (compare Rev 11:7; 13:7).

**6:4 fiery red** May suggest warfare and bloodshed (compare Mark 13:7–8).

**6:5 black horse** Represents famine, a common consequence of war (compare Rev 6:6; Mark 13:8).

**6:5 had a balance scale in his hand** The scale will aid in rationing out food and drink at exorbitantly high prices. Supplies left over after war (see Rev 6:2) will need to be carefully apportioned.

**6:6 A quart of wheat for a denarius** Suggestive of someone rationing out supplies in a government food line and selling them at inflated prices (compare 2 Kgs 6:24–25). A denarius, the coin mentioned here in the Greek text, was a day’s wage earned by a common laborer. Such rations could feed only one person, so a worker would not have been able to afford to feed his family. The result would have been widespread hunger and starvation.

**6:6 the olive oil and the wine** The necessities (wheat and barley) are sold for exorbitant prices, but luxury items (oil and wine) are unaffected. This may point to the role greed can play in intensifying the effects of a famine.

**6:8 pale green horse** May indicate pestilence and death, as its rider signifies. Expanding on Mark’s version of Jesus’ apocalyptic discourse, Luke adds “plagues” to famines (see Luke 21:11; compare Lev 26:25; Ezek 14:19).

**6:8 named Death** This personification of death is in direct contrast to the life offered by the Lamb, Jesus (Rev 7:14).

**6:8 Hades followed after him** Physical, bodily death is connected to the netherworld of Greek mythology—the place where people go after their bodily death. This personification, along with the personification of death, is likely meant to evoke the idea that these two evil powers are at work in the world—physical death and the spiritual death that can follow it (compare Hos 13:14).

**6:8 the wild beasts of the earth** In addition to the tactics of the second and third horsemen, Death and Hades also employed wild animals (see Lev 26:22; Ezek 14:15).

**6:9 fifth seal** While the martyrs make an appeal for vengeance, God forestalls His wrath. More must be added to their number before He strikes back.

**6:9 the souls of those who had been slaughtered** The martyrs are under the altar: They were sacrificed because of their faith in Christ (see 20:4).

**6:10 How long** This prayer often shows up in the midst of persecution (e.g., Zech 1:12; Pss 13:1–2; Isa 6:11). It is answered later in the book (Rev 10:6 and note; 19).

**6:11 white robe** See Rev 3:4; 7:14.

**6:11 fellow slaves and their brothers** Believers appear to be going through the judgments as well.

**6:12 great earthquake** Language of natural phenomena, as in vv. 12–14, is typical when referring to God’s judgment. It normally refers to the end of the age (e.g., Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:10; Mark 13:8). John may be using the language to parallel the events associated with the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that were still fresh in the mind of his audience (see Rev 8:8).

**6:13 stars of heaven fell to the earth** May refer to the massive chunks of rock and debris thrown from a volcano. Alternatively, the earthquake might be so violent that it even appears to shake the heavens.

**6:14 sky was split apart** Smoke and lava spewing hundreds of feet in the air may give the illusion of a splitting and vanishing sky.

**6:15 every** All kinds of people—rich and poor, powerful and weak, slave and free—will seek refuge from the wrath of the Lamb.

**6:16 Fall on us** Compare Hos 10:8; Luke 23:30.

**6:17 the great day of their wrath** The wrath is of God and the Lamb. This day is the final outpouring of judgment on the world. Those who have been bought by the Lamb are safe from this judgment (Rev 5:9). They are able to stand (compare Joel 2:11).

**7:1–17** *Following the judgments of the first six seals, an interlude takes place (just prior to the seventh) that allows for the sealing of the 144,000 (Rev 7:1–8) and John’s vision of an innumerable crowd of the redeemed (vv. 9–17). Opinions differ on the identity of the two groups in this chapter. Some believe the 144,000 to be ethnic Jews who come to faith in Jesus during a future tribulation. Others believe the two sections of this chapter to be two different ways of speaking about the entirety of God’s people.*

*In any case, ch. 7 answers the question presented in 6:17 of who is able to stand before God and the Lamb, Jesus. The answer immediately follows: the whole host of the redeemed.*

**7:1 four corners of the earth** The whole world is represented by the four points of the compass (see 4:6).

**7:1 four winds** Since the horsemen of Zechariah are called “winds” (or “spirits”) in Zech 6:5, this image may refer to the four horsemen from Rev 6:1–8.

**7:1 blow** Whether this is natural wind or the activities of the four horsemen, destruction and judgment are implied.

**7:2 another angel** Distinct from those mentioned in v. 1.

**7:2 the seal** In contrast to the mark of the beast (13:16–17), the seal serves to authenticate and identify the people of God. See 5:1.

**7:2 who were given permission** This Greek term is passive; their authority came from someone else—God.

**7:2 to damage the earth and the sea** Verse 1 and 7:3 adds “trees” to the list of wrath recipients.

**7:3 slaves** The angel and his helpers mark those who are already servants of God.

**7:3 on their foreheads** Reminiscent of Ezek 9:4.

**7:4 heard the number** The numbering of Rev 7:4–8 resembles military censuses from the OT; compare Num 1:3, 18; 26:2.

**7:4 one hundred forty-four thousand** There are differing views about the identity of the 144,000: They may be ethnic Jews who will become Christians and be kept from martyrdom during the seven-year tribulation period—a view usually taken by futurist readings of the book (Rev 1:19). Alternatively, the number may figuratively represent the complete number of the redeemed—12 multiplied by 12 multiplied by 1,000. This calculation derives from multiplying the tribes of Israel (21:12) by the apostles (21:14) by the number of completeness or perfection (20:4).

**7:4 from every tribe of the sons of Israel** In the list that follows, Dan has been omitted and replaced by Manasseh. Ephraim is also excluded.

**7:9 After these things I looked** John hears the number in v. 4, whereas he sees the multitude in v. 9. He may be attempting to portray the surprising fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan, just as he heard about a lion and saw a lamb in 5:5–6.

**7:9 with palm branches** Indicative of victory in royal and military processions, as demonstrated by its connection with white robes and salvation or victory in v. 10. Compare Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (e.g., Mark 11:8).

**7:10 Salvation to our God** The crowd praises God and the Lamb. See Rev 12:10; 19:1.

**7:11 all the angels** The angels participate in the same activity and posture as the 24 elders in 4:10 and 5:14.

**7:12 Amen** The angels affirm the statement of the great multitude in v. 10. "Amen" appears twice in this verse.

**7:12 Praise** A sevenfold song of praise to God.

**7:13 who are they** Reveals John's ignorance of the matter and sets up an explanation.

**7:14 the great tribulation** May refer generally to a time of intense persecution, a final period of persecution that will immediately precede the end of the age, or the total amount of persecution between Christ's ascension and return.

**7:14 white in the blood of the Lamb** Christ's blood cleanses from sin, hence the paradox of red (blood) making white (pure or victorious). Compare 1:5; 22:14; John 1:29; 1 John 1:7.

**7:15 Because of this** Refers to their having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**7:15 before the throne of God** This indicates being in God's presence—the great hope to which all of Revelation points (see Rev 21:3–5). The themes in vv. 16–17 are repeated in 21:3–5.

**7:15 in his temple** Refers to heaven, as portrayed by the throne room in John's visions (see 11:19).

**7:16 They will not be hungry** Hunger, thirst, and exposure to the elements were common plights of the oppressed in antiquity (e.g., Psa 121:6; Isa 49:10).

**7:17 the Lamb** In what seems paradoxical, the Lamb will be the shepherd. Religious and political leaders are often portrayed as either good or bad shepherds in the Bible (e.g., 2 Sam 5:2; John 10:11–18; see 1 Sam 9:3 and note).

**7:17 will wipe away** God will remove sources of distress, grief, and pain (see Rev 21:4; Isa 25:8).



# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

REVELATION 6 & 7 underlines the recognition that God is sovereign over history. Terrible things may happen that seem beyond explanation, but on the larger scale God is using such forces to bring history to its climax. There is no security, no firm ground to stand on, nothing in the universe to depend on, except God himself. The rest of creation will collapse.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What's the worst catastrophe that has ever happened to you?

Almost every hero in the Bible exhibits some flaws in the face of challenges and disaster. The one exception is Jesus, the only true hero in the ultimate sense. REVELATION 6 & 7 reminds us that our triumph rests on the finished work of Christ (7:14), and our future hope is in fellowship with him (7:15–17), no matter how extreme the circumstances get.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 6-7

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 6-7 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

What happens when the Lamb opens each of the first six seals?

REVELATION 6:1-7

The imagery of the four horsemen in 6:2-8 comes from Zechariah 1:8-17 and 6:1-8. In the Old Testament, horses were rarely used for peaceful purposes; they suggested war to the Jewish mind. From the descriptions in 6:2-8, what do you think each of the four horsemen represents?

- White
- Red
- Black
- Pale

What do the judgments wrought by the four horsemen have in common?

Jesus gave His own discourse on the end times in MATTHEW 24:4-51 (paralleled in MARK 13:1-37 and LUKE 21:5-31). What does Jesus say about wars and famines in MATTHEW 24:4-8?

The fifth seal is an interlude rather than a judgment (REVELATION 6:9-11). What is the answer to the martyrs' question in REVELATION 6:10?

REVELATION 6:10-11 was an important insight into heavenly reality for John's first-century readers enduring persecution. Why is this an important insight for us and other modern Christians?

How will people—mighty and lowly—react to the sixth seal's judgment (REVELATION 6:15-17)?

- How is this a warning or an encouragement to you?

Before we find out what happens when the seventh seal is opened, John's vision is interrupted. The sixth seal brought such a cataclysm that we might wonder what happens to believers. Two visions in REVELATION 7 give us glimpses.

- What happens in REVELATION 7:1-8?
- What happens in REVELATION 7:9-17?

Why is it important for us to know that...

- God's servants will be sealed before God afflicts the land and the sea with the final judgments (REVELATION 7:3)?
- The robes of the great multitude will be made white in the blood of the Lamb, as they come through and out of the Tribulation (REVELATION 7:14)?
- The multitude will serve God day and night in His temple (REVELATION 7:15)?

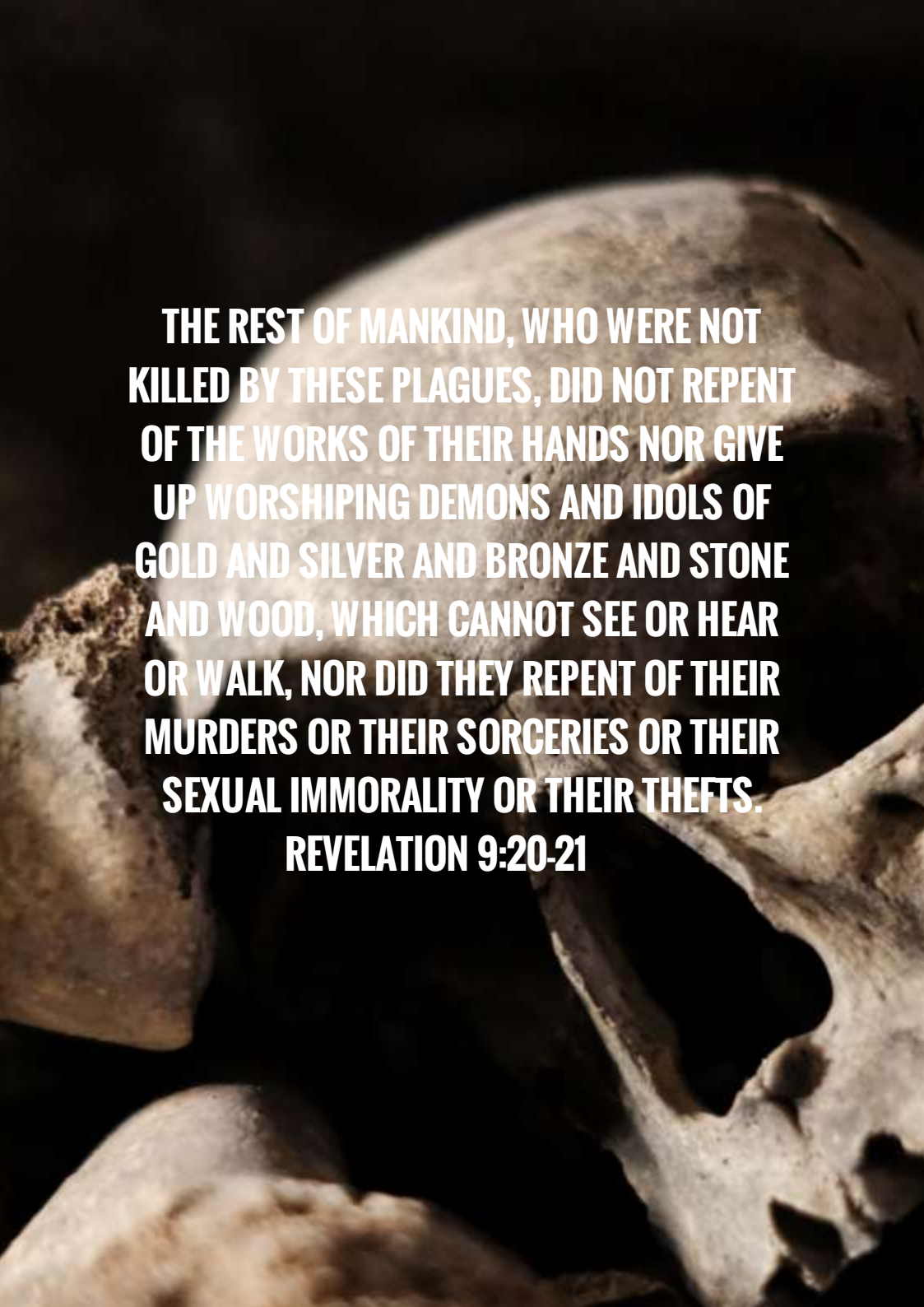
What personal relevance and encouragement do you find in REVELATION 7:16-17?

Could you say that your life thus far has been a sacrificial offering to God? Why/why not?

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



**THE REST OF MANKIND, WHO WERE NOT  
KILLED BY THESE PLAGUES, DID NOT REPENT  
OF THE WORKS OF THEIR HANDS NOR GIVE  
UP WORSHIPING DEMONS AND IDOLS OF  
GOLD AND SILVER AND BRONZE AND STONE  
AND WOOD, WHICH CANNOT SEE OR HEAR  
OR WALK, NOR DID THEY REPENT OF THEIR  
MURDERS OR THEIR SORCERIES OR THEIR  
SEXUAL IMMORALITY OR THEIR THEFTS.**

**REVELATION 9:20-21**

# REVELATION

## 8-9

“AND IN THOSE DAYS PEOPLE WILL SEEK DEATH AND WILL NOT FIND IT.  
THEY WILL LONG TO DIE, BUT DEATH WILL FLEE FROM THEM.”

REVELATION 9:6



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### REVELATION 8-9 ESV – English Standard Version

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

**8** <sup>1</sup>When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. <sup>3</sup>And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, <sup>4</sup>and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. <sup>5</sup>Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on

the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

<sup>6</sup> Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

<sup>7</sup> The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

<sup>8</sup> The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. <sup>9</sup> A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

<sup>10</sup> The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup> The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

<sup>12</sup> The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

<sup>13</sup> Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

**9** <sup>1</sup> And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to

the shaft of the bottomless pit. <sup>2</sup> He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. <sup>3</sup> Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. <sup>4</sup> They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. <sup>6</sup> And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

<sup>7</sup> In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, <sup>8</sup> their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; <sup>9</sup> they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. <sup>10</sup> They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. <sup>11</sup> They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

<sup>12</sup> The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

<sup>13</sup> Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup> So the four angels, who had been prepared

for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. <sup>16</sup> The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. <sup>17</sup> And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. <sup>18</sup> By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound. <sup>20</sup> The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, <sup>21</sup> nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES







## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

When the seventh seal on the scroll introduced in chapter 5 is opened, a new series of “trumpet” judgments is begun (8:1–6). The trumpet judgments devastate a third of earth’s vegetation (v. 7), seas (vv. 8–9), and fresh water (vv. 10–11), as well as a third of the heavenly bodies (vv. 12–13). Yet these judgments that shake the foundations of the material universe seem insignificant compared to what is to follow. Now the boundary between the supernatural and natural universe is breached; locust-like, demonic beings are unleashed to torture humankind (9:1–12). The sixth trumpet unleashes four unspeakably evil powers, with 200 million minions, who kill a third of humankind (vv. 13–19). Yet, despite these terrors, the rest of humanity did not repent but rededicated themselves to idolatry and immorality (vv. 20–21).

### EXPLORE

How does the action in REVELATION 8-9 link to REVELATION 6-7?

What is the significance of the silence? REVELATION 8:1

**Cf: Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7; Isaiah 41:1; 47:5; Zechariah 2:13.**

Who are the principal actors in these chapters and where do they come from?

What does the smoke of the incense stand for? What happens to it and how does it move? REVELATION 8:3-5

What disaster comes because of the first four trumpets? REVELATION 8:6-12

What part of the world is affected? REVELATION 8:6-12

Is there any pattern or link to others biblical events? REVELATION 8:6-12

Are there any positive lessons we can take away from REVELATION 8?

## **LAUNCH**

What is the origin of the next two trumpet calls? REVELATION 8:13-9:1

What distinctive groups of humanity are described in REVELATION 8:13-9:12?

What are the locusts like in REVELATION 9:7-11 and what does this reveal about the seriousness of God's judgement?

Compare REVELATION 9:6 with REVELATION 8:7. What shift in focus do we see?

What is the significance of the altar in REVELATION 9:13?

Do the three plagues coming from the horses have any Old Testament equivalent and if so, what is the significance? REVELATION 9:17-19

**Cf: Genesis 19:23-25; Luke 17:28-29; Jude 7**

What do people's reactions to the plagues (REVELATION 9:20-21) reveal about the human heart?

## **APPLY**

How does the significance of the prayers of God's people in REVELATION 8:3-5 influence your understanding of your relationship with God?

What do we learn from these chapters about the human condition?

What do these passages reveal to us about how to understand human history?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 8-9 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**“And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.”**

**REVELATION 9:6**

## COMMENTARY

**8:1–5** *After the interlude of ch. 7, the seventh seal is opened and seven angels receive seven trumpets that signal a further round of judgments when blown (vv. 1–2). But first, another angel takes a censer, symbolizing the prayers of God’s people, and hurls it to the earth (vv. 3–5).*

**8:1 he opened the seventh seal** The Lamb resumes His activity from ch. 6.

there was silence in heaven In the OT, silence is indicative of God’s impending judgment (see Hab 3:3–6; Zech 2:13–3:2). There is a dramatic pause in the endless praises of the living creatures (Rev 4:8).

**8:2 seven angels** These may be the seven archangels spoken of in Jewish tradition (see Tobit 12:15; 1 Enoch 20). Of these, only Michael is mentioned by name in Revelation (Rev 12:7).

**8:2 seven trumpets** Instruments of battle (e.g., Josh 6:5). When blown by the angels, these trumpets initiate the next seven judgments.

**8:3 another angel** Different from the seven angels of Rev 8:2.

**8:3 golden censer** A rounded vessel in which incense and burning coals were placed together. The resulting sweet fragrance often accompanied worship ceremonies and religious rituals (see Luke 1:9).

**8:3 incense** Incense is also identified with prayers in Rev 5:8.

**8:3 the golden altar** Perhaps the same altar as 6:9.

**8:4 from the hand of the angel** The angel appears to be performing a priestly action. This may recall the events of Ezek 10 (compare Lev 16:12; Num 16:46).

**8:5 threw it to the earth** Initiates judgment in response to the prayers of the saints—probably those recorded in Rev 6:10.

**8:5 thunders and sounds and lightnings and an earthquake** This formula, first mentioned in 4:5, is used again in 11:19 and 16:18. The latter three usages follow a set of judgments (the seals, trumpets, and bowls).

**8:6–13** *The next wave of judgments begins; four of the seven trumpets are blown in this section. The attacks, which come against nature and the cosmos, are intended to lead sinful humanity to repentance, not totally destroy them.*

**8:6 in order to blow them** Describes the commencement of judgment. John’s imagery recalls several of the plagues from the book of Exodus.

**8:7 hail and fire mixed with blood** Corresponds to Exod 9:22–25. John adds blood to the hail and fire of the exodus narrative.

**8:7 thrown to the earth** The same language is used of the fiery coals in Rev 8:5.

**8:7 a third of the trees** In the exodus account, hail shattered the trees of the field.

**8:7 all the green grass was burned up** Probably inclusive of all great vegetation, as in the exodus story which says “all the plants of the field.”

**8:8 something like a great mountain burning with fire** John may be speaking of a volcano or meteors. Jews viewed the unexpected eruption of Mount Vesuvius (AD 79) as divine punishment on Rome for the events of AD 70—when Titus entered Jerusalem, sacked the city, destroyed the temple, and killed many people. According to Jewish legend, God caused Vesuvius to erupt in recompense, destroying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were in Titus’ jurisdiction.

**8:8 a third of the sea became blood** Corresponds to Exod 7:20–25. The water may have become blood red due to the fiery mountain.

**8:9 a third of the creatures in the sea** One-third of the sea life died.

**8:9 a third of the ships were destroyed** Those in the area of the blood sea.

**8:10 great star burning like a torch** Perhaps a meteor.

**8:10 rivers and on the springs of water** Corresponds to Exod 7:20–25. Whereas the previous judgment was against salt water, this judgment is against fresh water.

**8:11 Wormwood** A leafy plant that causes water to become bitter. Though wormwood is not poisonous, it can be combined with other elements that are (e.g., Deut 29:18, where “poisonous and bitter fruit” is actually “gall and wormwood”; Lam 3:19). The object from the sky makes the waters bitter.

**8:12 a third of the sun** The fourth trumpet corresponds to Exod 10:21–23 (compare Joel 3:15; Amos 8:9).

**8:13 eagle** The majority of manuscripts from all periods have the word *aetos* (“eagle”) here. However, a minority of late manuscripts have the word *angelos* (“angel”). The Textus Receptus form of the Greek text follows the latter reading, as do English translations based on it, like the KJV and NKJV.

**8:13 Woe, woe, woe** The threefold use of “woe” corresponds to the three remaining trumpet judgments. It communicates distress, pain, suffering, and displeasure.

**8:13 to those who live on the earth** In Revelation this phrase refers to unbelievers, not all earth’s inhabitants (compare Rev 3:10; 6:10; 11:10; 13:8). Whereas the first four trumpets affected everyone (or at least those in one-third of the earth), the final three are only for unbelievers. The seal mentioned in 7:3 protects the remaining believers from the demonic oppression of the final three trumpets (see 9:4).

**9:1–12** *The blowing of the fifth trumpet, also called the first woe (v. 12), is recorded in vv. 1–12. John describes terrifying locusts unleashed upon the unrepentant*



*oppressors for five months. As with the horses in the latter half of the chapter, the descriptions are meant to terrify and alarm the unrepentant. The imagery describing these creatures is borrowed from various portions of the Hebrew Bible.*

**9:1 fallen from heaven to the earth** Stars are sometimes associated with angels (1:20). This figure may be the angel in v. 11 who is given charge over the abyss. The concept of a fallen star may suggest that the figure is Satan or one of his fallen angels (compare Luke 10:18; Rev 12:9).

**9:1 key** Symbolizes authority (see 1:18).

**9:1 the abyss** Where demons and fallen angels were thought to be kept—the underworld (see 2 Pet 2:4 and note; Jude 6; compare the ancient Jewish work of 1 Enoch 90:22–27).

**9:2 smoke went up from the shaft** May reflect the notion of the underworld as a place of burning and judgment (e.g., Mark 9:47–48). Smoke could also be figurative, describing the appearance of the locusts hurrying out of the abyss.

**9:3 locusts** Echoes Exod 10:12–15. The imagery of locusts is used in the OT for invading armies (e.g., Jer 51:27; Nah 3:15).

**9:3 power was given to them** They have been commissioned as agents of judgment and wrath—possibly referring to their ability to inflict pain (see Rev 9:5, 10).

**9:4 the grass of the earth** The normal food of locusts. This deviation in diet may suggest that the creatures in view here are not actual locusts (see note on v. 3).

**9:4 the seal of God on their foreheads** See 7:2.

**9:5 it was granted to them** The passive voice indicates that their authority to act comes from someone else (God).

**9:5 five months** The lifespan of locusts, which hatch in the springtime and die near the end of summer.

**9:5 like the torment of a scorpion** Reactions to scorpion stings include deep, severe, widespread pain, swelling, sensations of restricted breathing, and paresthesia, a tingling sensation on the skin.

**9:6 in those days** Refers to the five-month period of torture and suffering.

**9:6 people will seek death** Repeated in the following clause for emphasis. The pain will be so great that they will prefer death, but the stings will not be fatal (v. 5). Compare Jer 8:3.

**9:11 angel of the abyss** See Rev 9:1.

**9:11 Abaddon** A Hebrew name for the place of the dead (meaning “destruction”). This place is sometimes mentioned in the Hebrew text in parallel to Sheol (e.g., Job 26:6; Prov 15:11; 27:20).

**9:11 Apollyon** Means “destroyer.” This may indicate a connection to the Greek god Apollo, for whom the locust was often used as a symbol. Domitian—who may have been the emperor at the time Revelation was written—thought of himself as

Apollo incarnate. Thus, this may be John's way of presenting worship of the emperor as evil and demonic.

**9:12 The first woe** The fifth trumpet.

**9:13–21** *The sixth trumpet releases another four angels tasked with killing a third of the remaining population. They bring an army of 200 million to assist in the slaughter. The outlook is bleak for those who oppressed the people of God (see Rev 6:2 and note; 6:9–10).*

**9:13 one voice** Perhaps one of the martyrs under the altar or the angel with the censer (see 6:9–11; 8:3–5). In either case, the sixth trumpet is presented as a response to the prayers of the saints.

**9:14 four angels** Not the same four angels as those mentioned in 6:2–8 or 7:1. Many angels appear throughout the book, often in the same quantity (four, seven, etc.).

**9:14 Euphrates** The easternmost border of the Roman Empire. The Euphrates protected the Romans from their eastern enemy, the Parthians.

**9:15 had been prepared** They were made and appointed for a specific task at a specific time.

**9:15 they should kill a third of humanity** This portion is in addition to the one-fourth already killed by Death and Hades in 6:8. The effects of the judgments are intensifying.

**9:17 I saw the horses** The description of the demonic horde recalls the description of the locusts in vv. 7–9.

**9:18 By these three plagues** The fire, smoke, and sulfur had a plague-like effect, killing the one-third mentioned in v. 15.

**9:20 did not repent** Despite clear demonstrations of God's power, prolonged anguish (five months), and otherworldly attacks, they still would not turn to God, give Him glory, and repent of their idolatry.

**9:20 the demons and the gold** John equates idol worship to demon worship. Compare 1 Cor 10:20–22.

**9:20 neither to see** Reminiscent of Isa 44:18 (compare Dan 5:23).

**9:21 they did not repent** The four deeds in this list are associated with pagan religious practices (compare Wisdom of Solomon 12:3–6).

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

By the time we arrive at Revelation 8, we have seen a vast sweep of redemptive history, including the first coming of Jesus (REVELATION 1:5); the struggles of first-century Christians and churches (REVELATION 2–3); the present age between Jesus' first and second comings (REVELATION 6:1–8); the final judgment (REVELATION 6:12–17); and the new creation (REVELATION 7:9–17). Now, in REVELATION 8–9, John's vision of the trumpet calls covers that same time period again, this time giving additional theological insight into God's purposes and his terrible judgments.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is one of the most excruciating pains you have ever experienced? What happened?

When the seventh seal was opened, the scroll was ready to be unrolled, read and put into effect. At that moment, heaven fell silent. Seven angels were given trumpets. The prayers of the saints went up before God, and in response, fire was cast upon the earth. The thunder of judgment rumbled. With that warning, the trumpets are blown.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 8–9

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 8–9 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

A hush suddenly falls (REVELATION 8:1) after the thundering judgment and praise of REVELATION 6 and 7.

- How would you feel in John's place, seeing this?
- What is the significance of this abrupt and shocking silence?

When the seventh seal is opened, there is first silence, then prayer. How do you interpret the heavenly response to the saints' prayers (REVELATION 8:5)?

Briefly describe what happens in each stage of REVELATION 8:6–9:19.

REVELATION 8:6-7

REVELATION 8:8-9

REVELATION 8:10-11

REVELATION 8:12

REVELATION 8:13

REVELATION 9:1-12

REVELATION 9:13-19

God sent plagues on Egypt to deliver His people from slavery, reveal His power, judge the Egyptians for idolatry and prove that the gods of Egypt were false. Compare the plagues in Exodus 7:14–11:10 to the judgments of trumpets and bowls in Revelation.

- What echoes of Exodus do you observe in Revelation?
- What do you think God is saying by planning these echoes?

In many of His judgments, God afflicts nature in order to warn and punish humans. Why do you think He does this?

How do the inhabitants of the earth respond to the horrible but still limited plagues of the first six trumpets (REVELATION 9:20-21)?

- What does this tell you about human character?
- Have you seen this attitude today and in what way?

Only a third of the earth, the trees, the sea creatures, the drinking water, the sun, etc., are affected by the first four trumpets. The locusts can torture but not kill (REVELATION 9:5). The four angels are permitted to kill only a third of mankind (REVELATION 9:15).

- Why do you think God sends such horrifying plagues, yet limits them (REVELATION 9:20-21)?
- Do you think God is cruel to send such awful afflictions on the inhabitants of the earth? Why or why not?
- What difference does it make to you that the locusts are freed with God's permission (REVELATION 9:1) and that God chooses what they are and aren't allowed to do (REVELATION 9:3-5)?

How are the visions of the first six trumpets relevant to us in our time?

What lessons do they have for us about God, the kingdom, suffering, patient endurance and ultimate reality?

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?

**THEN THE SEVENTH ANGEL BLEW HIS TRUMPET, AND THERE WERE LOUD VOICES IN HEAVEN, SAYING, "THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD HAS BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER."**

**REVELATION 11:15**

# REVELATION

## 10-11

AND THE ANGEL WHOM I SAW STANDING ON THE SEA AND ON THE LAND RAISED HIS RIGHT HAND TO HEAVEN AND SWORE BY HIM WHO LIVES FOREVER AND EVER, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND WHAT IS IN IT, THE EARTH AND WHAT IS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND WHAT IS IN IT, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE DELAY...

REVELATION 10:5-6



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

#### **REVELATION 10-11 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**10** <sup>1</sup>Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. <sup>2</sup>He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup>and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. <sup>4</sup>And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the

seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.”

<sup>5</sup> And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven <sup>6</sup> and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, <sup>7</sup> but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

<sup>8</sup> Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” <sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, “Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.” <sup>10</sup> And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. <sup>11</sup> And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

**11** <sup>1</sup> Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, <sup>2</sup> but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. <sup>3</sup> And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone



would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. <sup>6</sup> They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. <sup>7</sup> And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, <sup>8</sup> and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, <sup>10</sup> and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. <sup>13</sup> And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup> The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

<sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his

Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”<sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God,<sup>17</sup> saying,

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,  
who is and who was,  
for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.

<sup>18</sup> The nations raged,  
but your wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be judged,  
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets  
and saints,  
and those who fear your name,  
both small and great,  
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

<sup>19</sup> Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

Again, John looks away from what is happening on earth. He sees a “mighty angel” approaching from heaven. The angel stands, straddling earth and sea and holds a “little scroll” (10:1–2). The announcement made at his appearance is sealed—kept secret (vv. 3–4). Yet it is no secret that “there will be no more delay”: the day of judgment predicted by the Old Testament prophets has come (vv. 5–7). John is then told to take the scroll the angel holds and “eat” it. Now that he’s prepared by taking God’s Word, John is told to speak out again, describing events as they touch on “many peoples, nations, languages, and kings” (vv. 8–11).

John is now given a rod with which to measure the Jerusalem temple and its altar (11:1). He is told that the Gentiles will dominate the city of Jerusalem for 42 months, the same length of time that John says the beast (the Antichrist) will rule (cf. 13:5–7). During this period two witnesses (men given power to bring drought and destroy those who attack them), will serve as God’s witnesses in the holy city (11:2–6). At the end of that time they will be killed, and the evil inhabitants of earth will celebrate their deaths (vv. 7–10). Three and a half days later they will return to life and be lifted up into heaven, while the earth quakes and terrified survivors are forced to acknowledge God’s hand at work (vv. 11–14). At this point the seventh trumpet is sounded by an angel, and voices in heaven announce the beginning of the reign of God. The barrier between material and spiritual universe is rent, and lightning can be seen flashing around God’s heavenly temple (vv. 15–19).

### EXPLORE

What is the angel like in REVELATION 10:1-4?

What does the sealing up in REVEALTION 10:4 imply about human knowledge of the future?

What is John to do with the scroll and why? REVEALTION 10:8-11

What do you think are the contents of the scroll? REVELATION 10:8-11  
**Cf: EZEKIEL 2:1-3:4**

## LAUNCH

In REVELATION 11:1-13, what is measured and what is not?

What is the significance of the measuring?  
**Cf: REVELATION 21:15-17; EZEKIEL 40:3, 5**

Consider the witnesses in REVEALTION 11:3-13...

- How are they identified?
- What do you think they symbolise?
- What other examples of witnesses do we have across scripture?

What happens at the end of the two witnesses' task? REVELATION 11:7-13

Is there any similarity to what happened to Jesus? Is this significant?

What do the events of REVELATION 11:14-19 say about God's kingdom?

What kind of judgement does the passage describe? REVELATION 11:18

What does the appearing of the ark signify?

## **APPLY**

What affect does God's word have on you?

What do you learn in these passages about what it means to be a witness?

How do you respond to God's power over an unbelieving world?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 10-11 stands out as something you are taking to heart, moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?



And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay . . .  
REVELATION 10:5-6

## COMMENTARY

**10:1–11** *Following the sixth trumpet judgment, John sees another mighty angel holding a little scroll. The angel announces a forthcoming fulfillment of the mystery of God, which will follow the next trumpet blast. John hears seven thunders after the angel speaks, but he is told not to communicate what they say. He is then given the little scroll to eat and is told he must prophesy again. Following a time of intense judgment, this chapter presents a message of hope to the people of God. This is the first of two interludes before the seventh trumpet is blown in Rev 11:15.*

### **10:1 descending** John's visions shift

between earth and the throne room in heaven. This chapter takes place on earth. **10:1 wrapped in a cloud** Recalls the Son of Man imagery from Dan 7:13 and Rev 1 as well as the ascension scene from Acts 1:9. This angel shares similarities with the glorified Christ from Rev 1; he may serve in close proximity to the Lamb. John identifies this being as an angel.

**10:1 rainbow** Recalls God's covenant with humankind in Gen 9:8–17. Following the seven seals and six trumpets, this angel is a harbinger of mercy.

**10:1 his feet were like pillars of fire** See Rev 1:15. The combination of pillars of fire and cloud recalls God's leading Israel in the exodus event (see Exod 13:21). The exodus deliverance motif, established in ch. 8, may be hinted at here to bring hope to God's people (see 8:6).

**10:2 a little scroll** The diminutive term is suggestive of size, not importance. It was small enough to be consumed.

**10:2 that was opened** Though its contents are unknown, it is opened, suggesting the contents are not secret.

**10:2 right foot on the sea and his left on the land** Describes a colossal angel. His stance may suggest his authority as well as the universal scope of his message.

**10:3 like a lion roars** He may have literally roared. Ultimately, the shout was meant to gain attention so all would hear his message (vv. 6–7).

**10:3 seven thunders** These may be heavenly voices or God's voice (compare John 12:28–29). The following verse, which indicates John was going to write down what they said, suggests that the thunder was more than just noise.

**10:4 Seal up** A seal would prevent disclosure. The little scroll and the message of the mighty angel are the focus of the chapter. They—not the words of the thunder—are important for humanity to hear.

**10:5 to heaven** The angel makes a solemn oath and proclamation before God (see Dan 12:7).

**10:6 swore** The angel swore to the truth of his proclamation.

**10:6 the one who lives forever and ever** Refers to God.

**10:6 who created** God created everything.

**10:6 There will be no more delay** The heavenly reply to the martyrs' question about the timing of God's vengeance on their murderers (Rev 6:10).

**10:7 the mystery of God** The connection of the mystery with the seventh trumpet may indicate that the mystery is the full establishment of God's kingdom (see 11:15–18; compare Mark 1:15).

**10:7 the prophets** While generally referring to the OT prophets, this may be a reference to prophets of the gospel (compare Rev 11:18). Either association is possible if the mystery is related to the kingdom (see Amos 3:7).

**10:8 take the opened scroll** Unlike the scroll in ch. 5 (which could only be opened by the Lamb), this scroll is already open, and John is allowed to take it.

**10:9 Take and eat it** By eating the scroll, John can speak the very words of God (v. 11). In Ezekiel, the prophet is also told to consume a scroll (the words of God) in order to make them known (compare Ezek 2:9–3:4).

**10:9 bitter** The scroll is bitter or sour because it contains God's judgments.

**10:9 sweet as honey** The scroll is also sweet because it contains God's words (see Psa 19:10; 119:103).

**10:11 prophesy again** Refers to the latter part of Revelation (Rev 12–22).

**11:1–14** *These verses comprise the second interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments. Similar to ch. 7 during the seal judgments, ch. 10 and this episode in ch. 11 disrupt the sequence of events. John introduces the concept of measuring the temple to connote God's protection and preservation of His people. He also presents two witnesses as God's prophetic harbingers of impending wrath.*

**11:1 was given** Perhaps by the angel from ch. 10 or by God.

**11:1 a measuring rod** A staff with a standardized length used for taking measurements.

**11:1 measure** This suggests God's protection of the people located within the measured area (compare Zech 2:1–5; Rev 21:15–17). Their preservation from spiritual harm recalls the sealing activity of ch. 7, where the 144,000 are protected prior to the opening of the seventh seal, the unleashing of the trumpet judgments, and the unleashing of the demonic forces of ch. 9 (see 9:4).

**11:1 temple of God** The Jerusalem temple could have been destroyed by the time John wrote his apocalypse. This temple may refer to a future rebuilt temple, the heavenly temple mentioned elsewhere in Revelation, or the church as God's temple, either throughout history or in a final tribulation period (see note on 1:19; compare vv. 19; 1 Cor 3:16).

**11:2 the courtyard outside of the temple** Refers to the court of the Gentiles, the designated space for non-Jews visiting the temple. Gentiles who ventured beyond its confines into the holy place risked death if caught.

**11:2 Gentiles** Contrasted with those who worship in the sanctuary, the Gentiles here represent unbelievers, upon whom judgment is coming (compare Rev 11:1).

**11:2 forty two months** Restated in v. 3 as 1,260 days (compare 12:6; 13:5). Both figures define, according to traditions from Daniel, the length of the persecution of God's people (e.g., Dan 7:25; 12:11–12). This could refer literally to a future tribulation or symbolically to the whole amount of time between Jesus' first and second comings, when God's people are under pressure from the nations (compare Rev 7:14).

**11:3 my two witnesses** The identity of these two figures is unknown. They may be symbolic of the overall witness of the Church during tribulation. Alternatively, these two witnesses may be actual prophets who come to earth and proclaim God's message.

**11:3 one thousand two hundred sixty days** See v. 2.

**11:3 dressed in sackcloth** Suggesting their somber ministry and their calling of the nations to repentance.

**11:4 the two olive trees** This echoes the reference in Zechariah to two anointed ones (Zech 4:11–14). These may be identified with the postexilic high priest Joshua and the Davidic descendant Zerubbabel, both of whom were instrumental in the temple restoration efforts (see Zech 4:1–14). John seems to be appropriating this tradition of priestly and kingly figures and reapplying it to his two witnesses.

**11:4 the two lampstands** Earlier in Revelation, lampstands are identified with the churches (Rev 1:12, 20). Only two of these churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) were entirely faithful and received no rebuke. The two witnesses thus may be a symbol of the Church bearing faithful witness.

**11:5 fire comes out of their mouth** May be representative of the kind of condemnatory activity associated with the sword in Christ's mouth (see 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21).

**11:6 to shut the sky** Describes the ability to bring about drought-like conditions, similar to Elijah (see 1 Kgs 17:1).

**11:6 over the waters** Reminiscent of Moses (see Exod 7:17–21).

**11:6 with every plague** Recalls the exodus (see Rev 8:6 and note).

**11:7 the beast** See 13:1–10.

**11:7 the abyss** Where demons and fallen angels resided. See 9:1.

**11:7 will kill them** They will be killed because of their prophetic ministry and message of Christ (see v. 6).

**11:8 their dead bodies will lie in the street** The ultimate shame (see Isa 5:25; Psalms of Solomon 2:27).

**11:8 Sodom and Egypt** Used metaphorically to highlight spiritual corruption. In biblical literature Egypt is vilified for its oppression and idolatry, and Sodom for its wickedness and immorality.

**11:8 where also their Lord was crucified** Refers to Jerusalem. However, since references to a great city are used throughout Revelation to describe Rome (figuratively called Babylon; see Rev 16–18), this phrase may also refer to Rome, since crucifixion was a distinctly Roman form of execution. It may even be that John has in mind all cities that oppose the work of God in the world.

**11:9 peoples and tribes and languages and nations** John is immediately fulfilling his prophetic responsibility (see 7:9; compare 10:11).

**11:9 three and a half days** Related to the 42 months of v. 2 and the 1,260 days of v. 3—both of which signify a three-and-a-half-year period.

**11:10 will send gifts to one another** Their deaths will be commemorated by a holiday.

**11:11 the breath of life** John refers to resurrection, whether the two witnesses are interpreted as two individuals or the entire Church. John likely borrows this phraseology from Ezek 37:5, 9–10.

**11:12 Come up here** Reminiscent of Enoch and Elijah being taken up to heaven (see Rev 11:3; Gen 5:24; 2 Kgs 2:11; compare Rev 4:1).

**11:2 in a cloud** See 10:1; compare 1 Thess 4:17.

**11:13 gave glory to the God of heaven** The intended goal of the judgments throughout the book (compare 9:20–21). Elsewhere in the Bible, this phrase sometimes refers to conversion (e.g., Matt 5:16; Luke 18:43); other times it serves as an expression of unbelievers forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of Israel's God (e.g., Josh 7:19; 1 Sam 6:5).

**11:14 The second woe has passed** The sixth trumpet judgment (see Rev 8:13).

**11:14 the third woe** The seventh trumpet judgment (see v. 15).

*11:15–19 At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, another violent outpouring of God's wrath is expected. Instead, voices from heaven announce the arrival of God's kingdom. A message of doom for the nations of the world is implied by this proclamation, but this is not initially accompanied by destruction. The result of the arrival of God's kingdom is that He will once again dwell with His creation.*

**11:15 seventh angel blew the trumpet** This completes the cycle of seven trumpets. There is no woe explicitly stated in relation to this trumpet (see 8:13).

**11:15 of our Lord and of his Christ** The kingdom of God and His Messiah has arrived. This was Daniel's great hope, the prophets' fervent desire, the focal point of Christ's preaching, and the apostles' goal.

**11:17 We give thanks** The only occurrence of the term “to give thanks” (*eucharisteō*) or its derivatives in Revelation.

**11:17 have begun to reign** God has always been sovereign over His creation; however, in John's visions of the time of the end, God takes charge of the kingdoms of the world by setting His Messiah over them as king. This means the end of suffering for the people of God, the end of the kingdoms of the world, and the arrival of justice.

**11:18 the small and the great** Describes everyone without distinction, whether ordinary or important.

**11:18 those who destroy the earth** The Greek term for "destroy" (*diaphtheirō*) refers to those who kill, murder, and oppress persons or nations.

**11:19 the temple of God in heaven was opened** Similar to v. 17, God dwells among His people, and they have unrestricted access to Him (compare Mark 15:38).

**11:19 the ark of his covenant** While the ark of the covenant is presumed to have been destroyed during Nebuchadnezzar's final siege of Jerusalem (586 BC), its fate is unknown. The ark was the locus of God's presence with His people and the symbol of His covenant with them, and here it carries the same significance (compare Rev 21:3).

**11:19 and there were lightnings** See 8:5.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

You might have thought people would repent of their rebellious wickedness after the first six trumpets, but their twisted hearts only found in the warnings, more reasons for hatred. The plagues have mounted to awful heights; humanity is unrepentant; we are poised for the final blast. But as we paused after the sixth seal to learn what was happening to the church in the midst of it all, so we pause after the sixth trumpet to hear God's Word about His prophets and witnesses.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is the most rewarding role or job you have ever had? Why?

God's Word is compared to food: bread (MATTHEW 4:4), milk (1 PETER 2:2), meat (1 CORINTHIANS 3:1–2) and honey (PSALM 119:103). The Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel knew what it was to “eat” the Word before they could share it with others. In this passage we see that any witness must see the Word “become flesh” (JOHN 1:14) before it can be given to those who need it.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 10-11

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 10-11 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Just as we saw an interlude in REVELATION 7:1–17 before the opening of the seventh seal, so now we have an interlude in REVELATION 10:1–11:14 before the blowing of the seventh trumpet. First, in REVELATION 10:1–11, we see a magnificent angel handing John a “little scroll” that is sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. What does this interaction between the angel and John, reveal about John’s authority?

Why is the oath of REVELATION 10:6-7 important for us to know about?

What do you think is symbolized by John’s eating the scroll of God’s words and finding it sweet in his mouth and sour in his stomach (REVELATION 10:9-11)?

What lesson or message for us does REVELATION 10:9-11 offer?

What do you think the measuring of the temple, but not the court of the Gentiles represents (REVELATION 11:1-2)?

Why is it important for us to know that the Temple is measured before the city is given over to be trampled (REVELATION 11:1-2)?

- What do you think is the relevance for us?

What does REVEALTION 11:1-14 tell us about God?

Recall how people responded to the first six trumpet-plagues (REVELATION 9:20-21). How does three and a half years of testimony from the witnesses affect these people (REVELATION 11:3-12)?

- What does it tell us about the world?

To what extent is it every Christian's responsibility like those of the witnesses? (LUKE 12:8-12; 21:12-19.)

What encouragement does the story of the two witnesses offer us as believers?

Earlier, God was called Him "who is, and who was, and who is to come" (REVELATION 1:4,8; 4:8). Why do you suppose "who is to come" is dropped in REVELATION 11:17?

We might have expected the seventh trumpet to usher in the third woe (REVELATION 8:13; 9:1,12-13; 11:14). Instead, we get a heavenly chorus of joy. What do you think this signifies?

Why is heaven singing when we still have six chapters before John describes the return of Christ?

Reflect on what the hosts of Heaven sing REVELATION 11:15-17. How should these truths affect your priorities and actions?

## FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?





**THEREFORE, REJOICE, O HEAVENS AND YOU  
WHO DWELL IN THEM! BUT WOE TO YOU, O  
EARTH AND SEA, FOR THE DEVIL HAS COME  
DOWN TO YOU IN GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE  
HE KNOWS THAT HIS TIME IS SHORT!”  
REVELATION 12:12**



# REVELATION

## 12-14

AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, “WRITE THIS: BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD FROM NOW ON.” “BLESSED INDEED,” SAYS THE SPIRIT, “THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABORS, FOR THEIR DEEDS FOLLOW THEM!”

REVELATION 14:13



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### REVELATION 12-14 ESV – English Standard Version

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

**12** <sup>1</sup>And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give

birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

<sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, <sup>6</sup> and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

<sup>7</sup> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

<sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. <sup>15</sup> The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after

the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. <sup>17</sup> Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

**13** <sup>1</sup> And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. <sup>2</sup> And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup> One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" <sup>5</sup> And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup> and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of

life of the Lamb who was slain. <sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

<sup>10</sup> If anyone is to be taken captive,  
to captivity he goes;  
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,  
with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, <sup>14</sup> and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup> And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. <sup>16</sup> Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, <sup>17</sup> so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. <sup>18</sup> This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

**14** <sup>1</sup> Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and

his Father's name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, <sup>3</sup> and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, <sup>5</sup> and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

<sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.

<sup>7</sup> And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

<sup>8</sup> Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

<sup>9</sup> And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have

no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

<sup>12</sup> Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

<sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

<sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” <sup>16</sup> So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

<sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.”

<sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.





## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

### MESSAGE NOTES



## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

John now sees visions that are clearly symbolic in nature. A pregnant woman is pursued by “an enormous red dragon.” The woman gives birth to a son destined to rule the nations with an iron sceptre, a clear reference to the Messiah (cf. Ps. 2:9). After God snatches the child up to heaven, the woman flees into the desert, to hide for the 1,260 days mentioned in 11:3 (12:1–6). John also sees war in heaven, with the great dragon, satan, hurled to earth with his followers (vv. 7–9). This triumph is celebrated by a voice in heaven, which also depicts satan’s fury (vv. 10–12). In frustration satan pursues the “woman who had given birth to the child” and also makes war on all the saints (vv. 13–17).

John now observes two beasts coming on the scene. The first comes from the sea, his form reminiscent of Daniel 7’s description of Gentile world powers (13:1–2). This beast, the Antichrist, is empowered by satan. He quickly wins a worldwide following that succumbs to his demand for worship (vv. 3–4). Again a 42-month period is mentioned, this time as the period during which the beast rules on the earth. Only those who believe in Christ resist his influence, and many saints will be martyred for their faithfulness to the Lord (vv. 5–10). John then sees a second beast, who serves the first beast and performs miracles on his behalf. This evil individual sets up an image of the Antichrist to be worshiped and organizes society, so that only those who express allegiance to the Antichrist can buy or sell (vv. 11–17). The chapter concludes with a mysterious clue to the Antichrist’s name: the number 666 (v. 18).

The actors in the drama have been introduced in chapters 7, 12, and 13, and the situation on an earth dominated by evil has been clearly revealed. John sees the Lamb on earth, surrounded by the 144,000, who sing His praise. Their work on earth is apparently complete (14:1–5). As John watches he sees three angels fly over the earth calling on mankind to worship God (vv. 6–7), announcing the fall of Babylon the Great (v. 8) and the doom of those who worship and follow the beast (vv. 9–11), as

well as the blessing of those who remain faithful to Jesus (vv. 12–13). Then John sees another terrible sight: an angel emerges from God’s temple and calls on waiting angels to begin the final harvest of earth’s rebellious millions (vv. 14–20).

## EXPLORE

Who are the two principal characters in REVELATION 12:1-6?

The woman’s clothing (REVELATION 12:1) is reflective of visionary passages that contain the sun, moon and twelve stars (EG: GENESIS 37:9-10). What people are associated with these symbols?

Who does each character represent? (REVEALTION 12:1-6)

Pregnant woman

The son

**Cf: ISAIAH 54:1, 5; GALATIANS 4:26-27**

**Cf: Psalm 2:7**

The dragon

**Cf: REVELATION 12:9**

What does God do to protect the woman?

What does this passage reveal (REVELATION 12:1-6) about spiritual warfare?

Who are the main participants in the conflict described in REVELATION 12:7-12?

What is the result of the battle for...

SATAN?

GOD?

What means did God use to achieve victory? REVEALTION 12:11

What weapon does the dragon use to attack and what does it signify?

REVELATION 12:13-17

## LAUNCH

What are the chief features of the Beast? REVELATION 13:1-10

What does REVELATION 13:1-10 reveal about the ways of satan?

Consider the second beast in REVELATION 13:11-18.

Where does it come from?

What does it do?

What link does it have to the first beast?

What does REVELATION 13:11-18 reveal about deceit and deception?

What is the significance of the following...

The name

REVELATION 14:1

Mount Zion

REVELATION 14:1

**Cf: MICAH 4:1-2; 7; Psalm 2:6; 9:11;  
PSALM 65:1; 69:35; 84:7; ISAIAH 60:14;**

The number 144,000

REVELATION 14: 1; 7:4

The virgins

REVELATION 14:4; 8; 17:4-6

The firstfruits

REVELATION 14:4

**Cf: 2 THESSALONIANS 2:13;  
JAMES 1:18**

Two angels

REVELATION 14:6-13

Babylon

REVELATION 14:8

The angels

REVELATION 14:6-20

One like a son of man

REVELATION 14:14

Reaping

REVELATION 14:15

Gathering

REVELATION 14:18

Grapes

REVELATION 14:18-19

Blood

REVELATION 14:20

## **APPLY**

How real do you think satan and his ways are?

In what way have your allegiance to Christ been swayed? What grade would you give yourself on patient endurance and faithfulness?

What are you doing to proclaim the gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people?

Do you think the end of the world is close at hand? How does this affect your lifestyle?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 12-14 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the lord from now on.” “blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”  
REVELATION 14:13

## COMMENTARY

**12:1–18** After the cycle of trumpet judgments (8:2–11:19) and before the bowl judgments (15:1–16:21), John sees a series of visions that involve the powers of evil attacking the Church (12:1–14:20).

Revelation 12 explicitly casts the dragon as the great accuser of God’s people. The kingdom of God was inaugurated by Jesus’ ministry, bringing the body of Christ, the Church, into existence (vv. 1–6). The dragon’s role as the accuser is completely undermined because there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Rom 8:1). The dragon thus seeks

vengeance against the Church (Rev 12:17).

**12:1 great sign** The Greek word *sēmeion* (meaning “sign, miracle, portent”) describes the foreshadowing of a coming event (compare v. 3): the banishment of Satan (v. 9) and the coming of the kingdom of God and His righteous rule (v. 10).

**12:1 heaven** The place where God dwells. The Greek word *ouranos* can mean sky or heaven and refers to the abode of God or an otherworldly dimension. Although the terms can be used interchangeably, the connection with 11:19 and 12:3–4, 7–9 suggests that this sign occurred in heaven (compare 15:1).

**12:1 a woman** The woman is unnamed and unidentified. Her association with the sun, moon, and 12 stars recalls Joseph’s dream in Gen 37:9.

**12:2 crying out** This, along with “birth pains” and “torment,” may suggest the persecution of the people of God.

**12:3 another sign** The first sign is the woman, the second is the dragon.

**12:3 dragon, having seven heads and ten horns** Identified in v. 9 as Satan, the archenemy of God. The horns recall the imagery of Dan 7:7 (where they referred to 10 kings). Like the dragon figures in the combat myth motif (see Rev 12:1–18), this dragon elevated himself and used his power to influence the kings of the world for the oppression of God’s people.

**12:3 royal headbands** Each of the seven heads had a diadem or crown. John sets up a deliberate contrast between the beast’s *diadēmata* (“crowns”) and the woman’s *stephanos* (“crown, wreath”). Royalty and kingly pretenders wore *diadēmata*, whereas victors wore a *stephanos*.

**12:4 a third of the stars from heaven** Since Graeco-Roman people in John’s day often equated stars with gods, and Jews thought of them as angels, this may be a reference to the dragon defeating some of the angelic host (compare the Jewish literature 2 Enoch 4:1; 2 Baruch 51:10). John is probably drawing a parallel between the activities of this dragon-like kingly pretender and Antiochus in Dan 8:10. Both usurpers harmed the stars.



**12:5 to shepherd** The Greek verb *poimainō*, meaning “to shepherd,” is often translated as “to rule.” While the sense is certainly one of leadership, the shepherd imagery should be maintained (see Rev 7:17).

**12:5 with an iron rod** Originally applied to Israel’s king, Psa 2 developed strong messianic connections in the Second Temple period (516 BC–AD 70). An iron rod in the hands of the Messiah connotes an unyieldingly just reign; He will not deviate from His righteous standards or tolerate wickedness or sedition. See Psa 2:9; compare Rev 2:27; 19:15.

**12:5 her child was snatched away to God** This phrase, coupled with the birth described earlier in the verse, likely represents Christ’s ministry from His birth to His death, resurrection, and ascension in summary fashion. Such abbreviated overviews are common in the NT (e.g., John 16:28; 1 Tim 3:16).

**12:6 wilderness** Throughout the Bible, the wilderness is viewed as a safe haven where the afflicted hide (e.g., 1 Sam 23:14; 1 Kgs 19:1–4). God often provides safety and sustenance in these circumstances (e.g., Deut 29:5; 1 Kgs 17:1–6). The concept of fleeing into the wilderness to a place prepared by God (spiritual protection or divine intervention) is similar to the measuring of the sanctuary in ch. 11 and the sealing of the 144,000 in ch. 7. See 11:2.

**12:7 Michael** An archangel; the protector of God’s people (see Dan 10:13; 12:1; compare Jude 9).

**12:8 any longer in heaven** Refers to the concept of the divine council. See Psa 82; compare Rev 12:7–18.

**12:9 was thrown down** Like the stars that he cast to earth in Rev 12:4. Satan is banished from the divine council in heaven to earth, then to the abyss (20:1–3), then finally to the lake of fire (20:10).

**12:9 ancient serpent** See Gen 3; Isa 27:1.

**12:9 the devil and Satan** The Greek terminology used here—*diablos* (meaning “slanderer”) and *satan* (meaning “accuser”)—appropriately coincide with the description of the dragon’s activities in Rev 12:10.

**12:10 accuses them before our God day and night** Satan’s role in the divine council was to accuse continually (see v. 8), but he rebelled from this proper role and became evil. Here, he carries on his original work, but outside of God’s jurisdiction.

**12:11 conquered** The knowledge that Satan could be defeated by faith, witness, and perseverance would have been a tremendous encouragement to the members of the seven churches and others being pressured to compromise spiritually.

**12:11 they did not love their lives until death** They were willing to be martyred for the sake of remaining faithful to Christ.

**12:12 rejoice, you heavens** The heavens should rejoice because Satan has been expelled from their midst.

**12:12 Woe to the earth and to the sea** Refers to the residents of the earth and sea (human and nonhuman life). Satan will exact his revenge upon them.

**12:12 he knows that he has little time** Satan has been banished from the heavenly assembly (vv. 9–10). Satan knows about the arrival of God’s kingdom and seeks to disrupt it.

**12:13 he pursued** The Greek word for “pursue” can also mean “persecute.” Since the woman is given two wings (v. 14), “pursue” fits the context better. However, v. 17 indicates that he will soon persecute her offspring.

**12:14 the two wings of a great eagle** John again alludes to the imagery of the exodus event to describe the deliverance and protection of God’s people (see Exod 19:4).

**12:15–16** *These verses describe the futile efforts of Satan to destroy the woman. These two verses should probably be understood as a metaphor for an attempted destruction of God’s people (compare note on Rev 12:1).*

**12:17 the rest of her children** John’s concern for the persecuted church suggests this is a reference to the Church. They will be attacked by the enemy, but they will be spiritually protected (see v. 6).

**12:17 the testimony about Jesus** The gospel (see 1:2).

**12:18 stood on the sand of the sea** Connects the dragon’s activities to what follows in ch. 13. Since the loud voice pronounced a woe on the land and sea in v. 12, this verse ominously foreshadows what is about to come.

**13:1–10** *Chapter 12 introduced readers of this vision to the dragon; this chapter introduces two beasts who act in concert with the dragon. The first half of the chapter (vv. 1–10) describes the first beast who aids the dragon in his destructive efforts.*

**13:1 sea** Represents turmoil and chaos and connects this account with the account of ch. 12 (see Dan 7:2; compare Rev 12:12).

**13:1 a beast** The description of the beast is reminiscent of Dan 7:1–7.

**13:1 ten horns and seven heads** This description is the same as the dragon (see Rev 12:3). Daniel’s fourth beast had ten horns (Dan 7:7, 24). The ten horns and seven heads are later identified as ten kings and seven hills (Rev 17:9, 12).

**13:1 ten royal headbands** In contrast to the dragon, his crowns are on his horns rather than his heads.

**13:1 blasphemous name** Possibly indicates the divine titles Roman emperors used for themselves. Domitian wished to be called “our Lord and God” and viewed himself as the savior of the world (see 4:11). Compare 17:3.

**13:2 leopard** Like the third beast in Daniel’s vision (Dan 7:6).

**13:2 a bear's** Like the second beast in Daniel's vision (Dan 7:5).

**13:2 lion** Like the first beast in Daniel's vision (Dan 7:4).

**13:2 great authority** The beast is a vassal who acts on behalf of and with the destructive force of the dragon. Since the dragon bestows his power on the beast, the beast shares many of the dragon's characteristics.

**13:3 though slaughtered to death** The beast's wound is a parody of the Lamb's wound in Rev 5:6.

**13:3 its fatal wound had been healed** The exact nature of his wound is unknown. Presumably it was such that any recovery would be deemed miraculous. It is also possible that he would die and be brought back to life by the dragon or false prophet.

**13:3 the whole earth was astonished and followed** This should have been the response to Christ's resurrection. Instead, the beast receives this attention and response.

**13:4 they worshiped the dragon** By worshiping the beast, people are actually worshiping Satan—the force behind the beast's power (compare 12:9).

**13:4 they worshiped the beast** Likely a veiled reference to emperor worship.

**13:4 Who is like the beast** This is a parody of Israel's praises of Yahweh's uniqueness in the OT (e.g., Exod 15:11; Psa 35:10; Isa 40:25).

**13:4 who is able to make war with him** This question will be answered definitively. John is preparing his audience for the events of Rev 19.

**13:5 speaking great things and blasphemies** A further allusion to Dan 7 (compare Dan 7:8, 11, 20).

**13:5 forty-two months** This defined period of time would have been a comfort to Christians; they knew the beast's reign of terror would not last forever. See Rev 11:2.

**13:7 to make war with the saints** Another allusion to Daniel, specifically with regard to the villainous ruler Antiochus (see Dan 7:25; 8:24; 11:30–31). This can also be seen as the warring efforts of the returned Nero; he would come to exact revenge on Rome and be allowed to harm the saints in the process (physical harm, not spiritual).

**13:8 from the foundation of the world** This may refer to the time when the names were entered in the book of life—suggesting that these people can have confidence in God's work. But the Greek phrase used here, *apo katabolēs kosmou*, follows and may modify *tou esphagemenou* ("who was slain"). In this regard, it may be translated as: "those whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slaughtered from the foundation (or founding) of the world." This translation could mean that Christ's saving death was always part of God's plan of salvation (compare 1 Pet 1:19–20).

**13:9 let him hear** Repeats the exhortation from chs. 2 and 3 (see 2:7).

**13:10 into captivity he goes** A call not to resist “captivity,” possibly alluding to arrest or governmental censure. John’s audience should avoid religious compromise at all cost, even to the point of death (martyrdom). Compare Jer 15:2; 43:11; Matt 26:52.

**13:10 is to be killed** In opposition to the previous stanza, this clause reveals the fate of those who resist and take matters into their own hands.

**13:10 patient endurance and the faith of the saints** John calls his readers to endure in the same manner as Christ. They are urged not to compromise their faith or fight back when encountering opposition.

**13:11–18** *In the following section, John introduces a second beast who is later described as the false prophet (see Rev 16:13; 19:20). The second beast is a religious counterpart that encourages worship of the political, first beast. For John’s original readers, this could have meant that Satan was behind the rise of the imperial religion, while the emperor sanctioned it and the second beast promoted it throughout the empire.*

**13:11 coming up from the earth** This may be a parody on the Lamb, who rose from the earth at the resurrection.

**13:11 two horns** In contrast to the Lamb’s seven in 5:6.

**13:11 he was speaking like a dragon** Distinguishes him from the Lamb. Perhaps “like a dragon” refers to the dragon from which he receives authority.

**13:12 whose fatal wound had been healed** The text does not say how the first beast is healed, but the signs mentioned in the next verse suggest that this false prophet (the second beast) may have been responsible for healing the first beast (compare v. 3).

**13:13 he performs great signs** The signs authenticated his message and demonstrated that the beast should be worshiped.

**13:13 causes fire from heaven to come down** As Elijah did in 1 Kgs 18:38 and 2 Kgs 1:10–12. This second beast may be imitating the miracles of God’s prophets in an attempt to demonstrate his superiority over them and to identify the first beast as divine.

**13:14 to make an image to the beast** In John’s day, images, busts, and statues were set up throughout the empire in tribute to the deified emperor.

**13:15 spoke** Possibly hyperbolic language used to express the authority that the false prophet and the images had. The command to worship and the threat upon the disobedient was so real that the images themselves seemed to be demanding allegiance.

**13:15 should be killed** Illustrates the situation John’s audience faced in Asia Minor.

**13:16 a mark** In the ancient world religious branding was a common way to display devotion to a particular deity. The Greek word *charagma* (meaning “mark,

brand, stamp”) describes the imperial logo on commercial documents, merchandise, and coinage.

**13:16 right hand or on their forehead** This may be a parody of the seal that Christians had (Rev 7:3; 14:1) or of the Israelites’ bearing God’s law. Jews often wore boxes (called phylacteries) containing portions of the Law on their foreheads or hands (see Exod 13:9; Deut 6:8).

**13:17 able to buy or to sell** There would be economic depression and poverty for those who would not bear the mark. The church in Smyrna may have already been feeling these effects (see Rev 2:9).

**13:18 his number is six hundred sixty-six** John may be employing gematria—the practice of assigning numbers to letters of the alphabet. The number may allude to Roman oppression, since one spelling of Emperor Nero’s name, transliterated from Greek into Hebrew, adds up to 666 by this method. An alternative is to see a contrast between this number and seven, the number of completion. Three sixes might indicate that the beast falls short of completion.

*14:1–5 In vv. 1–5, the Lamb is pictured standing with His 144,000 troops (see 7:4 and note) on Mount Zion. This passage answers the question of what happens to those who refuse the mark of the beast (13:16): They are marked with the name of the Lamb and His Father, and they are victorious.*

**14:1 Mount Zion** Zion originally referred to the Jebusite stronghold captured by David (2 Sam 5:6–7). It later came to symbolize the city of God, from which He exercises His reign (Isa 24:23; Heb 12:22).

**14:1 one hundred forty-four thousand** See Rev 7:4.

**14:1 written on their foreheads** Deliberately contrasts the beast’s mark in 13:16–18 (compare 7:3; 9:4; 22:4).

**14:2 a sound** The Greek word used here can mean “sound” or “voice.” It refers to the song of the 144,000 (v. 3).

**14:2 like the sound of loud thunder** The other thunderous voice in Revelation followed the Lamb’s first initiation of judgment (see 6:1).

**14:2 harpists playing on their harps** Harps in Revelation often connote victory. It is later prophesied that Rome will no longer hear the sound of harps (18:22).

**14:3 no one was able to learn the song** It is likely a song praising God and the Lamb for redemption.

**14:4 have not been defiled with women** This is holy war imagery; it indicates those who are ritually clean according to the Mosaic laws governing holy war (Deut 23:9–10; see 1 Sam 21:5; Josh 6:16; Josh 6:17).

**14:4 for they are virgins** Indicates that they have remained loyal to Christ and have not defiled themselves by compromising with the world (compare Rev 19:7–9; 2 Cor 11:2).

**14:4 first fruits** The offering of the firstfruits served as an acknowledgment to God for His gracious provision at harvest time (see Exod 23:16, 19). It communicated thankfulness and a sense of dependency from the person making the offering. It also signified that the entire harvest belonged to Yahweh. The people of God are presented in like manner.

**14:5 blameless** Like their Lord; they reflect His character and fidelity.

**14:6–13** *Three angels arrive bearing announcements of impending judgment and a warning against religious compromise. There is a final exhortation to remain steadfast and an explanation of the consequences for those who do not.*

**14:6 I saw** Common language throughout the book indicating a new vision or a new scene in an existing vision.

**14:6 flying directly overhead** The last time this phrase was used (Rev 8:13), a threefold woe was announced—similar to what occurs here.

**14:6 eternal gospel** His statement in v. 7.

**14:7 Fear God and give him glory** The goal of judgment (see 9:20).

**14:7 hour of his judgment has come** Judgment is imminent. In light of the assembly of the Lamb's troops in vv. 1–5, the angel can announce the arrival of judgment.

**14:7 worship** The angel calls his audience to worship the true God as opposed to the beast.

**14:7 heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs** All areas that God has judged so far.

**14:8 Fallen, fallen** Repeated for emphasis and to communicate the complete devastation that would befall Rome (see 18:2; compare Isa 21:9). John foresees the eventual demise of the city as judgment from God; it did not occur in his day.

**14:8 Babylon the great Rome.** Babylon, the site of the Tower of Babel and the destroyers of the Jerusalem temple (in 586 BC), was the symbol of human pride, idolatry, and immorality (e.g., Gen 11:9; Dan 4:30). Rome was guilty of the same sins that brought destruction on ancient Babylon (compare 1 Pet 5:13).

**14:8 sexual immorality** Probably refers to idolatry, often described as adultery in the OT, but sexual sins may be in view as well (compare Rev 2:14; 18:3; Jer 51:7).

**14:10 will drink** They will be forced to drink; they will receive the wrath of God. mixed full strength in the cup of his wrath It was unmixed—not weakened by diluting with water. For the cup of wrath imagery, see Jer 25:15–29.

**14:10 with fire and sulphur** Foreshadows the events of Rev 19:20; 20:10, 14–15. Sulfur is a foul-smelling element that burns extremely hot.

**14:10 in the presence of** They may be able to observe the joyous fates of those who chose to worship the Lamb rather than the beast.

**14:11 forever and ever** Unlike the torture of 9:5, which lasts five months, this final torture is permanent and will not be relieved.

**14:12 patient endurance of the saints** Refers to their perseverance in the pursuit of righteousness and faith. Like 13:10, this is an encouragement for believers but with a view toward eternal destiny: Those who persist in faith and do not take part in the worship of the beast will avoid the second death and receive divine blessing (see vv. 13; 20:12–15).

**14:13 Write** See 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 19:9; 21:5. This has been John’s command from the beginning of the book.

**14:13 Blessed are** A second beatitude (see 1:3).

**14:13 in the Lord** In union or relationship with the Lord.

**14:13 from now on** John anticipates several martyrdoms in the near future.

**14:13 “Yes,” says the Spirit** The first time the Spirit speaks explicitly in the book.

**14:13 for their deeds follow after them** Describes a record of their service and faithfulness to Christ. This section (vv. 6–13) is an exhortation to believers to avoid compromise with the world and the beast and to persevere until death. In the end, their deeds will testify to their faith.

**14:14–20** *This section narrates two harvests: a grain harvest and a grape harvest. The first harvest is performed by the Son of Man, the second by an angel. It is not entirely clear whether these harvests indicate salvation or judgment. The first harvest appears to be a harvest of salvation, and the second harvest appears to be a harvest of judgment.*

**14:14 a son of man** See 1:13.

**14:14 golden crown** Testifies to Jesus’ kingship (compare 4:10).

**14:14 sickle** A tool with a curved blade and handle used for reaping grain.

**14:15 another angel** In addition to the three mentioned in vv. 6–9.

**14:15 the temple** Refers to the temple in heaven (see 11:19; v. 17).

**14:15 the one seated on the cloud** Refers to Christ; the angel informs Christ of God’s command to reap.

**14:15 the harvest of the earth is ripe** The imagery in this section may echo Joel 3:12–13 or Jesus’ words about the end-time harvest (Matt 9:37–38; 13:36–43). If the Joel passage is in view, this may be a judgment on the wicked. If Jesus’ words are in view, this first harvest consists of collecting those who will be with Him.

**14:17 he also had a sharp sickle** Christ performed the first harvest; the grape harvest will be performed by angels (compare Matt 13:41–42).

**14:18 authority over the fire** While this could be suggestive of judgment, like the angels who control the water and wind, it most likely refers to the fire of the altar (Rev 8:3–5; compare 7:1; 14:10; 16:5).

**14:18 from the altar** The altar is in the temple (vv. 15, 17). The mention of the altar might suggest the atonement God requires (5:12).

**14:19 the great winepress of the wrath of God** This reaping involves not just harvesting, but crushing in a winepress (compare Isa 63:3; Rev 19:15).

**14:20 outside the city** Criminals and the wicked were customarily executed outside the city.

**14:20 bridles of the horses** The blood was about five feet deep.

**14:20 one thousand six hundred stadia** This expression, combined with “as high as a horse’s bridle,” is meant to suggest a great quantity of blood and a massive number of people judged.



# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

With the final trumpet, we might have expected the third and most devastating woe, the return of Christ, and the consummation of the kingdom. Instead, chapters 12 through 14 give us a series of visions about the conflict between the church and the powers of evil—war in heaven and war on earth. The reasons why the seven churches are suffering, why John is on Patmos, why the witnesses must be martyred in the last days is explained in these chapters. Likewise, these visions explain why the seals and trumpets, as well as the bowls yet to come, are necessary.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

How have you experienced satan's attacks in the past?

These passages help us understand the cosmic struggle between holy and evil and the Church's essential part in God's working plan. Those who do not compromise are usable.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 12-14

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 12-14 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

In your own words, explain what you think is the meaning of John's vision in REVELATION 12:1-6.

What can we learn about satan (his character, activities, and destiny) from REVELATION 12:7-12?

Who are "they" in REVELATION 12:11 who have overcome the accuser (consider REVELATION 12:10-11)?

- How have they overcome satan?
- How does this harmonize with, rather than contradict, REVELATION 12:7-8, which ascribes the victory to Michael and his angels?
- How do you think REVELATION 12:11 should affect your life?

Explain what the dragon (satan) does when he is cast to the earth (see REVELATION 12:13-17).

- Why is it important for you to know that when he is hurled from heaven and cannot destroy the woman, the dragon makes war against those who obey God's commands (see REVELATION 12:12,17)?
- What important truths about God and His people are conveyed in REVELATION 12:6,14-16?

Does satan really control the earth?

Cf: PSALM 24:1; MATTHEW 4:8-10; JOHN 8:44; 12:31; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:4.

As Christ is God's representative, so the sea beast is satan's. He is often called the antichrist for this reason: he is a gross imitation and opposite of

Christ. How does the Beast distortedly mimic what Christ is and does?  
REVELATION 13:1-18

“Patient endurance” is a theme of Revelation. According to REVELATION 13:1-18, what will (or do) the saints have to endure patiently?

- Why is it important for you to know this?

What is the significance of the fact that the Beast “was given” his mouth and his authority for a limited period (REVELATION 13:5,7)?

- Who do you think gives the Beast this power, and why is this important?

What are the chief characteristics of the redeemed 144,000 (REVELATION 14:4-5)?

- In which of these traits you would like to grow?
- How does this vision encourage or challenge you?

In REVELATION 14:6-13 there are four brief oracles of encouragement and warning.

- What lessons for us, do the four prophecies of REVELATION 14:6-13 offer?

What difference should the promise of judgment and wrath against evil make to your present life? REVELATION 14:14-16 14:17-20

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?

**THEN I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM THE  
TEMPLE TELLING THE SEVEN ANGELS, “GO  
AND POUR OUT ON THE EARTH THE SEVEN  
BOWLS OF THE WRATH OF GOD.”  
REVELATION 16:1**



# REVELATION

## 15-16

THEN I SAW ANOTHER SIGN IN HEAVEN, GREAT AND AMAZING, SEVEN ANGELS WITH SEVEN PLAGUES, WHICH ARE THE LAST, FOR WITH THEM THE WRATH OF GOD IS FINISHED.  
REVELATION 15:1



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 15-16 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**15** <sup>1</sup>Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

<sup>2</sup>And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

<sup>3</sup>And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and amazing are your deeds,  
O Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways,  
O King of the nations!  
<sup>4</sup> Who will not fear, O Lord,  
and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

<sup>5</sup>After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, <sup>6</sup>and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. <sup>7</sup>And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, <sup>8</sup>and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

**16** <sup>1</sup> Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

<sup>2</sup> So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

<sup>3</sup> The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

<sup>4</sup> The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. <sup>5</sup> And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,  
for you brought these judgments.

<sup>6</sup> For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,

and you have given them blood to drink.

It is what they deserve!”

<sup>7</sup> And I heard the altar saying,

“Yes, Lord God the Almighty,  
true and just are your judgments!”

<sup>8</sup> The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. <sup>9</sup> They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

<sup>10</sup> The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish <sup>11</sup> and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

<sup>12</sup> The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. <sup>13</sup> And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. <sup>14</sup> For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. <sup>15</sup> (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his

garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”<sup>16</sup> And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

<sup>17</sup> The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”<sup>18</sup> And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.<sup>19</sup> The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.<sup>20</sup> And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found.<sup>21</sup> And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES







## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

The devastating judgments resume as seven final plagues are launched (15:1), while victorious saints in heaven praise God for His deeds (vv. 2–5). Seven angels emerge from the heavenly temple bearing bowls “filled with the wrath of God” (vv. 6–8), to be directed against those who bear the mark of the beast (16:1–2). Painful sores break out on humans and earth’s seas and waters are turned to blood (vv. 3–4), as an angel proclaims the justice of these judgments (vv. 5–7).

The judgments then continue. The sun swells and intense heat scorches the earth (vv. 8–9). All becomes dark, and men twist in agony but continue to curse God (vv. 10–11). Then the waters of the Euphrates dry up, and a vast army is recruited by demonic beings for a last great battle against God at Armageddon (vv. 12–16). When the final bowl is emptied earth itself is shattered: great fissures open, cities crumble and mountains fall as huge hailstones pummel the broken land. Yet the remainder of humankind continues to curse God (vv. 17–21).

### EXPLORE

REVELATION 15 is an opening scene to the fourth cycle of judgements. Who is present?

How are the redeemed described? REVELATION 15:2

Two songs are mentioned in REVELATION 15:3. What do you think is the relationship between the two?

What is the focus of the song in REVELATION 15:3-4?

What does it say about God?

What does it reveal about the heart of the singers?

What does it say about the nations?

What response is asked for?

What is the new location in REVELATION 15:5 and what is the significance of this location?

What does the clothing signify in REVELATION 15:6?

What is the source and significance of the bowls? REVELATION 15:7-8

How does REVELATION 15:8 set the expectation and mood for the plagues that are to come?

## LAUNCH

What different disasters happen with the first four bowls? REVELATION 16:1-9

What regions are affected?

How does this compare to plagues from biblical history?

Can you see any link between these four disasters and what happens with the first four trumpets (REVELATION 8:6-12)?

With the third bowl, we learn about the reason for the judgements. What biblical principle of justice is presented? REVELATION 16:4-7

**Cf: OBADIAH 15; REVELATION 18:6**

With the fourth bowl, what does the reaction of the people reveal about their true problem? REVELATION 16:9, 11

What different disasters happen with the last three bowls? REVELATION 16:10-21

What role is played by demonic spirits? REVELATION 16:13-15

## **APPLY**

How influenced is your praise and worship of God by circumstances?  
Why/why not?

How receptive are you to admitting your guilt and repenting when you sin?

What has surprised you about God or about his judgement?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 15-16 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

Then I saw another sign in  
heaven, great and amazing,  
seven angels with seven  
plagues, which are the last,  
for with them the wrath of  
God is finished.  
REVELATION 15:1

## COMMENTARY

**15:1–16:21** Revelation 15–16 narrate the pouring out of seven bowls of God's wrath, described as the last plagues (v. 1). These build on and consummate the earlier judgments of the seven seals (6:1–8:1) and trumpets (8:6–11:19). Whereas the seals destroyed a quarter of the earth (6:8) and the trumpets destroyed a third of the earth (8:7), the destruction of the bowls is comprehensive.

**15:1–8** In this section, the reader is introduced to the seven angels who will carry out God's final earthly judgment (vv. 1, 5–8). Those who conquered the beast vindicate God through song for His forthcoming judgment (vv. 2–4).

**15:1 another great and marvelous sign** A third sign (see 12:1, 3).

**15:1 in heaven** Refers to the abode of God (see 12:1).

**15:1 seven angels** See 8:6, although these appear to be a different set of seven angels.

**15:1 having seven plagues** They are not suffering from the plagues but are responsible for delivering them upon the earth.

**15:1 the last ones** The final set of seven judgments upon the earth following the seals and the trumpets.

**15:2 a sea of glass mixed with fire** The addition of fire here may be a reference to judgment. See 4:6.

**15:2 who had conquered the beast** Includes martyrs and survivors who did not succumb to pressure and persecution. The beast's conquest of them is short-lived (11:7); those who are killed by the beast enjoy divine blessing and eternal life (14:12–13).

**15:2 his image** See 13:14–15.

**15:2 the number of his name 666** (see 13:18).

**15:2 harps from God** Signifying victory (see 14:2).

**15:3 the song of Moses, the slave of God** In Exodus, the song of Moses marveled at God's wonders, character, and majesty, similar to the song in vv. 3–4 (see Exod 15:1–21; Deut 32).

**15:3 the song of the Lamb** There are not two songs, but one. It describes deliverance for God's people and judgment for their enemies (compare 5:9–13; 7:10–17).

**15:4 Who would never fear, Lord** A rhetorical question: all will fear and glorify His name. See Exod 15:11.

**15:5 temple, the tent of the testimony** This description emphasizes the tabernacle as the site of God’s covenant testimony (compare Num 17:7). The judgments that are about to take place flow from people’s rejection of God.

**15:5 was opened** Similar to Rev 11:19. The opening of temple doors or gates could signal judgment, such as in the Deuterocanonical work 3 Maccabees 6:16–21. A parallel is found in Virgil’s Aeneid where the temple of Janus in Rome was opened prior to battle.

**15:6 the seven angels** See Rev 15:1.

**15:6 dressed in clean, bright linen garments** Typical clothing for angelic figures (see Dan 10:5; 12:6–7; Ezek 9:2; 10:2).

**15:6 girded with golden belts** These angels resemble the figure from Dan 10:5 and the glorified Christ in Rev 1:13.

**15:7 one of the four living creatures** See 4:6–8.

**15:8 smoke** Alludes to the theophany at Sinai (see Exod 19:18). Smoke or cloud often accompanies a visible manifestation of God’s presence (1 Kgs 8:10–11; Isa 6:4).

**16:1–21** *The angels carrying the seven bowls of God’s wrath pour them out upon the world. The bowls are God’s final judgment prior to the great white throne judgment in ch. 20. These judgments are similar to the plagues on Egypt and the trumpet judgments earlier in the book (compare Exod 7–12).*

**16:1 loud voice** While generally anonymous in Revelation, this likely refers to God’s voice; no one could enter the temple because His presence was there.

**16:1 seven angels** See Rev 15:1, 6.

**16:2 evil and painful sore** Describes oozing, open wounds or ulcers, corresponding to Exod 9:8–12.

**16:2 mark of the beast** See Rev 13:16.

**16:2 worshiped his image** See 13:14–15.

**16:3 blood, like that of a dead person** This judgment and the one that follows mirror Exod 7:17–24.

**16:3 every living thing** In contrast to the one-third that perished as a result of the second trumpet judgment (see Rev 8:8).

**16:4 they became blood** Compare 8:10–11, where the rivers and streams are made bitter.

**16:5 angel of the waters** See 14:18.

**16:6 they have poured out the blood** Those who delighted in shedding blood now are forced to drink blood as a fitting form of punishment.



**16:7 I heard the altar saying** Refers to those that dwell beneath the altar—the martyrs. This is the ultimate vindication in response to their query in 6:10.

**16:7 righteous** God has avenged the blood of the martyrs. The murderers received righteous retribution.

**16:8 it was granted** Passive verbs in Revelation often connote divine permission (e.g., 6:4; 9:5; 13:5, 7, 15). Here, the sun is an instrument of divine wrath.

**16:9 were burned up** Or received severe burns.

**16:9 who has the authority over these plagues** Because Yahweh was responsible for the plagues, the wicked cursed His name.

**16:9 they did not repent to give him glory** They did not glorify Him or acknowledge His power, but they will be forced to do so. Compare 2:5; 9:20.

**16:10 the fifth** The first four bowls were directed toward the natural world. This is a frontal assault on evil.

**16:10 throne of the beast** The symbol of the beast's power (see 13:2). In John's day, this was Rome and its divine pretensions, which were ultimately satanic (see 2:13).

**16:10 darkened** Corresponds to Exod 10:21–23, where the darkness is centralized in Egypt (compare Rev 8:12).

**16:10 they began chewing their tongues** May connote confusion and mental derangement brought on by prolonged, intense physical suffering.

**16:10 because of the pain** Caused by the sores, thirst, and burns inflicted so far.

**16:11 they blasphemed the God of heaven** The people's typical response (compare v. 9).

**16:12 Euphrates** The Euphrates River served as Rome's eastern border and protected Rome from invasion by the Parthian Empire. If the Euphrates were to dry up, Rome would be threatened.

**16:12 the kings from the east** If the Nero redivivus myth is the background for this imagery, then this refers to the Parthians led by Nero.

**16:13 the dragon** See 12:3, 9.

**16:13 the beast** The first beast (see 13:1).

**16:13 the false prophet** The second beast (see 13:11).

**16:13 three unclean spirits like frogs** Corresponds to Exod 8:1–15. Evil spirits, not literal frogs, are in view here.

**16:14 performing signs** These demons summon people to battle and authenticate their message with signs. Ironically, though they were commissioned by the unholy trinity, they unknowingly work for the Holy Trinity by gathering the nations together in one place for judgment.

**16:14 the whole inhabited world** Refers to all the kingdoms of the world, including the vassals of Rome.

**16:14 the great day of God the All-Powerful** Refers to judgment day (see Joel 2:11).

**16:15 like a thief** After mentioning the Day of the Yahweh (the Lord) in the previous verse, John inserts a parenthetical statement describing Christ's return in judgment (compare Matt 24:43–44; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10).

**16:15 Blessed is** The third beatitude in Revelation (see Rev 1:3).

**16:15 they see his shameful** In the ancient Near East, conquering armies often paraded prisoners of war naked to expose them to as much shame as possible (compare Ezek 23:24–29).

**16:16 Armageddon** The Greek word used here, *harmageddōn*, could be a reference to Megiddo in the Esdraelon plain, but this is not definitive since Megiddo is a plain, not a mountain (the first part of the Greek word, *har*, is Hebrew for “mountain”). In the OT, Megiddo was the site of significant conflicts (e.g., Judg 5:19; 2 Kgs 9:27; 2 Chr 35:22). John may be drawing on a well-known battle site to indicate symbolically the final conflict between God and the dragon, as he has elsewhere drawn on the symbolism associated with Babylon (see Rev 14:8) and Mount Zion (see 14:1).

**16:17 the seventh poured out his bowl** Since this angel pours from heaven, he continues to pour in a downward direction. In contrast with the seal and trumpet judgments, no interlude takes place between the sixth and seventh bowls—the time allotted for repentance has passed.

**16:17 loud voice God's voice** (see v. 1).

**16:18 time humanity has been on the earth** A hyperbolic way of saying “the most violent earthquake of all time.”

**16:19 the great city** Probably refers to Rome (see 17:18; 18:10–24); Jerusalem is also possible (see 11:8).

**16:19 Babylon the great** Refers to Rome (see 14:8).

**16:20 every island fled** Because of the quake in v. 18, the earth appeared to be running away. This type of language is used to describe divine punishment in the OT (e.g., Nah 1:3–5).

**16:21 about a hundred pounds** Hailstones of this size would bring total destruction. Such a storm would level cities, obliterate forests, and leave few survivors among people or animals. This final bowl judgment brings wholesale devastation upon the earth.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

We encountered seven seals, seven thunders, and seven trumpets in REVELATION 6–11. REVELATION 12–14 then focused on the key enemies of God (particularly satan and the two beasts) before providing yet another view of God’s final victory over his enemies (as we’ve seen, the end of history and the final judgment is depicted numerous times throughout the book, e.g., 6:12–17; 11:17–19; 14:14–20). Now, in REVELATION 15–16, we’re presented with the last major cycle of seven: the seven bowls.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What first-hand experience have you had with a natural disaster? What happened?

These passages depict the climactic outpouring of the judgments of God, (REVELATION 16) after first affirming the righteousness and justice of the God who inflicts such terrible retribution (REVELATION 15).

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 15-16

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 15-16 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

In Exodus 15:1-18, Moses led Israel in a song to celebrate God's victory over Egypt at the Red Sea. The song in REVELATION 15:3-4 echoes Moses' song. Why is it appropriate that those who have been victorious over the Beast and his cult are the ones who sing the song of REVELATION 15:3-4?

Why is it appropriate that the song of the Lamb (REVELATION 15:3-4) is sung just as the seven last plagues are about to be poured out?

What important truths about God are affirmed in REVELATION 15:1-8?

What happens when each of the seven bowls of wrath is poured out?

REVELATION 16:2

REVELATION 16:3

REVELATION 16:4

REVELATION 16:8-9

REVELATION 16:10-11

REVELATION 16:12-16

REVELATION 16:17-21

The first four trumpet-judgments destroyed a third of the earth (and trees), the sea (and sea creatures), the fresh waters, and the light (REVELATION 8:6-12). How are the bowl-judgments different?

How is the first plague appropriate for those who have allowed the mark of the Beast on their bodies (REVELATION 16:2)?

How do the next two plagues fit mankind's crimes (REVELATION 16:4-7)?

How do the people respond to the seven plagues (REVELATION 16:9, 11, 21)?

How are the bowls of wrath, horrible as they are, perfectly just?

What do and don't we know about the battle at Armageddon from the information given in REVELATION?

Compare REVELATION 16:15 to LUKE 12:35-48. How can you apply this truth even now?

What are the "impure spirits that looked like frogs" (REVELATION 16:13), and what do they do (REVELATION 16:14,16)?

The third beatitude is inserted into this brief story (REVELATION 16:15). Why is this blessing so relevant to the context of REVELATION 16:13-14,16?

- How is this beatitude relevant to your life?

What is your response to the idea of God's wrath?

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



**THEN I HEARD  
ANOTHER VOICE  
FROM HEAVEN  
SAYING,  
“COME OUT OF  
HER, MY PEOPLE,  
LEST YOU TAKE  
PART IN HER  
SINS,  
LEST YOU  
SHARE IN HER  
PLAGUES;  
REVELATION 18:4**

# REVELATION

## 17-19:10

“HALLELUJAH!

SALVATION AND GLORY AND POWER BELONG TO OUR GOD, FOR HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND JUST; FOR HE HAS JUDGED THE GREAT PROSTITUTE WHO CORRUPTED THE EARTH WITH HER IMMORALITY, AND HAS AVENGED ON HER THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS.”

REVELATION 19:1-2



## READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 17-19:10 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**17** <sup>1</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” <sup>3</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet

beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” <sup>6</sup> And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her, I marveled greatly. <sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. <sup>8</sup> The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. <sup>9</sup> This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; <sup>10</sup> they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. <sup>11</sup> As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. <sup>12</sup> And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. <sup>13</sup> These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup> They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he



is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

<sup>15</sup> And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. <sup>16</sup> And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, <sup>17</sup> for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

**18** <sup>1</sup> After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he called out with a mighty voice,

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

She has become a dwelling place for demons,

a haunt for every unclean spirit,

a haunt for every unclean bird,

a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

<sup>3</sup> For all nations have drunk

the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,

and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,

and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”

<sup>4</sup> Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,

“Come out of her, my people,

lest you take part in her sins,

lest you share in her plagues;

<sup>5</sup> for her sins are heaped high as heaven,  
and God has remembered her iniquities.

<sup>6</sup> Pay her back as she herself has paid back others,  
and repay her double for her deeds;  
mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.

<sup>7</sup> As she glorified herself and lived in luxury,  
so give her a like measure of torment and mourning,  
since in her heart she says,

‘I sit as a queen,

I am no widow,

and mourning I shall never see.’

<sup>8</sup> For this reason her plagues will come in a single  
day,

death and mourning and famine,

and she will be burned up with fire;

for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.”

<sup>9</sup> And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual  
immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and  
wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

<sup>10</sup> They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

“Alas! Alas! You great city,

you mighty city, Babylon!

For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

<sup>11</sup> And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for  
her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, <sup>12</sup> cargo of  
gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk,  
scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of  
articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood,  
bronze, iron and marble, <sup>13</sup> cinnamon, spice, incense,

myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

<sup>14</sup> “The fruit for which your soul longed  
has gone from you,  
and all your delicacies and your splendors  
are lost to you,  
never to be found again!”

<sup>15</sup> The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

<sup>16</sup> “Alas, alas, for the great city  
that was clothed in fine linen,  
in purple and scarlet,  
adorned with gold,  
with jewels, and with pearls!

<sup>17</sup> For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off <sup>18</sup> and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

“What city was like the great city?”

<sup>19</sup> And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, for the great city  
where all who had ships at sea  
grew rich by her wealth!

For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

<sup>20</sup> Rejoice over her, O heaven,  
and you saints and apostles and prophets,  
for God has given judgment for you against her!”

<sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

“So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence,

and will be found no more;

<sup>22</sup> and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters,

will be heard in you no more,

and a craftsman of any craft

will be found in you no more,

and the sound of the mill

will be heard in you no more,

<sup>23</sup> and the light of a lamp

will shine in you no more,

and the voice of bridegroom and bride

will be heard in you no more,

for your merchants were the great ones of the earth,

and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

<sup>24</sup> And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints,

and of all who have been slain on earth.”

**19** <sup>1</sup> After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

<sup>2</sup> for his judgments are true and just;

for he has judged the great prostitute

who corrupted the earth with her immorality,

and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

<sup>3</sup> Once more they cried out,

“Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

<sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” <sup>5</sup> And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
small and great.”

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself ready;

<sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

<sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” <sup>10</sup> Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

### MESSAGE NOTES



## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

John again sees a vision whose major elements are interpreted within the text. A “great prostitute” is a city seated on seven hills, who rides the Antichrist to power and then is destroyed by him. John first describes “the great prostitute” (17:1–6) and goes on to interpret the vision (vv. 7–18), identifying the beast, his drive toward power, and his subsequent turning on the “prostitute” when absolute power is his.

John sees yet another angel who announces the fall of Babylon the Great, the great satanic system of evil that corrupts every human society: a blend of religion and political power, a composite of swirling desires and passions, a web of institutions that befit the powerful and oppress the weak. This system is pictured as a great commercial city, whose fall is celebrated in heaven and bewailed on earth. First comes the announcement: “Fallen is Babylon the Great” (18:1–3). In a warning intended for John’s readers, another angel calls God’s people to “come out of her,” separating themselves from Babylon in all her forms (vv. 4–8). The viewpoint then shifts. Her fall is lamented by the kings of the earth who tasted her powers (vv. 9–10), the merchants who profited from her passion for luxury and self-indulgence (vv. 11–17), and the seamen who carried her goods (vv. 18–19). But the lament on earth is drowned out by shouts of joy in heaven (v. 20). There, as a parable of the sudden and total destruction to be visited on Babylon, an angel violently hurls a giant boulder into the sea, which swallows it up—and it is gone (vv. 21–24).

Now, truly, the end has come. John hears the roar of a multitude in heaven shouting “Hallelujah!” and praising God for avenging the blood of His servants (19:1–2). The cry is echoed by the worshiping elders (vv. 3–4), and then taken up by the multitude, rejoicing that the ultimate union of believers with the Lord is about to take place (vv. 5–10).

## EXPLORE

In REVELATION 17:1-6 we meet the great prostitute. What is revealed about her...

Appearance?

Morality?

Character?

What danger does the great prostitute pose to the saints? REVELATION 17:6

What is the relation between the woman and the beast? REVELATION 17:7

How is the name of the beast in REVELATION 17:8 like and unlike the name of God?

What is the significance of the number seven (REVELATION 17:9-11) and what does it imply about the other numbers in REVELATION 17:10?

What two instances of war are there? REVELATION 17:14; 16-17

What is God's involvement in the warfare? REVELATION 17:17



## LAUNCH

Who is Babylon? REVELATION 17:1-6

What has happened to Babylon and what sins has been revealed?  
REVELATION 18:1-3

What are people told to do and why? REVELATION 18:4-8

What do we learn about justice? REVELATION 18:6

In the three woes of REVELATION 18:9-19...

Who is wailing?

What is common to all three groups?

What different sins are revealed for each group?

What is the heart attitude of each group?

REVELATION 18-19:10 describes rejoicing...

What is being celebrated? REVELATION 19:1-3

Who is celebrating? REVELATION 19:4-8

Who is the bride? REVELATION 19:7

What is the significance of the marriage supper? REVELATION 19:9

## **APPLY**

What in our day is reflective of the figure of the great prostitute?

On the basis of these terrible judgments, what do you feel exhorted to do?

What do these passages reveal about the true nature of worship?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 17-19 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**“Hallelujah!  
Salvation and glory and  
power belong to our God, for  
his judgments are true and  
just: for he has judged the  
great prostitute who  
corrupted the earth with her  
immorality, and has avenged  
on her the blood of his  
servants.”  
REVELATION 19:1-2**

## COMMENTARY

**17:1–19:5** This section contains a graphic portrayal of the great prostitute, Babylon—identified as Rome—and the beast she rides on, the larger Roman Empire (Rev 17:1–18). This is followed by an account of her fall (18:1–24) and a hymn of praise (19:1–5) over her destruction. John writes this section as though he is looking back—as if the judgment has already occurred (though it was future to his time of writing). It serves as a contrast to the new Jerusalem, described in chs. 21–22.

**17:1 one of the seven angels** Introduced in 15:1; 16:1.

**17:1 the great prostitute** Identified in v. 18 as a major city (probably Rome). The

prophets often depict cities using female imagery such as a bride, wife, or prostitute (e.g., Isa 1:21; 23:17; Ezek 23:2–4). The image of a prostitute is used to illustrate Rome’s spiritual bankruptcy and moral degradation.

**17:1 many waters** Identified in Rev 17:15 as the people of many nations.

**17:2 the wine of her sexual immorality** Sexual immorality may refer to religious infidelity, the sexual indiscretion involved in pagan ritual, or both (see 2:21 and note). Chapter 18 suggests that this immorality also represents the commercial and political dealings of Rome with the kings and merchants of the earth. All of Rome’s relationships are corrupt. See 14:8; compare Jer 51:7.

**17:3 in the Spirit** John’s third such experience (see Rev 1:10; compare 21:10).

**17:3 scarlet beast** Since every description of this beast mirrors the first beast in 13:1–8, the two should be equated (see note on 13:1; note on 13:3).

**17:3 blasphemous names** May describe a divine title ascribed to the emperor (see 13:1 and note).

**17:3 having seven heads and ten horns** These are variously identified in vv. 9–10, 12. See 13:1.

**17:4 purple and scarlet** Connotes luxury and royalty (compare 18:16–17).

**17:4 precious stones and pearls** Lavish ornamentation used for beautification (see 18:16).

**17:4 full of detestable things** Compare with 14:10. This Greek word is used to refer to idolatry and practices associated with polytheistic religious practices.

**17:5 a mystery** Indicates a mysterious name—one with a hidden meaning that requires interpretation. Roman prostitutes commonly wore headbands bearing their name.

**17:5 mother of prostitutes** The source of the earth's obscenities (see v. 1 and note).

**17:6 with the blood of the saints** Whereas the prophets and saints are previously mentioned together (see 11:18; 16:6), they are separated here by the double occurrence of the Greek preposition ek ("with"). This may indicate that two different groups are in view: OT saints and NT believers.

**17:7 the angel** Angels often interpret key events in apocalyptic literature (e.g., Dan 7:16; 8:15–16).

**17:8 was, and is not, and is going to come** A parody on the divine name (see Rev 1:4).

**17:8 the book of life** See 3:5.

**17:9 seven mountains on which the woman sits** The city of Rome was well-known for being built upon seven hills.

**17:9 they are seven kings** The seven heads of the beast also represent seven kings (kingdoms may also be intended).

**17:10 one is** Could refer to a particular Roman emperor (such as Domitian) or Rome itself, depending on how the seven kings are interpreted.

**17:10 the other has not yet come** Refers to a future king or kingdom of the seven.

**17:10 remain a short time** The succession of beastly rulers will continue, but not for much longer.

**17:11 an eighth, and is of the seven** The beast is referred to as an eighth who is of the seven. Perhaps what is meant here is that the beast is of the same kind as the seven; he is the power behind these seven kings or kingdoms.

**17:12 who have not yet received a kingdom** Refers to future rulers who will unite with the beast (see v. 16). These could be 10 particular rulers, or 10 may be a symbolic number representing all of the kings of the earth (compare 18:3; 19:19).

**17:14 called and chosen and faithful** Refers to the whole people of God (see 14:1–5).

**17:15 The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated** Perhaps indicating an oppressive, heavy-handed style of leadership fitting with the reaction in vv. 16–17. In the ancient Near East, water was a symbol of chaos and represented severe difficulty.

**17:16 will hate the prostitute** Babylon's former allies turn against her. As often happens, evil forces are not unified; they fight among themselves.

**17:18 the great city** Refers to Rome, which served as the embodiment of greed, idolatry, and immorality for those who first read Revelation (see 18:16, 19).

**18:1–24** While the final verses of ch. 17 warn of Rome’s impending demise, ch. 18 details its destruction (see vv. 3, 24). Kings, merchants, and seafarers offer a dirge for the once-great city.

**18:1 the earth was illuminated by his splendor** Recalls the judgment motif of Ezek 43:2–3. The light emanating from the angel lit up the whole world and identified him as God’s messenger.

**18:2 Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great** See Rev 14:8.

**18:2 a haunt** People no longer inhabit the city as result of the destruction and judgment.

**18:2 every unclean spirit** Rome was controlled by and overrun with demonic powers (compare 9:20; 16:13–14). Following the judgments of ch. 16 and 17, only demons inhabited the city.

**18:2 every unclean bird** John probably envisions carrion fowl—birds that eat flesh (see 8:13; 19:17–18). The Greek word for “bird” here and in ch. 19 differs from the word used in ch. 8; it is normally used to refer to birds that are unclean for religious reasons (Deut 14:12–18). However, the two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive—several flesh-eating fowl appear on Moses’ list.

**18:3 kings of the earth** See Rev 17:2.

**18:3 merchants of the earth** These traders grew rich from Rome’s idolatry, extravagance, and lust.

**18:4 Come out from her, my people** A common OT injunction against sinful and deadly associations (e.g., Isa 52:11; Jer 50:8). Christians are told to abandon Rome’s idolatrous ways of operating. These areas are often linked to religious life (see Rev 2:9).

**18:4 you will not receive her plagues** See 9:18; 15:1; Rev 16. Judgment against Rome and the Roman Empire had not yet occurred when John wrote Revelation. However, he wrote as if it had already taken place.

**18:5 sins have reached up to heaven** The Greek verb *kollaō* means “to cling or attach to” (see Luke 10:11). The imagery describes sins that stick to each other, pile up before God, and eventually reach heaven.

**18:5 God has remembered** See Rev 16:19.

**18:6 as she herself also paid out** The reverse of the “Golden Rule” (see Matt 7:12; Luke 6:31).

**18:6 pay back double** Echoes the prophetic censures in the OT (compare Jer 16:18; 17:18).

**18:6 mix double for her** Refers to the drink’s potency, not a double amount of liquid. A restatement of “repay her double” in the preceding clause.

**18:7 I sit as a queen** Echoes the boastful claims of OT Babylon (Isa 47:7–9).

**18:8 in one day** Describes a very short time (compare Isa 47:9).

**18:8 she will be burned up with fire** Perhaps alluding to Nero’s actions (see Rev 17:16) or the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which Jews viewed as a judgment against Rome for the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

**18:8 the Lord God who passes judgment on her** God Himself condemns Rome in response to its wickedness and oppression (see vv. 3, 24).

**18:9 the kings of the earth** See 16:14; 17:2, 18; 18:3; 21:24.

**18:9 who committed sexual immorality** See 17:2.

**18:9 the smoke of her burning** Portrays the punishment of 17:16 as if it has already been meted out.

**18:10 standing far off** The kings will watch from a distance so as not to be included in Rome’s punishment.

**18:10 the great city Rome** (see 16:19; 17:18).

**18:11 merchants of the earth** See v. 3.

**18:12 cargo** The goods in vv. 12–13 are luxury items, indicating the opulence and indulgence of the city (compare Ezek 27:2–24). John’s list includes wares from eastern and southern Europe, northern and eastern Africa, the Middle East, and southern and eastern Asia—from all over the earth.

**18:13 slaves and human lives** The Greek phrase used here also appears in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) to represent prisoners of war and slaves (Num 31:32–35; 1 Chr 5:21; Ezek 27:13). Approximately one-third to one-half of the Roman Empire’s population consisted of slaves.

**18:14 the luxury and the splendor** The Greek phrase used here, *ta lipara kai ta lampra*, translates literally as “the fatty things and the shiny things.” *Ta lipara* likely refers to delicacies and foods associated with a lavish lifestyle (see Rev 18:13). *Ta lampra* describes objects of gold, silver, jewels, and pearls (see v. 12).

**18:14 never find them any more** Rome’s destruction was permanent and final.

**18:16 dressed in** The same description as the prostitute in 17:4—identifying her with the city of Rome.

**18:17 every shipmaster** This list represents trades that are engaged in maritime commerce.

**18:18 Who is like the great city** The same question was asked of the first beast (see 13:4).

**18:19 they threw dust on their heads** A traditional sign of mourning and grief.

**18:19 all those who had ships** Describes all sea traders (see v. 17).

**18:20 Rejoice over her** In contrast to the mourning of the world’s political and economic systems, those who have been oppressed by the great city rejoice over its demise (compare Jer 51:48).

**18:21 threw it into the sea** Symbolizes total destruction (compare Jer 51:63–64; Luke 17:2).

**18:22 will never be heard in you again** The joyous sounds of feasts, festival, celebrations, and even of commerce in economically good times will disappear completely.

**18:23 bridegroom and bride** Recalls the language used to describe the loss of joy in Jer 7:34; 16:9; and 25:10.

**18:23 merchants were the most important people** Merchants carried goods as well as ideologies and pagan religious practices all over the known world. As a result of their exploits, the city and its businesspeople became rich, more people entered into commercial relationships with Rome (see Rev 18:4).

**18:24 in her was found the blood** The angel blames Rome for the deaths of all the earth’s slaughtered people. Here, John likely identifies Rome with the countless oppressive cities that preceded her. Because of them, untold numbers of people were slaughtered to spread false religion, sexual immorality, and materialism.

**19:1–5** *This section shows the heavenly response to the command to rejoice in 18:20 and concludes God’s judgment on the city of Rome.*

**19:1 Hallelujah** This is a Hebrew command meaning “Praise Yah.” “Yah” is a shortened version of Yahweh. Verses 1–3 are akin to the Hallel psalms (Pss 104–106; 111–118; 120–136; 146–150; from the Hebrew word *halel*, “to praise”). The Hallel psalms commemorate God’s deliverance via the exodus event, a theme echoed many times in Revelation.

**19:1 Salvation and glory and power** This grouping of three is meant to contrast with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—who are undeserving and powerless before God.

**19:2 judgments are true and righteous** See Rev 16:7.

**19:2 passed judgment on the great prostitute** See ch. 17.

**19:3 her smoke goes up forever and ever** A perpetual testimony of her destruction and God’s power (compare 14:11; Isa 34:10).

**19:4 worshiped** In contrast to the earthly inhabitants of Rev 9:20; 13:4, 8, 12; 14:11.

**19:5 a voice** Since the voice says “our God,” it probably does not belong to God. It may be the voice of one of the four living creatures (see 4:6–8).



**19:5 Praise our God** A Greek way of saying the Hebrew expression “Hallelujah” (see v. 1).

**19:5 who fear him** Describes those who regard Him with reverential awe or respect.

**19:6–10** *This section contains four contrasts: God is praised for His reign, the bride of the Lamb is juxtaposed with the prostitute (who was destroyed in ch. 17), the new Jerusalem replaces fallen Babylon (Rome), and the marriage supper of the Lamb contrasts the judgment feast in vv. 17–18. All these simultaneously highlight God’s salvation of His people and His justification for destroying those who oppose Him.*

**19:6 the sound of many waters** Compare 1:15; 14:2.

**19:7 his bride** Identified as the new Jerusalem in 21:2, 9. Here the bride of Christ is likely to be understood as the Church (see 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–27, 32; compare Isa 54:5–7).

**19:8 the righteous deeds of the saints** May refer to their victory and refusal to compromise their faith (compare chs. 2–3). Throughout Revelation, white clothing represents victory (see 3:4).

**19:9 Blessed are** The fourth beatitude in Revelation (see 1:3).

**19:9 who are invited** A private event intended only for the called.

**19:9 These are the true words of God** May refer to the beatitude just pronounced by the angel or to the song of vv. 6–8 (compare 21:5; 22:6).

**19:10 I fell down before his feet** John, who is likely overwhelmed by what he sees and hears, tries to worship the one giving him the message of joy and hope.

**19:10 Do not do that** The angel rebukes John’s attempt to worship him. Revelation consistently affirms that God alone is worthy of worship (11:16; 14:7; compare 13:4–8).

**19:10 the testimony of Jesus** May refer to the testimony about or concerning Jesus or the testimony that Jesus Himself gave—the gospel (see 1:2; 12:17).

Though both are true, the gospel that Jesus gave is likely in view here.

**19:10 is the spirit of prophecy** Probably refers to the empowering force behind prophetic pronouncement.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

When the seventh angel poured out his bowl, a massive earthquake shattered “the great city” and collapsed the world’s other cities. Through this disaster, “God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath” (REVELATION 16:19). Babylon’s fall was promised in 14:8 and glimpsed in 16:19, but it is so important to the message of the Revelation that two chapters are now devoted to it.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is the greatest thing you have made? Why were you proud of it?

These passages culminate in Heaven and the saints are called to rejoice over the ruin of Babylon (REVELATION 18:20), and so they do (REVELATION 19:1-5). But the shouts turn from the Babylon’s fall to celebrate the rise of her counterpart, the bride of the Lamb (REVELATION 19:6-10).

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 17-19:10

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 17-19:10 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Why do you think idolatry is described as adultery? REVELATION 17:1-2

Who you think the great prostitute is? REVELATION 17:1-2

- Who are her prostitute daughters (REVELATION 17:5)

What is the point of the way the Beast's "resurrection" imitates Christ's (REVELATION 17:8)?

Beautiful possessions, fine food, or clothes can be seductive temptations (REVELATION 17:4). What do you find hard to resist or seductive?

Is the prostitute someone to be feared, respected, ignored, loved? Why do you think so?

The angel's explanation of the "mystery" (secret) of the Beast (REVELATION 17:7-17) may leave us more perplexed than before. What do we know about the Beast (his identity, character, and actions) from these verses?

What can we learn about God and the Lamb from the angel's words (REVELATION 17:14,17)?

What does it mean to be one of the Lamb's "called, chosen and faithful followers" (REVELATION 17:14)?

How is it important to you that God is in complete control, even when the Beast and his followers think they are doing their own will (REVELATION 17:17)?

For what sins has God condemned her (REVELATION 17:2,6; 18:2-3,7,23-24)?

- What should God's people do, and why should they do this (REVELATION 18:4)?

Why do you think the kings, merchants and seamen are singled out to mourn the great city's fall? REVELATION 18:11-17a

How do the kings, merchants and seamen respond to the Babylon's fall, and why?

- Kings (REVELATION 18:9-10)
- Merchants (REVELATION 18:11,15-17)
- Seamen (REVELATION 18:17-19)

In contrast, how should God's people respond, and why (REVELATION 18:20)?

What does the Babylon's fate tell you about God (REVELATION 18:4-8,20)?

How would you describe the mood in REVELATION 19:1-9?

For what deeds and attributes is God praised in REVELATION 19:1-10?

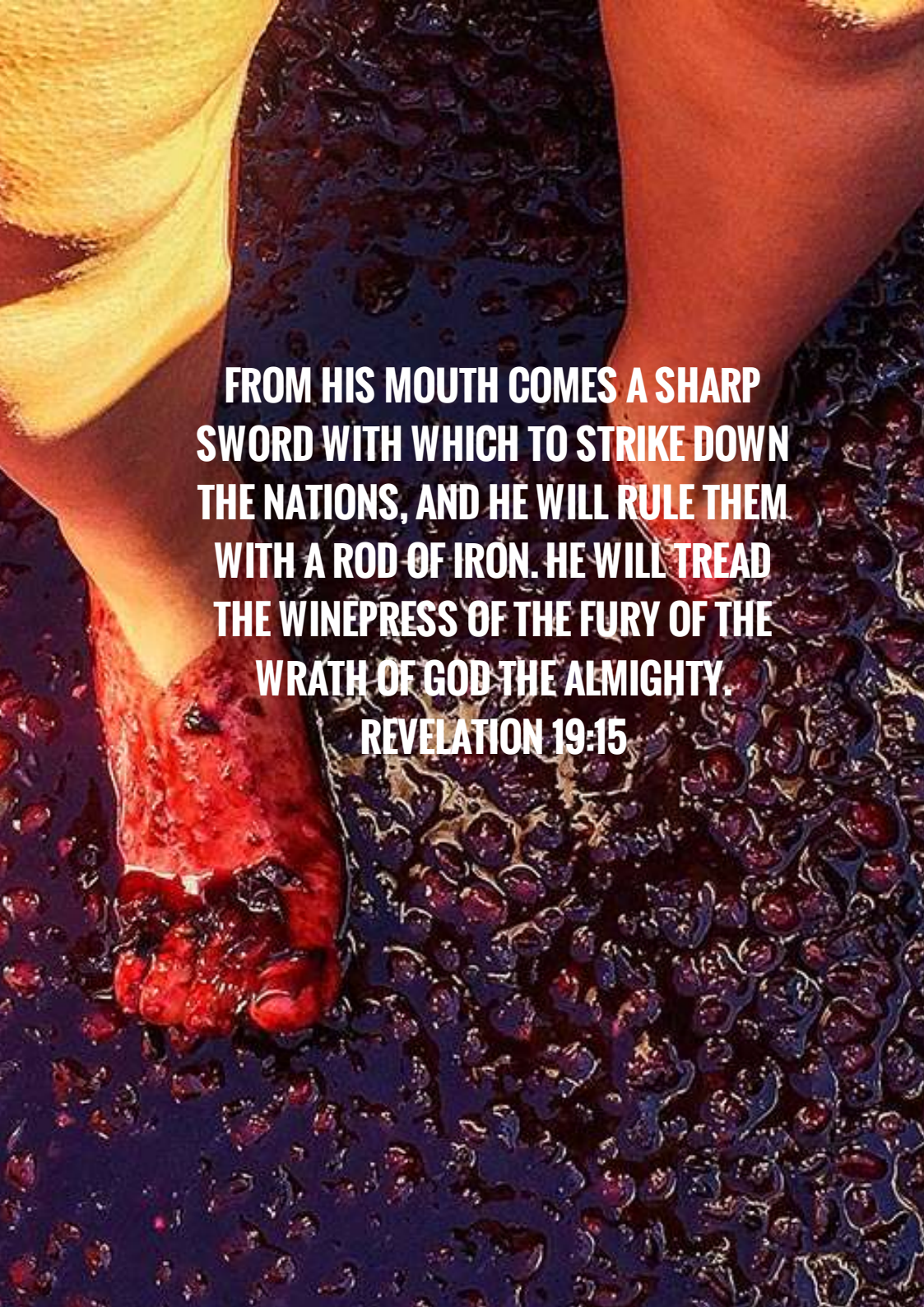
What are the implications for you of the fact that Christ's relationship to the church is described as a marriage?

Do you act as one betrothed to the Lamb, and how can this affect your life more deeply?

# FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



**FROM HIS MOUTH COMES A SHARP  
SWORD WITH WHICH TO STRIKE DOWN  
THE NATIONS, AND HE WILL RULE THEM  
WITH A ROD OF IRON. HE WILL TREAD  
THE WINEPRESS OF THE FURY OF THE  
WRATH OF GOD THE ALMIGHTY.  
REVELATION 19:15**

# REVELATION

## 19:11-20:15

ON HIS ROBE AND ON HIS THIGH HE HAS A NAME WRITTEN, KING OF  
KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.  
REVELATION 19:16



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 19:11-20:15 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**19** <sup>11</sup>Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup>He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. <sup>15</sup>From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and

he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

<sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup> to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” <sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. <sup>20</sup> And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. <sup>21</sup> And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

**20** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. <sup>2</sup> And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.



<sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, <sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

<sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and

Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.<sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

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<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

REVELATION 19:11–21 contains an awesome description of the conquering Christ (11–16), followed by a description of his triumph over the beast, the false prophet and their followers (17–21).

We have seen already in REVELATION 9:1 that God owns the key to the bottomless pit: he has ultimate authority over it, but he has given satan limited control. God’s authority is confirmed here in REVELATION 20:1, as we see an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key in his hand. The angel seizes satan and binds him “for a thousand years,” throwing him into the pit and shutting and sealing it over him. The purpose of this confinement is “so that [satan] might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years are ended. After that he must be released for a little while” (v. 3). Opinions regarding the meaning of REVELATION 20:1–3 diverge sharply. To take two of the main views, premillennialists understand the “thousand years” to refer to a future, millennial kingdom in which Jesus reigns on earth, while amillennialists believe the “thousand years” refers to the entire present age between the first and second comings of Jesus.

In REVELATION 20:7–10, we witness the total defeat of Satan. The final battle, mentioned already in REVELATION 16:13–16 and REVELATION 19:17–21, is described here once again, and this time Satan’s final defeat is emphasized (20:10). In REVELATION 6:12–17 and REVELATION 11:18, we’ve caught glimpses of the final judgment. Here in 20:11–15 we see it described yet more fully.

### EXPLORE

What names are given to Christ and what do they tell us? REVELATION 19:11-21

What does Christ do? REVELATION 19:11-21

If we take REVELATION 19:11-21 together with REVELATION 19:1-10, there are two feasts. What are they and how do they compare/contrast?

In REVELATION 20:1-3 on who's behalf is satan acting?

How is satan described and what happens to him? REVELATION 20:1-3?

What are the options for how we interpret the 1000 years? REVELATION 20:3

In REVELATION 20:4-10, certain people are favoured. Who are they, how are they described and what is the nature of the favour?

## **LAUNCH**

What do we learn about the 'first' and 'last' things in REVELATION 20:1-15?

In REVELATION 20:11-5...

- What is the basis for judgement?
  
- Who is being judged?

What is the 'book of life' and whose names are written in it? REVELATION 20:12

**Cf: REVELATION 13:8, 17:8; John 6:39-40**

What are the two results? REVELATION 20:11-15

## APPLY

What is your knowledge, understanding and experience of the spiritual battle that is going on?

How might REVELATION 20:1-10 encourage those under persecution?

How might it encourage us?

What is your relationship to the 'book of life'?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 19-20 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

**On his robe and on his thigh  
he has a name written, King  
of kings and Lord of lords.  
REVELATION 19:16**

## COMMENTARY

**19:11–21** *The remainder of ch. 19 narrates the arrival of Christ on a white horse and the defeat of the beast and his minions. Coupled with ch. 20, this section presents the end of evil and the final judgments of God and the*

*Lamb prior to the arrival of the new Jerusalem.*

**19:11 white horse** White symbolizes victory (see 3:4).

**19:11 Faithful” and “True** These titles identify the rider as Jesus (see 3:14).

**19:11 with justice he judges and makes war** See Isa 11:3–5.

**19:12 his eyes were a flame of fire** Matches the description of Christ in Rev 1. See 1:14; 2:18.

**19:12 many royal headbands** Jesus’ royal authority dwarfs that of the dragon and the beast (see 12:3; 13:1).

**19:12 that no one except he himself knows** See 2:17; 3:12.

**19:13 in an outer garment dipped in blood** This may refer to Christ’s own atoning blood or the blood of His enemies (compare Isa 63:1–6).

**19:13 his name is called the Word of God** This is not the name that no one else knows (in Rev 19:12). Rather, it is a name that emphasizes His status as the ultimate revelation of God’s character (compare John 1:1–5).

**19:14 the armies that are in heaven** Composed of the whole people of God.

**19:15 out of his mouth came a sharp sword** Matches the description of Christ in Rev 1. See 1:16; 2:12, 16.

**19:15 shepherd them with an iron rod** Describes an unyieldingly just reign (see Psa 2:9; Rev 12:5).

**19:15 winepress** See 14:17–20.

**19:16 a name written** A fourth name—in addition to Faithful and True (v. 11), the unknown name (v. 12), and the Word of God (v. 13).

**19:16 King of kings and Lord of lords** This title emphasizes the absolute power of Christ as the divine warrior (compare 17:14; 1 Tim 6:15; Deut 10:17). When put in the vernacular of John’s day (Aramaic), the gematriac value of this title is 777 (minus “and”): the perfect contrast to the mark of the beast, 666 (see Rev 13:18).

**19:17 in the sun** The Greek preposition *en* (meaning “in, with, by, to, on”) is best rendered “on.” The angel was probably standing on the sun, not in it. Perhaps John saw him above the sun.

**19:17 directly overhead** See 8:13; 14:6.

**19:17 great banquet of God** In contrast to the marriage supper of the Lamb (see vv. 7–9). Here, the carrion fowl feast upon the flesh of God’s enemies (compare Ezek 39:17–20).



**19:18 the flesh of kings** See Rev 16:14, 16.

**19:20 the beast** See 13:1–10.

**19:20 the false prophet** See 13:11–18; 16:13.

**19:20 the lake of fire that burns with sulphur** Here, the beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, while their followers are killed with the sword from Christ's mouth. See 14:10; 20:14–15; 21:8.

**19:21 killed by the sword of the one who is seated on the horse—the sword that comes out of his mouth** Apparently, only Christ will fight in the battle.

**19:21 all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh** A gruesome end for the enemies of God (see vv. 17–18). In contrast to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the typical ritual (humans eating animals) is reversed.

*20:1–6 With his two emissaries gone and the arrival of the kingdom of God at hand, the dragon is chained in order to ensure a period of peace. Those who refused to worship the beast or his image are resurrected and made vicegerents with Christ.*

**20:1 key** The fourth mention of a key in the book (see 1:18; 3:7; 9:1). Keys signify access and authority.

**20:1 abyss** Where demons and fallen angels resided. See 9:1.

**20:2 the dragon** See 12:3.

**20:2 bound him** The angel binds Satan to prevent him from deceiving the nations, accusing believers, and propagating evil (see 12:9–10).

**20:2 a thousand years** Concurrent with the length of Christ's kingdom (see v. 4 and note).

**20:3 shut it and sealed it above him** In vv. 2–3, John repeatedly describes Satan's binding to emphasize that the threat and influence of Satan has been thwarted by Christ during this period.

**20:3 it is necessary** Communicates that what follows is part of God's sovereign plan.

**20:3 released for a short time** A final rebellion and judgment pave the way for the new heavens, new earth, and new Jerusalem (see vv. 7–10).

**20:4 those who had been beheaded** Beheading was a common method of capital punishment exacted on citizens and prisoners of the Roman Empire. This group may represent martyrs only, or it may include all who remained faithful in the face of pressure to worship the beast.

**20:4 word of God** See 1:9.

**20:4 a thousand years** This period is characterized by righteousness and unprecedented blessing. The 1,000-year duration may symbolize a perfect reign, or it may in fact last for 1,000 years.

**20:5 The rest of the dead** If those who came to life in the previous verse are only the martyrs, then these are Christians who were not martyred. Alternatively, this

may refer to the wicked only, who will be raised for judgment. Either way all the dead are ultimately described as being judged (Rev 20:12–15; compare Dan 12:1–4).

**20:5 This is the first resurrection** Premillennialists take this to be a physical resurrection before the millennium. A second resurrection, narrated in Rev 20:11–15, would then occur after the millennium. Amillennialists and some postmillennialists generally take this to refer to the saints' reigning either in heaven or on earth before Christ's return (compare Eph 2:6).

**20:6 Blessed** John's fifth beatitude (see Rev 1:3).

**20:6 holy** Without sin and reserved for God and His service.

**20:6 the second death** See v. 14.

**20:7–10** *Satan is briefly released after the millennium (see v. 2). He attempts one final assault against the people of God but receives final judgment before doing any harm. Amillennialists see this as the same battle (Armageddon) narrated in 16:13–16 and 19:17–21. Premillennialists see it as a separate battle (see note on v. 4).*

**20:8 the four corners of the earth** See 7:1.

**20:8 Gog and Magog** An allusion to Ezek 38–39. Here, Gog and Magog probably represent the resurgence of evil nations, perhaps having been deceived by Satan to rebel against the Lamb's rule (see Rev 20:10).

**20:8 is like the sand of the sea** Innumerable (see Gen 32:12; 41:49; Isa 10:22; Jer 33:22; etc.).

**20:9 the beloved city** Perhaps referring to Jerusalem, though that city is portrayed negatively elsewhere in the book (see Rev 11:8). This may not be a physical location but a reference to God's people (3:12; 21:2). Regardless, this beloved city is where the saints are.

**20:10 lake of fire and sulphur** See 19:20.

**20:11–15** *John here narrates the final judgment, in which all the dead stand before God's throne and receive His justice.*

**20:11 great white throne** White connotes victory throughout Revelation. See 4:2.

**20:12 the dead** Includes believers and unbelievers (see Dan 12:2; John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15). Both will have their lives evaluated by the perfect judge.

**20:12 books were opened** Contains the record of their deeds (see Dan 7:10 and note).

**20:12 the book of life** See Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8.

**20:12** what was written in the books Refers to their deeds. Believers have the finished work of the Lamb on their behalf to atone for their sins and rectify their shortcomings.

**20:14 Death and Hades** Both death itself and the place of the dead (the netherworld) are destroyed (compare 1:8; 6:8).

**20:14 the second death** This event, which is described here as occurring at the final judgment, is experienced by personified Death and Hades and people who have not accepted Jesus (v. 15). It is called a second death because those who have already died bodily now die spiritually (vv. 12–13; compare Dan 12:1–4).

**20:14 the lake of fire** This final death is permanent and inescapable (see Rev 2:11; 20:6; 21:8).

**20:15 book of life** See 3:5.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

At last, the long-awaited moment arrives: He who “is to come” does come. Christ Himself enters the battle. The irresistible power of the Lamb who is also King of kings and Lord of lords ends the battle almost before it begins!

Chapter 20 is the focus of more controversy than any other single passage of Revelation, due to the variety of views of the Millennium. What it does reveal is that God defends his people (REVELATION 20:8–9) and points to his love and faithfulness toward his own. The passage also reveals that we may be outnumbered in this world, but in the end God’s purposes will triumph, and he will keep the church from being ultimately defeated by the world’s evil oppressors. Victory belongs to the Lord!

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What is the longest game you have ever played? How long did it last? Did you win?

In this world we do not win all the battles, but that is not daunting with a longer-range perspective; when our Lord Jesus comes, nothing can stand against him!

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 19:11-20:15

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 19:11-20:15 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

There is a shifting mood across REVELATION 9. From celebration (REVELATION 19:1-10), to majesty (REVELATION 19:11-16), to carnage (REVELATION 19:17-21).

What characteristics of the rider are mentioned in REVELATION 19:11-16?

- Who do you think the rider is, and why?  
**Cf: HEBREWS 4:12**
- Why is it appropriate that the rider is called “the Word of God” in REVELATION 19:13?
- What do all the symbols used to describe the rider tell you about Him?

What is your impression of the battle in REVELATION 19:19-21?

- Does it seem to be much of a contest?

What important truths does REVELATION 19:1-21 offer us today?

What are the four chief traits of the thousand-year period? REVELATION 20:2-3; 20:4; 20:5

In what sense are the following true now, and in what sense are they not yet fulfilled? REVELATION 20:1-6

- Satan bound  
**Cf: MATTHEW 12:29; LUKE 10:17-19; 11:20-22; 22:3; JOHN 12:31; ACTS 5:3; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-4; 11:14; EPHESIANS 2:2; COLOSSIANS 2:15; 1 THESSALONIANS 2:18; 1 PETER 5:8.)**
- Satan unable to deceive the nations  
**Cf: EPHESIANS 2:1-3; COLOSSIANS 1:13.**

- The witnesses of Jesus reigning  
**Cf: 1 PETER 2:9; REVELATION 5:10; 6:9-11.**

On what basis are the dead judged (REVELATION 20:11-13)?

- Does this include those who have put their faith in Christ as well as those who have not?  
**Cf: ROMANS 2:6-8, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10, and 1 PETER 1:17**

Who do you think is “him who was seated on” the throne of judgment (REVELATION 20:11)?

**Cf: DANIEL 7:9; MATTHEW 6:4; 7:22-23; 10:32-33; MARK 8:38; JOHN 5:22,30; 8:16; 12:47-49; ROMANS 14:10; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10; REVELATION 4:2.**

- Why is this important for you to know?

On what basis will people escape or fail to escape the lake of fire (REVELATION 20:15)?

What does it mean to have one’s name in the Book of Life?

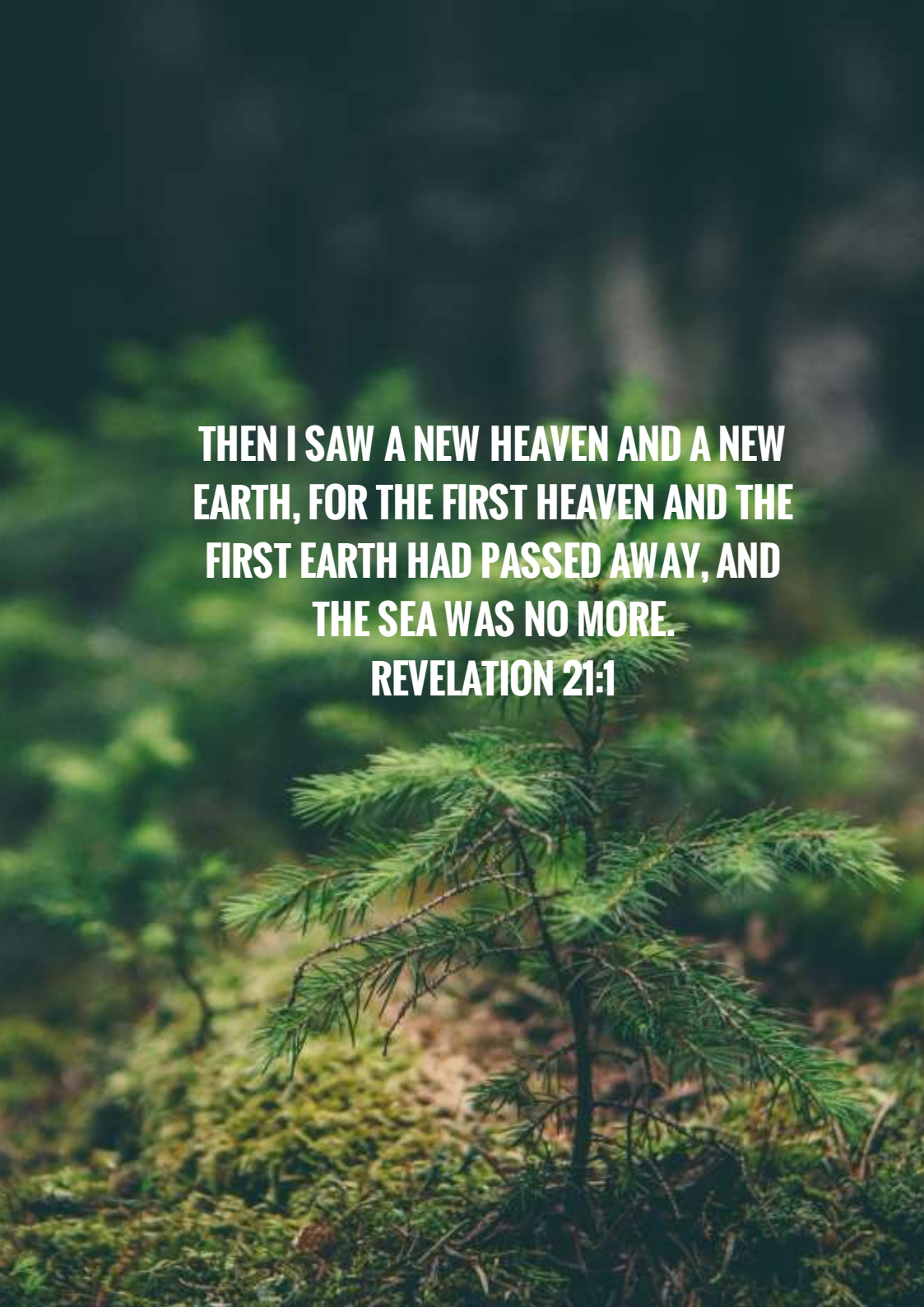
How is REVELATION 20:1-15 personally relevant to you? What important lessons does the chapter teach, and how should it affect your life?

## FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



A young evergreen tree, possibly a spruce or fir, stands in the foreground of a forest. The ground is covered in a thick layer of green moss. The background is filled with out-of-focus green foliage, creating a sense of depth and a natural, serene atmosphere. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the tree's needles and the moss.

**THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW  
EARTH, FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE  
FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY, AND  
THE SEA WAS NO MORE.  
REVELATION 21:1**



# REVELATION

## 21-22:5

AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM THE THRONE SAYING, “BEHOLD, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD IS WITH MAN. HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM, AND THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM AS THEIR GOD.

REVELATION 21:3



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 21-22:5 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**21** <sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear

from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

<sup>9</sup> Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— <sup>13</sup> on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. <sup>16</sup> The

city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. <sup>18</sup> The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**22** <sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its

twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.



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Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

John now sees what we call “heaven”: a totally new heaven and earth, a fresh creation destined to be the home of God and His people (21:1). John sees a New Jerusalem, the symbol of God’s presence, descending (vv. 2–5). He hears Christ proclaim this new creation the home of the godly, from which sin and sinners are forever excluded (vv. 6–8). John is then given a closer look at the vast New Jerusalem, glistening with jewels (vv. 9–21). He realizes that there is no temple in the city, for God Himself is present and provides its light. That city thus serves as a beacon for all humankind (vv. 22–27).

John also sees a river flowing from the city lined with fruit trees. Like the city itself, the land is forever suffused with the light of God’s presence, never to know night. There God’s servants will reign for ever and ever (22:1–6).

### EXPLORE

What is the principal sight within this cosmic picture? REVELATION 21:1-2

How is the new Jerusalem described? REVEALTION 21:2, 10-11

How is the relationship between God and humanity described?  
REVELATION 21:3

What two types of people are distinguished in REVELATION 21:6-8?

- What positive promises are made to one group?

How does REVELATION 21:1-8 compare and contrast with REVELATION 20:11-15?

## LAUNCH

What does the Holy City symbolise? REVELATION 21:9

What is the significance of the following features of the Holy City?

- Architecture REVELATION 21:12-14
- Shape of the city REVELATION 21:16  
**Cf: 1 Kings 6:20**
- Size of the city REVELATION 21:15-17
- The jewels REVELATION 21:18-20

What strikes you about the appearance of the city?

What role do God and the Lamb have in the city? REVELATION 21:22-24

Why do you think the city has no temple? REVELATION 21:22

What comes into the city and what stays out? REVELATION 21:22-27

In REVELATION 22:1-5, what is at the centre of the scene?

What is the relationship between God and his people? REVELATION 22:1-5

## **APPLY**

What do these visions do to your expectation of what your final home will be like?

How could you look differently at yourself and your life in this world because of this passage?



## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 21-22 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?

And I heard a loud voice  
from the throne saying,  
“behold, the dwelling place  
of God is with man. He will  
dwell with them, and they  
will be his people, and God  
himself will be with them as  
their God.”  
REVELATION 21:3

## COMMENTARY

**21:1–8** *Following the ultimate triumph over evil, God makes all things new and ushers in a period in which He dwells with His people, resulting in rest and blessedness. The new heavens and earth will be eternal.*

**21:1 new heaven and a new earth** John seems to envision the relationship between the new heavens and earth to the old order similarly to how Paul understands the resurrected body as a transformation of the physical body (see 1 Cor 15:42–44; compare Isa 65:17). See 2 Pet 3:13.

**21:1 the sea did not exist any longer** Probably refers to the origin of evil and chaos (see Rev 13:1; compare Gen 1:2).

**21:2 a bride** See Rev 19:6–9; 19:7.

**21:3 take up residence with them** Describes the great hope in the book of Revelation and the whole Bible (e.g., Exod 25:8; Lev 26:11–12; Ezek 37:26–27; Zech 2:10). Believers can be confident that in the end, they will be united with God.

**21:3 they will be his people** Dedicated to Him, belonging to Him.

**21:3 God himself will be with them** Emphasizes that He will remain and reside with them.

**21:4 wipe away every tear from their eyes** God will extinguish all sorrow and grief (Rev 7:17).

**21:4 death will not exist any longer** Christ conquered death on the cross; death was eradicated in 20:14. The saints will live eternally with God.

**21:4 pain will not exist any longer** Describes physical or bodily (as opposed to spiritual) death and discomfort—things brought about by the fall and the entrance of sin into humanity (see Gen 3).

**21:4 former things** Refers to the old or previous way of life or existence.

**21:5 the one seated on the throne** God Himself speaks.

**21:5 I am making all things new** John’s vision anticipates the restoration of an Eden-like state that also includes a reversal of the effects of humanity’s sin as described in Gen 3.

**21:5 Write, because these words are faithful and true** See Rev 19:9. “These words” probably refers to the truths contained in vv. 1–4.

**21:6 It is done** The Greek term used here refers to completion—probably in reference to the words in v. 5 and the overall actions of vv. 1–4. God has accomplished His purpose and made all things new.

**21:6 the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end** Echoes the introduction of Christ in ch. 1 (see 1:8; 1:17).

**21:7 The one who conquers** Refers to those who remained faithful to Christ (compare 12:11; 15:2).

**21:7 he will be my son** In these passages, the paternal relationship is used describing God as Father and the king as His son (compare e.g., 2 Sam 7:14; Psa 2:7).

**21:8 as for the cowards** This verse issues a reminder to John's audience. The seven churches were pressured to compromise their allegiance to Christ. Here, in the midst of describing the wonders of God's new creation, John reminds them of the consequences of compromising with the present order.

**21:9–27** *A restored Jerusalem was at the center of messianic expectations in the first century AD. God's people had longed for this ever since their return from exile (538 BC). In this vision, John describes what it will be like when God finally brings these hopes to fruition.*

**21:9 seven angels** From Rev 15:1; 16:1; 17:1.

**21:10 in the Spirit** John's fourth and final experience in the spirit (see 1:10).

**21:10 coming down out of heaven from God** The new Jerusalem descends to earth as a dwelling place for the saints. It comes from heaven, God's dwelling place: Heaven and earth are now united.

**21:11 that has the glory of God** The city was illuminated or shining with the light of His glory (doxa); see Ezek 43:5).

**21:13 on the east** The order of east, north, south, and west reflects Ezek 42:16–19.

**21:14 the twelve apostles of the Lamb** Refers to Jesus' main group of disciples who served as the Church's foundation (compare Eph 2:20). Both the 12 tribes (Rev 21:12) and the 12 apostles are represented, emphasizing the continuity of the people of God.

**21:16 equal** The city is depicted as a cube of gold (v. 18). This is perhaps an allusion to the holy of holies (most holy place), the focus of God's holy presence throughout the OT (see 1 Kgs 6:20). In contrast with the holy of holies, which could only be entered by the high priest once a year, now all of God's people will dwell in His presence.

**21:17 one hundred forty-four cubits** Probably refers to the height of the wall, though it could refer to its thickness. Like the dimensions of the city itself, this is a multiple of 12 (a significant number in Revelation; see Rev 7:4).

**21:17 according to human measure** The angel is using the standard measure of the day, not some type of other-worldly, angelic measurement.

**21:19 every kind of precious stone** These stones recall those that were set into the high priest's breastplate (see Exod 28:17–20).

**21:21 each one of the gates was from a single pearl** Describes 12 massive pearls—each pearl is its own gate.

**21:22 I did not see a temple in it** Because God and the Lamb will be present, there will be no need for a temple.

**21:23 its lamp is the Lamb** The Lamb is also a light source.

**21:24 the nations** Fulfills the OT hope that the nations and foreign kings would come to Jerusalem to worship God (see Isa 2:1–3).

**21:25 there will be no night there** Because of the omnipresence and illumination of God and the Lamb (Rev 21:23).

**21:27 the book of life of the Lamb** See 20:12.

**22:1–5** *During his final vision, John presents the new Jerusalem as a restored Eden, including the tree of life, the rivers that flowed from the garden, and the intimate relationship the first people enjoyed with God.*

**22:1 the river of the water of life** This language recalls Eden (Gen 2:10), as well as the prophecies of Ezek 47:1 and Zech 14:8 (compare Rev 7:17; 22:17).

**22:2 the tree of life** This fulfills the promise of 2:7 (see Gen 2:9; 3:24). The presence of the tree on both sides of the river is an allusion to Ezek 47:12.

**22:2 producing twelve fruits** It produces 12 different kinds of fruit—a new one each month.

**22:2 for the healing of the nations** The leaves are used to treat and soothe humanity.

**22:3 any curse** There will be nothing that falls under the curse of God's judgment (see Zech 14:11). This includes the curse humanity brought upon itself because of its first sin against God (see Gen 3).

**22:3 will serve** The Greek word used here can mean “to serve” or “to render religious service.” Here it probably refers to offering worship as priests.

**22:4 they will see his face** This previously resulted in death (e.g., Exod 33:20; compare Isa 6:5). Now, it is described as a life-giving blessing for God's people.

**22:4 his name will be on their foreheads** May allude to the plate on the high priest's forehead (Exod 28:36–38; compare Rev 3:12; 14:1).

**22:5 reign forever and ever** See 20:4.

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

The final paragraph of C. S. Lewis's book *The Last Battle* is a commentary on the close of REVELATION:

*“The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”*

#### ***Open in prayer***

#### ***Opening question***

What is one of the most beautiful places you have ever been?

John in words and pictures seeks to share what lies beyond human imagination. He transposes echoes from a dozen books of Scripture into a grand key and weaving them together into a triumphant climax for His biblical symphony. REVELATION 21:1–22:5 see us soaking in the splendour of God's plans fulfilled.

#### ***Read scripture***

Have one or several people read REVELATION 21-22:5

### REVIEW

#### ***Provide opportunity to share***

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 21-22:5 message on Sunday?

# DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

REVELATION 21:3 records the fulfilment of a series of Old Testament prophecies.

- What does each passage promise?  
LEVITICUS 26:11-12      EZEKIEL 37:27      EZEKIEL 48:35
- Why is this promise so important?

REVELATION 21:4 renews the promise made in ISAIAH 25:8 and 1 CORINTHIANS 15:54. What are the implications of this for believers?

What do you think it means that “To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life” (REVELATION 21:6)?

**Cf: ISAIAH 55:1-3; JOHN 4:7-14; 7:37-39; REVELATION 22:1.**

What does it mean for you that you are God’s son or daughter and His heir? REVELATION 21:7

Why do you think “the cowardly” heads the list of those destined for the fiery lake (REVELATION 21:8)?

**Cf: LUKE 12:4-12; REVELATION 12:11.**

Summarize the description of the Holy City in REVELATION 21:9-21.

What is signified by the fact that the nations will bring their splendour to the Holy City (REVELATION 21:24,26)?

What is implied by the fact that the city’s gates will never be shut (REVELATION 21:25)?

The new Jerusalem is a city when viewed from the outside (REVELATION 21:1-27) and a garden when viewed from the inside (REVELATION 22:1-5). What is the point?

What is significant about John not seeing “a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (REVELATION 21:22)?

What statements are made about God and the Lamb (REVELATION 21:23; 22:1,3)?

- How is it important that God and the Lamb are paired in these verses?

What ideas are repeated several times in REVELATION 21:11,23,25; 22:5?

According to REVELEATION 22:3, what will be the chief occupation of God’s people in the kingdom?

What important truths have you learned about the kingdom of God from REVELATION 21:1–22:5?

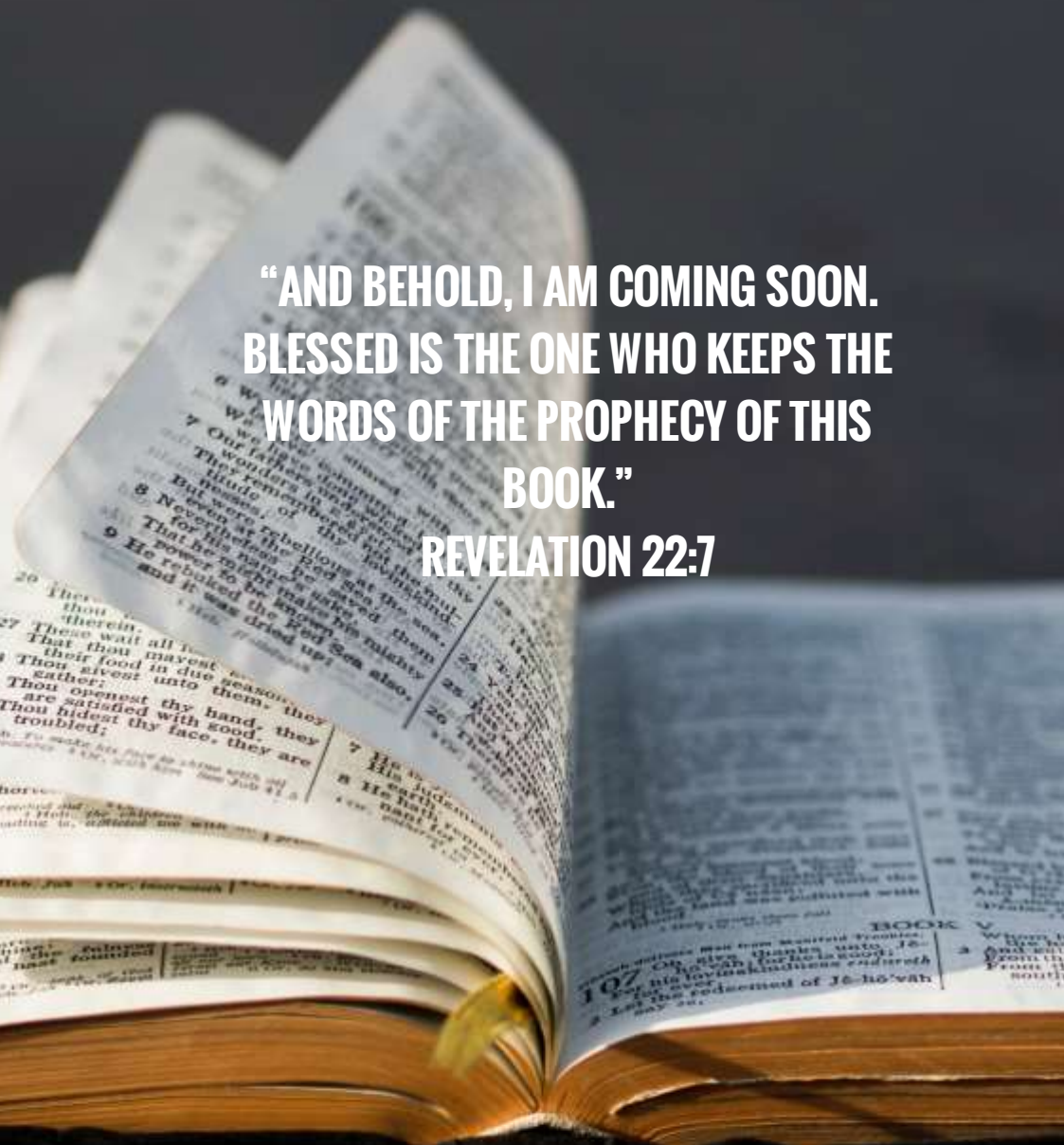
## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?

**“AND BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON.  
BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO KEEPS THE  
WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS  
BOOK.”**

**REVELATION 22:7**





# REVELATION

## 22:6-21

“BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON, BRINGING MY RECOMPENSE WITH ME, TO REPAY EACH ONE FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE. 13 I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END.”

REVELATION 22:12-13



### READ SCRIPTURE

Take the time to repeatedly read and meditate on the passage daily, across the week, using at least two different versions of the Bible.

As you read, use the space in the margins to highlight key words, make notes, or write down any questions.

### **REVELATION 22:6-21 ESV – English Standard Version**

**The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.**

**22** <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

<sup>7</sup>“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, <sup>9</sup> but he said to

me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup> Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

<sup>12</sup> “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

<sup>16</sup> “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

<sup>18</sup> I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.



## LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

Listen and take notes from the Sunday morning message or listen online to the recorded sermon.

<https://www.kingstoncommunitychurch.com/recordings>

## MESSAGE NOTES





## COMPLETE THE STUDY GUIDE

Take your time across the week to work through the following study guide questions. Be prayerful as you seek truth in and through the Word. Jot down any questions or additional observations you make so you can share them with your small group.

### OVERVIEW

As the radiant vision fades John hears Christ speak and promise, “Behold, I am coming soon” (v. 7).

John again falls down before the angel who has shown him the new heavens and earth and again is directed to worship God. John is also directed to share what he has seen—not that the lost will be convinced, but that believers might be encouraged to do right and continue in holiness (vv. 8–11).

Again John hears Jesus promise, “I am coming soon” and urges holiness (vv. 12–16). The church responds, eager for His coming (v. 17). After a final word of warning, John expresses his own deep desire: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (vv. 18–21).

### EXPLORE

Why “must” these things soon take place? Revelation 22:6

**Cf: REVELATION 1:1**

What do we learn about John’s role as revealed in REVELATION 22:6-11?

What does REVELATION 22:6-11 reveal about worship?

What is meant by the instructions not to seal up the words in REVELATION 22:10? **Cf: DANIEL 12:4, 9**

What does REVELATION 22:11 reveal from the message of the book of revelation?

## LAUNCH

Who is the source of promises? REVELATION 22:13

What does REVELATION 22:14–15 teach about how a person can enjoy access to the new creation?

What is the specific invitation? REVELATION 22:16-17

The strong warning of REVELATION 22:18–19 is unique.

- What plagues are described in Revelation?
- What is at stake when it comes to tampering with the book of Revelation?
- Why are the consequences so drastic?

## **APPLY**

How has Jesus' descriptions of himself, challenged the Jesus you relate to? REVELATION 22:13, 16

What is your reaction to the call to 'come'?

Jesus says, "I am coming soon". But it's now been about two thousand years (and counting). What does this mean for you now?

## **SUMMARY**

Consider the following questions as you seek to apply God's Word to your life...

What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Kingdom?

What one truth from REVELATION 22 stands out as something you are taking to heart moving forward?

## **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

What prayer or praise points have come out of your study of this passage?

My praise/prayer points regarding a situation in my life at the moment?



**“Behold, I am coming soon,  
bringing my recompense  
with me, to repay each one  
for what he has done. I am  
the Alpha and the Omega,  
the first and the last, the  
beginning and the end.”**  
REVELATION 22:12-13

## COMMENTARY

**22:6–16** *Typical of apocalyptic literature, John emphasizes the imminent nature of the events described in the book and the need for perseverance. Christians need not compromise their faith in Christ or fear reprisals; they need only to endure and overcome.*

**22:6 God of the spirits of the prophets** An authentication of John’s message and visions. God Himself inspires His prophets’ spirits or inspires them to prophesy.

**22:7 behold, I am coming quickly** Refers to the Parousia mentioned in 19:11. See 2:16; 3:11.

**22:7 Blessed is** The sixth beatitude (see 1:3), identical to the second half of the first beatitude.

**22:9 Do not do that** See 19:10.

**22:9 Worship God** Even the beloved apostle is prone to mistakes. The angel instructs John—and all believers—to worship God alone.

**22:10 Do not seal up the words** Opposite from the standard instructions of apocalyptic literature (e.g., Dan 12:4, 9). Revelation’s words are not intended for a future, undisclosed audience; they are written to comfort and encourage God’s people in John’s day and in all periods of history.

**22:11 let him do** Picks up on the last phrase in Rev 22:10. There is no more time to repent; the end has come.

**22:11 the defiled** Those who are morally or spiritually corrupt.

**22:11 let him practice righteousness still** Describes persevering and remaining faithful in the face of persecution.

**22:11 let him be holy still** Describes being completely dedicated to God, belonging exclusively to Him.

**22:14 Blessed are** The seventh and final beatitude (see 1:3).

**22:14 ones who wash their robes** See 7:14. Most English translations read “wash their robes,” following most of the earliest Greek manuscripts; a few English translations, such as the KJV and NKJV, read “do his commandments,” following most later Greek manuscripts. The two expressions sound similar in Greek.

**22:16 the root and the descendant of David** A reference to the prophecy in Isa 11:1, 10. See Rev 5:5.

**22:16 the bright morning star** Likely dependent on a messianic interpretation of Num 24:17.

**22:17 the bride** See Rev 19:6–9; 21:9.

**22:17 Come** An invitation to the redeemed to participate in the bountiful blessings of God’s new creation.

**22:18–21** *Revelation closes with a warning about interpreting the message spoken through John. No one is to add to or subtract from what John has written. He speaks prophetically, and the message he delivers to the seven churches cannot be altered.*

**22:18 I testify** John (see 1:4).

**22:18 to everyone** Refers to the seven churches to whom this apocalypse is circulated.

**22:18 if anyone adds to them** Or alters them (see Deut 4:2; 12:32). John, as God’s prophet, speaks on behalf of God. His message is true, authoritative, and final.

**22:18 written in this book** Refers to the message of Revelation (see Rev 1:11).

**22:19 if anyone takes away from the words** Those who take away from John’s words will be judged (see Deut 4:2; 12:32). Altering the apocalypse is equal to altering God’s message; doing so leads to death.

**22:20 The one who testifies about these things** Refers to Jesus.

**22:20 Yes, I am coming quickly** The third affirmation of this statement (see Rev 22:7, 12). This threefold formula highlights the truth and certainty of Christ’s claim.

**22:20 Come, Lord Jesus** The Greek phrase used here is the equivalent to the Aramaic expression *Marana tha* (meaning “Our Lord, come!”; see 1 Cor 16:22). This became the cry of the early church, particularly as it began facing persecution under the Roman Empire. Its inclusion here suggests that John’s audience knew the phrase.

**22:21 grace of the Lord Jesus be with all** A typical benediction, especially in Paul’s letters (e.g., Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23; Gal 6:18).

# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

Three times in this closing passage, the promise is made, “Behold, I am coming soon.” Eternity may seem far off. Yet for each of us the return of Jesus and the events foretold in Revelation have an immediacy. “Soon” may be tomorrow! There is nothing that must happen before the events we have read of in Revelation may begin. This passage also makes it clear that we are to learn to live with this sense of immediacy.

#### *Open in prayer*

#### *Opening question*

What are three words that people might say, that describe the legacy you leave behind in this world?

Revelation closes in a series of brief prophetic utterances. They may seem random, but they draw together themes threaded throughout the book.

#### *Read scripture*

Have one or several people read REVELATION 22:6-21

### REVIEW

#### *Provide opportunity to share*

What were the main truths you heard from the REVELATION 22:6-21 message on Sunday?

### DISCUSSION

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

What ideas are repeated in REVELATION 22:7,10,12,20?

- What implications do these truths have for your life and your response to REVELATION?

Why do you think there is such an emphasis on the authority and reliability of the one who testifies to this book of prophecy (REVELATION 22:6,16,20)?

What do you think is the point of REVELATION 22:11 in context?

The sixth and seventh beatitudes are in REVELATION 22:7,14.

- What does it mean to “keep the words of the prophecy written in this scroll”?
- Explain who is blessed and what is promised them in REVELATION 22:14.

How does “let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’” (REVELATION 22:17) apply to us today?

- How can we make this petition a part of our prayers and actions?

Are you thirsty for the water of life, even though you are a Christian? If so, how can you “come” and receive this free gift?

What do you take to heart from REVELATION 22:7-21?

- What action do you think you should take in light of this?

# FINISH

*Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer*

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



# SMALL GROUP

## LEADERS GUIDE

### REVELATION IN REVIEW

*Use the following questions to guide your discussions*

Looking back over the book of REVELATION what are your impressions of what you have learned about the following:

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Satan's power in the world
- Kingdom of God
- Suffering of God's people
- Protection of God's people

What have you learned from REVELATION about the future?

What have you learned about the nature of prophecy?

How does God want His people to act in light of the kingdom, the suffering, and the protection he provides?

If you had to tell someone in a couple of sentences what REVELATION is about, what would you say?

What do you think is the most important lesson you have learned from studying REVELATION?

Have you changed in any way as a result of studying REVELATION? If so, how?

## FINISH

***Provide opportunity for each participant to contribute prayer and praise points and as a group share in a time of prayer***

Praise/prayer points from others in my group?



# APPENDIX

## SUMMARY of VIEWS

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE

**BY WAYNE GRUDEM**

Excerpts from Part 7 of Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine*.

#### THE MILLENNIUM

The word millennium means “one thousand years” (from Lat. millennium “thousand years”). The term comes from Revelation 20:4–5, where it says that certain people “came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.” Just prior to this statement, we read that an angel came down from heaven and seized the devil “and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended” (Rev. 20:2–3).

Throughout the history of the church there have been three major views on the time and nature of this “millennium.”

#### EXPLANATION OF THE THREE MAJOR VIEWS

*1. Amillennialism.* The first view to be explained here, amillennialism, is really the simplest. It can be pictured as in figure 55.1:



**Figure 55.1: Amillennialism**

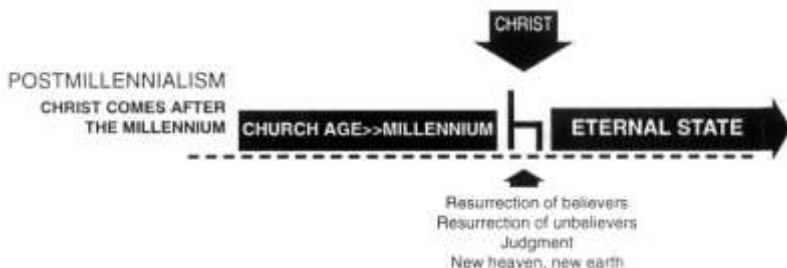
According to this position the passage in Revelation 20:1–10 describes the present church age. This is an age in which Satan’s influence over the nations has been greatly reduced so that the gospel can be preached to the whole world. Those who are said to be reigning with Christ for the thousand years are Christians who have died and are already reigning with Christ in heaven. Christ’s reign in the millennium, according to this view, is not a bodily reign here on earth but rather the heavenly reign he spoke of when he said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18).

This view is called “amillennial” because it maintains that there is no future millennium yet to come. Since amillennialists believe that Revelation 20 is now being fulfilled in the church age, they hold that the “millennium” described there is currently happening. The exact duration of the church age cannot be known, and the expression “thousand years” is simply a figure of speech for a long period of time in which God’s perfect purposes will be accomplished.

According to this position, the present church age will continue until the time of Christ’s return (see figure 55.1). When Christ returns, there will be a resurrection of both believers and unbelievers. The bodies of believers will rise to be reunited with their spirits and enter into full enjoyment of heaven forever. Unbelievers will be raised to face the final judgment and eternal condemnation. Believers will also stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), but this judgment will only determine degrees of reward in heaven, for only unbelievers will be condemned eternally. At this time also the new heavens and new earth will begin. Immediately after the final judgment, the eternal state will commence and continue forever.

This scheme is quite simple because all of the end time events happen at once, immediately after Christ’s return. Some amillennialists say that Christ could return at any time, while others (such as Berkhof) argue that certain signs have yet to be fulfilled.

2. *Postmillennialism*. The prefix post- means “after.” According to this view, Christ will return after the millennium. The postmillennial view may be represented as in figure 55.2.



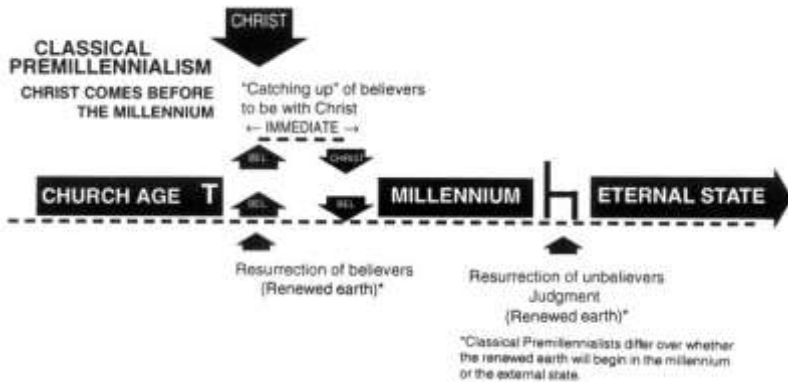
**Figure 55.2: Postmillennialism**

According to this view, the progress of the gospel and the growth of the church will gradually increase, so that a larger and larger proportion of the world’s population will be Christians. As a result, there will be significant Christian influences on society, society will more and more function according to God’s standards, and gradually a “millennial age” of peace and righteousness will occur on the earth. This “millennium” will last for a long period of time (not necessarily a literal one thousand years), and finally, at the end of this period, Christ will return to earth believers and unbelievers will be raised, the final judgment will occur, and there will be a new heaven and new earth. We will then enter into the eternal state.

The primary characteristic of postmillennialism is that it is very optimistic about the power of the gospel to change lives and bring about much good in the world. Belief in postmillennialism tends to increase in times when the church is experiencing great revival, when there is an absence of war and international conflict, and when it appears that great progress is being made in overcoming the evil and suffering in the world. But postmillennialism in its most responsible form is not based simply on the observation of events in the world around us, but on arguments from various Scripture passages, which will be examined below.

### 3. *Premillennialism*.

**a. Classic or Historic Premillennialism:** The prefix “pre-” means “before,” and the “premillennial” position says that Christ will come back before the millennium. This viewpoint has a long history from the earliest centuries onward. It may be represented as in figure 55.3.



**Figure 55.3: Classical or Historic Premillennialism**

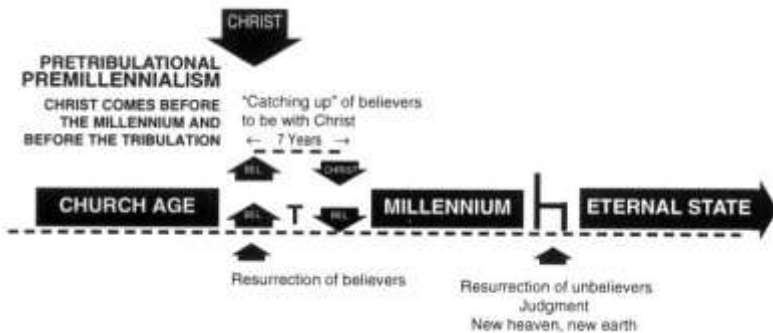
According to this viewpoint, the present church age will continue until, as it nears the end, a time of great tribulation and suffering comes on the earth (T in the figure above stands for tribulation). After that time of tribulation at the end of the church age, Christ will return to earth to establish a millennial kingdom. When he comes back, believers who have died will be raised from the dead, their bodies will be reunited with their spirits, and these believers will reign with Christ on earth for one thousand years. (Some premillennialists take this to be a literal one thousand years, and others understand it to be a symbolic expression for a long period of time.) During this time, Christ will be physically present on the earth in his resurrected body, and will reign as King over the entire earth. The believers who have been raised from the dead, and those who were on earth when Christ returns, will receive glorified resurrection bodies that will never die, and in these resurrection bodies they will live on the earth and reign with Christ. Of the unbelievers who remain on earth, many (but not all) will turn to Christ and be saved. Jesus will reign in perfect righteousness and there will be peace throughout the earth. Many premillennialists hold that the earth will be renewed and we will in fact see the new heavens and new earth at this time (but it is not essential to premillennialism to hold to this, for one could be a premillennialist and hold that the new heavens and new earth will not occur until after the final judgment). At the beginning of this time Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit so that he will have no influence on the earth during the millennium (Rev. 20:1–3).

According to the premillennial viewpoint, at the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit and will join forces with many unbelievers who have submitted outwardly to Christ’s reign but have inwardly been seething in rebellion against him. Satan will gather these

rebellious people for battle against Christ, but they will be decisively defeated. Christ will then raise from the dead all the unbelievers who have died throughout history, and they will stand before him for final judgment. After the final judgment has occurred, believers will enter into the eternal state.

It seems that premillennialism has tended to increase in popularity as the church has experienced persecution, and as suffering and evil have increased in the earth. But, as in the case of postmillennialism, the arguments for the premillennial position are not based on an observation of current events, but on specific passages of Scripture, especially (but not exclusively) Revelation 20:1–10.

**b. Pretributational Premillennialism (or Dispensational Premillennialism):** Another variety of premillennialism has gained widespread popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States. According to this position, Christ will return not only before the millennium (Christ’s return is premillennial), but also it will occur before the great tribulation (Christ’s return is pretributational). This position is similar to the classical premillennial position mentioned above, but with one important difference: it will add another return of Christ before his return to reign on earth in the millennium. This return is thought to be a secret return of Christ to take believers out of the world. The pretributational premillennial view may be represented as in figure 55.4.



**Figure 55.4: Pretributational Premillennialism**

According to this view, the church age will continue until, suddenly, unexpectedly, and secretly, Christ will return part way to earth, and then will call believers to himself: “The dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16–17). Christ will then return to

heaven with the believers who have been removed from the earth. When that happens, there will be a great tribulation on the earth for a period of seven years.

During this seven-year period of tribulation, many of the signs that were predicted to precede Christ's return will be fulfilled. The great ingathering of the fullness of the Jewish people will occur, as they trust Christ as their Messiah. In the midst of great suffering there will also be much effective evangelism, especially carried out by the new Jewish Christians. At the end of the tribulation, Christ will then come back with his saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years. After this millennial period there will be a rebellion, resulting in the final defeat of Satan and his forces, and then will come the resurrection of unbelievers, the last judgment, and the beginning of the eternal state.

One further characteristic of pretribulational premillennialism should be mentioned: This view is found almost exclusively among dispensationalists who wish to maintain a clear distinction between the church and Israel. This pretribulational viewpoint allows the distinction to be maintained, since the church is taken out of the world before the widespread conversion of the Jewish people. These Jewish people therefore remain a distinct group from the church. Another characteristic of pretribulational premillennialism is its insistence on interpreting biblical prophecies "literally where possible." This especially applies to prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Israel. Those who hold this view argue that those prophecies of God's future blessing to Israel will yet be fulfilled among the Jewish people themselves; they are not to be "spiritualized" by finding their fulfillment in the church. Finally, one attractive feature about pretribulational premillennialism is that it allows people to insist that Christ's return could occur "at any moment" and therefore does justice to the full force of the passages that encourage us to be ready for Christ's return, while it still allows for a very literal fulfillment of the signs preceding Christ's return, since it says these will come to pass in the tribulation.



