

# *Revelation*

## *Part 1*

### *Leader Guide*

(NASB and ESV)

*JESUS' MESSAGE  
TO THE CHURCH  
(REVELATION 1–3)*

*Revelation Part 1 Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)*

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## USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

### Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

### Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**  
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**  
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

### Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


#### When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

#### For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Overview of Revelation 1–5

To begin this discussion, you might ask your group if there was anything in Revelation 1–5 or 22 which caught their attention. Give a few minutes for them to share.

Tell them to look at their “Revelation 1–5 at a Glance” chart to use as a visual aid for this discussion.

**REVELATION 1**

Ask your group what this chapter is about. What did they note as the theme of this chapter on the At a Glance chart?

They probably put something like:

Revelation given to John; he was told to write, saw Jesus

What was the chain of communication in verse 1? What was communicated?  
You might draw a diagram using arrows from one down to the other as a visual aid.

God gave to Jesus  
↓  
Jesus gave to an angel  
↓  
Angel gave to John  
the Revelation to write  
↓  
To the seven churches in Asia

The revelation is to show to Jesus' servants, believers, the things which must soon take place. That's why it was written, and that's also what it's about.

What kind of writing is this, according to verse 3?

It's prophecy.

What does it say about the one who reads this?

Blessed is the one who reads (ESV—reads aloud), hears and heeds / keeps what is written in this prophecy.

The time for these things to take place is near.

What does Revelation 22 say about this prophecy?

Verses 6-7 emphasize this is prophecy from the God of the spirits of the prophets. God sent this prophecy to show His servants the things which will soon take place. The one who heeds this prophecy is blessed.

These are almost the same statements as in chapter 1.

Verses 8-10 are about John. He heard and saw what he was told to write in this prophecy book. Again it says the time is near.

Verses 18-19 contain warnings about adding to or taking away from the words in this prophecy book.

You might ask your group if they get complacent about the nearness of this fulfillment. Ask what they think about the blessing attached to reading, hearing, and heeding / keeping this prophecy. Give them time to discuss how all of this relates to them.

Lead your discussion back to Revelation 1.

*NOTE: You might tell your group the next lesson will thoroughly cover this chapter. They'll do more study on Revelation 1. So, don't ask about all the details in this chapter or you will lose your time for the rest of this discussion.*

What else does this chapter say about John writing the Revelation?

John was on an island named Patmos because of God's word and Jesus' testimony. It seems from the immediate context that he was there because of persecution against the gospel. John was persevering / enduring in tribulation. There was persecution at the time he wrote this revelation.

A voice told him to write what he saw and send it to the seven churches which are named in verse 11. He saw Jesus in the middle of these seven churches.

There is a map in the Appendix of the Precept Upon Precept workbook which will be helpful for your group to look at as they discuss the places mentioned in Revelation 1-5.

What specifically was John told to write?

The things which you have seen  
John saw the vision of Jesus in chapter 1.

He was worshiping the Lord—he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Then he heard a voice and saw Jesus Himself in the midst of 7 lampstands. This description of Jesus is awesome and will be studied more in Lesson 2.

The things which are  
The things which will take place after these things (ESV—after this)

## **REVELATION 2**

What is this chapter about? Ask what your group put as the chapter theme on their At a Glance chart.

Something like:

Write to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira

How does this chapter relate to the first?

These are four of the seven churches in Asia at the time John was told to write to them. This chapter contains the messages from the Lord Jesus to those churches.

Ask your group if they think these messages are relevant for churches now. Give time for them to briefly discuss this.

## **REVELATION 3**

What is a possible chapter theme for Revelation 3?

Write to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

What is a repeated statement in chapters 2 and 3?

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Ask your group if they have an ear to hear.

## **REVELATION 4**

How does this chapter begin? Compare verse 1 with Revelation 1:19.

After being told what to write to the seven churches, John saw and heard from heaven.

The voice said John would be shown what must take place after these things. This is the same terminology as in Revelation 1:19.

1:19 gives the main parts or segments of what John was to write in this Revelation

What he saw—Jesus in the midst of the seven churches, Revelation 1

The things which are—the seven churches, Revelation 2 and 3

The things which take place after—Revelation 4–22

*NOTE: Be sure your group has the above information noted on their Revelation 1–5 at a Glance chart for the main segment divisions.*

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Revelation 4.

John saw one on the throne in heaven; worship

What is the change in content from Revelation 2–3?

The setting changes from earth in chapters 2–3 to heaven in 4 and 5.

In Revelation 4 the focus is on the One who sits on the throne, God the Almighty.

Give time for your group to discuss the description of what was happening around the throne.

John used the gems of earth to describe the heavenly appearance, brilliance.  
24 elders on 24 thrones around God on His throne  
Lightning, thunder, fire, and something like a sea of glass before the throne  
4 living creatures constantly praising the Holy One, the Almighty God

When the creatures praise, then the elders fall down before the throne in worship.

Verse 2 presents the second time John was “in the Spirit.”

In Revelation 1:10-18, John was in the Spirit and then heard and saw.  
In chapter 4 again he was in the Spirit and heard and saw.

Verse 8 compares to the description of God in 1:8.

Ask what your group learned about God in this chapter. Can this help in their worship of Him?  
You might list the things they say about Him from Revelation 4 and 5.

## **REVELATION 5**

What is a theme for this chapter?

The Lamb is worthy to open the book / scroll.

Who is the central figure and why? What is the sequence of events?

There was a sealed book / scroll in God's right hand.

No one was found worthy to open it or look inside it.

John wept because of that until one of the elders told him the Lion of Judah, the Root of David had overcome / conquered and could open the seals of the book / scroll.



The Lamb, as if slain, took the book from God.

When He did, the creatures and elders fell down before Him in worship.

They sang a new song, verses 9-10.

Others in heaven joined in verses 11-13.

You can close your discussion with some time of praise/ worship of the One who sits on the throne and the Lion/ Lamb.

How can Revelation 4 and 5 make a difference in a person's everyday life?



## REVELATION, PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 2

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 1

### REVIEW

To begin this discussion ask your group what they remember as the main segments in Revelation. Tell them to look at the “Revelation 1–5 at a Glance” chart as a visual aid.

Revelation 1	what John saw
Revelation 2–3	the things which are
Revelation 4–22	the things which will take place after these things / this

This outline of Revelation is in 1:19.

What is the Revelation about?

It's prophecy of what will take place in the future.

The book's stated purpose is in Revelation 1:1 and 22:6.

To show Jesus' servants, God's servants, the things which must soon take place.

### REVELATION 1:1-3

How does Revelation begin? Discuss the relevant word studies.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

What is the definition of the word “revelation”?

“revelation,” *apokalupsis*—“uncovering, unveiling”<sup>1</sup>, “a disclosure”<sup>2</sup>

Is Revelation an unveiling of the person of Jesus or of His revealing the things which will take place?

If Revelation was written to show Jesus' bond-servants the things which must soon take place (main theme and purpose of the book), then that is the emphasis of all that's written.

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996) 32.

<sup>2</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

Although the first chapter is mostly a vision of Jesus, an unveiling of who He really is, the whole book focuses more on events than on who Jesus is. It is about the things which must soon take place.

“soon,” *tachos*—“quickness, swiftness, speed”<sup>3</sup>

The disclosure of things which must quickly, speedily, take place  
When these things begin to happen, they happen with speed.

“‘Quickly or suddenly coming to pass,’ indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning takes place. The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden.”<sup>4</sup>

This book is Jesus' revelation of what will happen.

What was the order of communication? (ESV—How was it made known?)  
Again, as in Lesson 1, you might diagram with arrows the order.

God to Jesus  
↓  
Jesus to angel  
↓  
Angel to John  
↓  
John to churches, servants

“communicated / made known,”  
*semaino*—“to give a sign,”<sup>5</sup> “to signify, make known”<sup>6</sup>

Jesus made these things known to John by an angel who showed him what he needed to see. The revelation is what John saw.

Then John wrote it to the servants, to the 7 churches of Asia.

What is promised in verse 3?

Revelation is a book of prophecy which needs to be read (ESV—aloud), heard, and heeded / kept because the time of its fulfillment is near.

Those who do are blessed.

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<sup>3</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G5034.

<sup>4</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (paperback edition) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press 1989), p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G4591.

<sup>6</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G4591.

“blessed,” *makarios*—the closest definition of this word is happy, but it’s more than that. It is “possessing the favor of God, that state of being marked by fullness from God.”<sup>7</sup>

#### **VERSES 4-8**

Who and what are these verses about?

As a visual aid for this part of your discussion, you can list the main points about God and Jesus.

Verse 4 is the beginning of John’s specific message to the seven churches of Asia.

Him who is and who was and who is to come

He is the one on the throne.

This is a reference to the Lord God, the Almighty. Compare this with verse 8.

*NOTE: If your group didn’t ask about the seven Spirits (ESV—spirits) last week, then they probably will now. There is no specific explanation for this, except that it is what the text says. No other place in the Bible uses this terminology.*

Verses 5-7 are about Jesus.

The faithful witness

The firstborn of the dead

*NOTE: “Firstborn of the dead” will be studied in Lesson 4, so don’t let your group discuss too much about that.*

The ruler of the kings of the earth

Freed us from our sins by His blood

Made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father

Glory and dominion forever

Ask how this description compares with Daniel 7.

How does Jesus receive His dominion, His kingdom?

The Ancient of Days, God the Father, gave the one like a Son of Man dominion, glory, and a kingdom. His dominion is everlasting, and His kingdom will not be destroyed.

All nations will serve Him, Daniel 7:14.

Revelation 1:5, He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Verse 7 is the first time Jesus’ coming is mentioned in Revelation, but it is mentioned several times after this. The things which must shortly take place are connected with the second coming of Jesus.

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<sup>7</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G3107.

His coming will be seen by all.  
He was pierced—this refers to what happened on the cross.  
The mourning might be because it will be too late for those who did not believe in Him.

Verse 8 repeats verse 4, but also adds a new description about the Father, the Almighty.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega”

A metaphor is an implied comparison of things that are different. Alpha and Omega in verse 8 could be considered metaphors. Just as the Greek alphabet begins with Alpha and ends with Omega, the Almighty is the beginning and the end.

*NOTE: Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter. The New Testament was originally written in Greek.*

John was told to write what he saw—he was to communicate with the letters of the Greek alphabet. God is the consummation of all that was to be communicated; it originated with Him and ends with Him.

#### **VERSES 9-11**

Who and what are these verses about?

Persecution of Christians was going on at the time John wrote Revelation. He was exiled because of his faith to an island off the coast of Asia, modern Turkey. He had persevered in his tribulations. He looked more to the kingdom of God than to the earthly persecutions of the ruling Roman empire.

In the Spirit he heard and saw the first of the visions in Revelation.  
But before seeing anything, he was told what to do—write in a book what he saw.  
Then he was to send it to the seven Asian churches; he wrote it so that bond-servants of this day can read what he wrote and heed / keep its prophecy.

The voice of verse 10, like a trumpet, must have been the angel's voice.

Ask about the meaning of “simile.”

A simile is a comparison of two different things uses the connecting word *like* or *as*.  
Verses 10-17 contain several similes, such as the voice like a trumpet.

#### **VERSES 12-16**

Who do these verses describe? Ask your group what they learned from their study.  
As a visual aid, draw a stick figure of Jesus in the middle of seven churches.

John saw seven golden lampstands. Verse 20 interprets the lampstands as the seven churches. These are the seven churches named in verse 11.

He saw one like a son of man in the middle of the seven churches.  
This is similar to the description in Daniel 7 of the Ancient of Days.  
It's a description of Jesus here.

Although the sight of Jesus was so awesome, John had to describe it by using terms people would understand. He could only say "like" because no earthly terms would sufficiently describe what he saw.

robe to the feet / long robe  
golden sash across / around His chest  
head and hair white like wool and snow  
eyes like a flame of fire  
feet glowing like burnished bronze  
voice like the sound / roar of many waters  
face like the sun shining

Jesus was in the middle of the lampstands, or in the middle of the churches.  
The church at that time was being persecuted—He knew; He was there.

He held the seven stars, the angels of the churches, in His right hand. He's in control; He communicates with His church.

The sharp two-edged sword came from His mouth.

*NOTE: This will be studied in a later lesson.*

Give your group time to think about who Jesus really is. Ask how this can bless them.

#### **VERSES 17-20**

What was John's reaction? What did Jesus say?

John fell at His feet as a dead man, afraid.

Jesus told John not to be afraid.

He said of Himself:

First and last  
Living one, died and alive forever  
Has the keys of Death and Hades

Then He told John to write:

things he had seen—Revelation 1, vision of Jesus in midst of churches

things / those which are—chapters 2–3, messages to the seven churches

things / those which will take place after these things / this—Revelation 4–22

How does this chapter end?

An explanation of the seven lampstands and the seven stars

The lampstands are the churches, and the stars are the angels of the churches.

Ask your group what they have learned from these first two lessons that has given them some lessons for life.



**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 2:1-7
- Jesus' message to the Ephesian church

**REVIEW**

If you will ask your group each week what Revelation is about and/ or why John wrote it, then by the end of this first course, they should be able to tell the answers to anyone who asks. Also ask them what the three segments are. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart.

1:1, the Revelation was written to show Jesus' servants the things which must soon take place. It's a book of prophecy promising a blessing to those who heed / keep what is in it.

1:19, the three segments John was told to write are:  
the things you have seen, Revelation 1—vision of Jesus among 7 churches  
the things which are, chapters 2–3—Jesus' messages to those churches  
the things which will take place after these things, Revelation 4–22

**EPHESUS**

You can begin your discussion of Revelation 2:1-7 by asking who these verses are about.

This is what Jesus told John to write to the church at Ephesus.

The best visual aids for this discussion are “Jesus' Messages to the Churches” chart and the map.

You can ask what they learned from their study about Ephesus.

The city was well-known as it had one of the seven wonders of the ancient world there, the famous temple of Artemis—the goddess of fertility. The first temple was destroyed by fire in 356 B.C., and one rebuilt in 250 B.C was magnificent.

Ephesus was a prominent city during the time of the Romans, especially during the first and second centuries.

Acts records the beginning of the church there approximately 45 to 50 years before John wrote the Revelation. Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila were the ones who initially took the gospel to Ephesus. Paul wrote a letter to them about A.D. 60. John didn't write Revelation until around A.D. 95. This was the city where he ministered before being exiled to Patmos.

Acts 19 tells that there had been a lot of evil spirits and magic in the city. When the gospel came and people were saved, many burned their magic books—they repented from their old ways. In Ephesians 1, Paul commended them for their love. Timothy had also ministered at Ephesus.

### DESCRIPTION OF JESUS CHRIST

How does the message to the church at Ephesus begin?

It's a description of Jesus, verse 1.

The One who holds the 7 stars in His right hand

- The 7 stars are the angels of the 7 churches
- “angels” literally means “messengers”

*NOTE: Some think that these letters are directed toward the pastors or elders as messengers of these churches.*

The One who walks among the 7 golden lampstands

- The 7 lampstands are the 7 churches
- A lampstand is for shining light into darkness; so are churches.
- Jesus was walking among the churches; in chapter 1 He was in the middle.

Jesus is in the midst of the churches and knows all that goes on in them. That's still true now. His church is to be the light to the world, and He, as the light of the world, gives them the power to shine.

### COMMENDATION

How did Jesus commend this church?

Jesus was in the middle of the churches, and knew about the Ephesian church:

Deeds / works

Toil

Perseverance / endurance

Cannot tolerate / bear with evil men

Tested those who call themselves apostles

Found them to be false

Endured for His name's sake

Hadn't grown weary

Hated the Nicolaitans' deeds / works

It seems like they had their service and doctrine straight, and didn't tire in working for the Lord.

## REPROOF

What was the reproof to this church?

Jesus said He had something against the church.  
They'd left their first love (ESV—abandoned the love you had at first).

Ask what your group learned from the word studies and cross-references related to verse 4.

At a previous point in time this church had forsaken what they loved first. They were continuing in doing things for the Lord and in His name, but without love. These kinds of churches, or individuals, can seem hard and cold in their devotion to the Lord and what they do in His name.

### Deuteronomy 28 and 30

From the time God gave the Law to Israel He has called His people to love Him with all their heart. Israel didn't choose to obey this call, and they suffered the consequences for it—they were removed out of their promised land.

To love God is to follow His commands.

### Mark 12:28-34

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. Everything else is secondary to loving Him.  
The second greatest command is to love others as self.

### 1 Corinthians 13

If there is no love, then the deeds / works are worthless.

### Acts 2, 4, and 5

At the beginning of the church in Jerusalem it was filled with love.

Not only were the believers devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, but also to prayer and sharing what they had with each other—demonstrating their love for others. They were of one heart and soul, a heart and soul that loved God above all else.

They filled Jerusalem with the message about Jesus and the church grew daily.

### John 15

Jesus said if a person keeps His commandments, he will abide in His love.

1 John

Keeping His commands is how one loves Him.  
There are things which can hinder love for God.

Love of the world  
Lust of the flesh and eyes, pride of life

*NOTE: 1 John was also written by the apostle John shortly before he wrote Revelation.*

Although the Ephesian church was doing deeds / works in Jesus' name, it doesn't mean that they weren't deeds of the flesh, perhaps out of pride.

James 4:4

Friendship with or love of the world is hostility toward God.  
God's enemies are the unsaved. Salvation brings reconciliation.

God's heart is hurt by the adultery of His people Israel.

His heart is also hurt when a believer temporarily chooses the world over Him.

Give your group time to discuss application at any point in this discussion.

Lead your discussion back to Revelation 2:5-7.

**WARNING AND INSTRUCTION**

Is there warning or instruction from Jesus to the church at Ephesus?

Remember from where you have fallen.

—continuous or repeated action, a command from Jesus

Repent

—a command to begin at that very moment to change one's thinking

Do the deeds / works you did at first

—that was loving God

What did Jesus say, in verse 5, He would do if this church didn't repent?

Remove their church (lampstand, 1:20).

What is the repeated statement to all of the 7 churches? Relate this to 1:3.

He who has an ear; let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.  
To all the churches

Listen to what Jesus said and take heed.

**PROMISE TO OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

How does the message to the church at Ephesus end?

Addressing him who overcomes / conquers

They would be the ones who have an ear to hear and obey what Jesus said.

Jesus will grant him to eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God.

How does the promise of verse 7 relate to the rest of the message to Ephesus?

What is the connection between Jesus' description of Himself, the problem He addressed, and the promise to those who overcome the problem?

Those who remember, repent, and do the first deeds of loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength are the overcomers / conquerors. They are the ones who will be in Paradise with God and eat of the tree of life.

It seems like those who don't overcome don't receive life and aren't going to be in Paradise.

If that's the case, then leaving the first love is a matter of life and death.

Jesus who walks among the churches knows who loves, what deeds or works are done and He gave the warnings and instructions to overcome / conquer by hearing what He said and acting accordingly.

*NOTE: All seven statements to the overcomers / conquerors will be studied thoroughly in the last lesson of this course, so you don't need to allow much time for discussing it until the last discussion.*

To end this discussion, ask your group how this applies to churches and individual believers now.

*NOTE: Some in your group might have read or heard the 7 churches represent 7 periods of church history. It is best if you don't allow for that discussion until they have studied all the messages to the churches. Lesson 9 would be a more appropriate time for that discussion.*



**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 2:8-11
- Jesus' message to the church at Smyrna

To begin your discussion, review Revelation's theme/ purpose and the three main segments. Then ask about what your group remembers from the message to the church at Ephesus.

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart, the map, and "Jesus' Messages to the Churches" as visual aids for this discussion.

**SMYRNA**

Ask what they learned about Smyrna.

It's the modern city of Izmir, Turkey.

An excellent harbor—extensive trade passed into and out of the city  
Surrounded by rich farmland

A temple for the worship of Rome, dedicated to Tiberius Caesar  
Conflict between Jews and Christians

The gospel might have reached Smyrna from Ephesus.  
Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was martyred in A.D. 156.

**DESCRIPTION OF JESUS**

How does the message to the church at Smyrna begin?

Jesus  
the first and the last  
who was dead, and has come to life (ESV—who died and came to life)

Ask what your group learned from the word studies and cross-references.

Revelation 1:17-18 gives basically the same description of Jesus, but adds some to it.

He is the first—preeminent, not just first in time, but also first in position.

Revelation 1:5, firstborn of the dead  
The place of the firstborn son was preeminence over his brothers and sisters.

Since Jesus is the firstborn of the dead, He has the place of prominence over all others raised from the dead.

Colossians 1:15-18

Jesus is the firstborn of all creation.

This does not indicate that He was created, but that as Creator (verse 16) He has first place in everything created. He holds creation together.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26

He is the first fruits of those who are asleep.

Jesus as the first fruits of those raised from the dead indicates that His resurrection is proof of the harvest to come. His resurrection is the hope of resurrection for all who believe in Him.

Resurrection order:

Jesus first

Then those who are His at His coming

Order of the end events:

He reigns until He puts His enemies under His feet, the last one being death.

During that reign, He abolishes / destroys all authority, etc.

Then He hands over the kingdom to God the Father.

Jesus has preeminence.

Acts 2:22-32

It was God's plan for Jesus to be killed for the sins of the world. Although godless men, the Romans, and those who claimed to know God, the Jews, nailed Him to the cross, God raised Him up again.

Death, the last of God's enemies Jesus will abolish / destroy, could not hold Him.

Neither was He abandoned to Hades.

This is not a reference to "hell"—*Gehenna*, the lake of fire.

It's the place defined as the abode of departed spirits.

Like death, Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire according to Revelation 20.

Luke 16

Jesus said that the rich man was in Hades, and Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom. In Hades the rich man was in agony, in flames. He was an unbeliever.



## COMMENDATION

After that powerful description of Jesus, what did He say to the church at Smyrna?

Jesus said He knew their

“tribulation,” *thlipsis*—“a pressing, pressing together, pressure”<sup>1</sup>

“poverty,” *ptocheia*—“*beggary*, i.e., *destitution*”<sup>2</sup>; “extreme and abject poverty”<sup>3</sup>

the blasphemy / slander by the synagogue of Satan

The church's persecution was coming from a strong Jewish synagogue.  
Since they were unbelievers, they were under Satan's control.

Relate 1:9 to this church's situation.

Relate this also to Jesus' description of Himself to this church.

Ask what your group learned about persecution and suffering for Christians.

### John 15 and 2 Timothy 3

Since the world hated Jesus so much that they killed Him, it's no surprise that they hate those who live for His name and glory.

All Christians will be persecuted.

### 1 Peter 2

As Jesus was persecuted, He left an example for believers to follow in doing what is right in the midst of persecution. Ask if your students think that the church at Smyrna was doing what was right in their persecution.

### 1 Peter 1 and 4

Christians aren't to be surprised when trials or persecution comes to them. It's for their testing, to prove their faith; therefore, they can rejoice because of it.

### Hebrews 2 and 5

Even Jesus learned obedience through what He suffered.

### Hebrews 10

Suffering for the church at Smyrna wasn't a sign that God was displeased with them.

Verse 36 says believers enduring persecution are doing God's will.

Some of them suffer publicly, all by association.

Some lost their property, which could have also happened at Smyrna.

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<sup>1</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G2347.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G4432.

<sup>3</sup> Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 616.

Ask what they learned as some results of enduring suffering and persecution. Also how can one endure?

2 Timothy 1

Paul told Timothy that God had given him a spirit of power, love, and discipline. That's how he could endure suffering for the gospel.

Philippians 4

Paul was able to do and endure because of Christ strengthening him.

2 Corinthians 1; 1 Corinthians 10:13

Paul wrote that the comfort in Christ is as abundant as the suffering. He had also told them that God won't allow one to be tempted beyond what he's able to endure—He'll make a way out for the Christian.

Luke 12

Jesus said the Holy Spirit is with believers in trials and will give them what they need to say.

James 1:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:15-18; Job 2:9-10; 6:10; 1 Peter 2; 1 Peter 4

Rejoicing and thanksgiving are the attitudes which should accompany persecution, trials, and sufferings.

Romans 8:28 is quoted by many for a very good reason. But verse 29 is so exciting—Christians are being conformed into the image of Christ by the sufferings they endure.

He's the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Why would Jesus say they were rich if they were in poverty?

Their riches were in Him, treasures in heaven, Matthew 6.

He became poor so all Christians would become rich—spiritually, 2 Corinthians 8:9.

**REPROOF**

Ask your group if they noted anything in this box on their charts.

This church was being refined in their tribulation, and there was no reproof for them.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Ask what Jesus told them in verse 10. Discuss relevant cross-references also.

Don't fear what you're about to suffer.  
Be faithful to death.

Psalm 56

David said he trusted in God when he was afraid.

The situation for the church at Smyrna wasn't going to get any better, but worse.

The devil was going to throw some of them into prison.

Since those claiming to be Jews were of what Jesus called the synagogue of Satan, they must have been the human agents the devil used to imprison believers.

1 Thessalonians 3:2-5

Although Christians are destined for afflictions, some of those come by the tempter.

Those in Smyrna were not being tempted beyond what they were able to endure. The devil was not gaining a victory over them.

The tribulation of ten days is a curious statement, and it's best not to be dogmatic about its meaning. It could have been a literal ten days, or it could have symbolically meant for a definite period of time. In other words, there would be an end to it.

Relate Jesus' description to verse 10.

He had been faithful until His death. Then He had overcome death as the firstborn from the dead. He gave them the example to follow and the hope that they could be faithful.

As He is the One who has come to life, He would give them the crown of life.

*NOTE: Crowns in that culture were for those who participated in Olympic-type games and endured to the end to win a crown. The winners wore the crowns.*

Give time for your group to discuss application at any relevant point in this discussion.

**PROMISE TO OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

Ask how this relates to the rest of the message.

Some or all of them would die for their faith.

But they wouldn't be hurt by the second death.

Because they'll have the crown of life

*NOTE: The second death will be studied in Lesson 10 on the overcomers.*

Ask your group how this relates to them.

Encourage them to be ready when persecution comes to them.



## REVELATION, PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 5

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 2:12-17
- Jesus' message to the church at Pergamum

### REVIEW

After your review of Revelation's theme/ purpose and main segments, review the main points of Jesus' messages to Ephesus and Smyrna. Tell them to look at the At a Glance chart and "Jesus' Message to the Churches" as visual aids.

Ephesus—love has to accompany deeds / works or the church is useless  
Smyrna—no reproof to the suffering church being tested and proven

### PERGAMUM

Ask what your group learned about the city of Pergamum.  
Tell them to look at the map as a visual aid.

"In the third century B.C., Pergamum became the center of an independent kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

Another name for it is Pergamos, modern Bergama.  
It's about 20 miles inland from the Aegean Sea and about 55 miles from Smyrna.

It was "a great political and religious centre."<sup>2</sup>

Parchment, first made in this city, got its name from here, and it had a great library second only to the one in Alexandria.<sup>3</sup>

It had the first temple in Asia dedicated to a Roman Emperor, Augustus, 29 B.C.,<sup>4</sup> and "it was one of the oldest and most prominent centers of the imperial cult, i.e., the worship of the Roman emperor as a divine being . . . ."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 771–772.

<sup>2</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 2:12.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 2:12.

<sup>4</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 2:12.

<sup>5</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 771–772.

It was also well-known for its worship of Asklepios (the serpent god of healing), Zeus, Isis, and several other gods.<sup>6</sup>

There were all sorts of false worship; the city was famous for it. There was worship of the Roman Caesars as well as several gods of ancient origin.  
Satan is behind false worship.

Revelation 2:13 says it was where Satan's throne was.  
One of Jesus' faithful witnesses, Antipas, was killed there, where Satan dwells.

Verses 14-15 say there were also those there who held to the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.

### **DESCRIPTION OF JESUS**

Ask what the description is and what they learned about it from cross-references in the lesson.

The One who has the sharp two-edged sword  
Relate this to 1:16. The sword was coming out of His mouth.

#### Hebrews 4:12

God's Word, sharper than any two-edged sword  
Here the context is that the Word goes deep inside a person to the heart and mind.

#### Ephesians 6:17

The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God  
It comes out of Jesus' mouth, and it's called the sword of the Spirit.  
It's part of the believer's armor for battle against the schemes of the devil.

#### Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 19:15

Isaiah said God will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth. The context is judgment.

When Jesus comes, He's called the Word of God. The sharp sword comes from His mouth to strike down the nations. That's judgment.

To the church in this city where parchment was first used and named, this city with a huge famous library, Jesus was described as the One who had the sword, referring to God's Word, coming from His mouth.

Verse 16 also refers to Jesus' coming and the sword of His mouth. The context is again judgment.

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<sup>6</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G4010.

## COMMENDATION

How did Jesus commend this church?

The church at Pergamum had held fast Jesus' name.

Ask your group what they learned about Jesus' name and what they think it means to hold fast to it.

A person's name represents His character, who He is.

The church at Pergamum was holding on to who Jesus is, although they lived in the center of pagan worship—where Satan's throne was. It was a center for him.

Joseph was told by the angel what to name Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. His is the only name by which people are saved. His name Immanuel means "God with us."

The church in the midst of the occult held on to the Savior.  
God was with them in that evil place.

Jesus is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus' name is above every other one. God magnified His name and His Word.  
At a time in the future every knee will bow to the name of Jesus and know that He is Lord.

Ask your group how it's possible for them to hold fast when they're in similar situations.

Ask what they think not denying His faith means, verse 13.

Jude says the faith was once for all handed down to the saints.  
Faith is believing what God has said, believing in His Son Jesus.

The Pergamum church didn't deny the word of God they believed, which they had because of Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God. Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Antipas was the example of not denying the faith; he was killed for being Jesus' witness.

This church lived according to what they believed, according to God's Word.

Believers now can do the same—faith is not seeing, but believing. Believing what God has said, even in the midst of evil.

Give your group time to discuss relevant application.

## REPROOF

According to verses 14-15 what was the reproof?

Jesus had a few things against them. They had some who held to  
Balaam's teaching  
Nicolaitans' teaching

Ask what your group learned about each one.

### Teaching of Balaam

He "kept teaching Balak"—it was a continual thing for a while, systematic. He taught Balak how to put a stumbling block before Israel. That stumbling block led them into sin—idolatry and immorality.

This wasn't blatant contradiction of the truth, but enticing toward evil.

Balak was the king of Moab who saw Israel camped in his area. There were multitudes of them, and he was fearful. They were in his territory and very numerous. All the nations had also heard what God had done for Israel.

He hired a prophet named Balaam to curse Israel. But God spoke to Balaam that he could not curse them. Balaam feared God, so he didn't curse Israel. But instead he taught Balak how to invite the men of Israel camped close by to come to Moab's festivals for worshipping false gods.

The men of Israel became enticed by the women of Moab and Midian at the worship; they had been deliberately led into sin.

As a result, God sent a plague among them and killed 24,000. It was their judgment for following other gods, following other teaching leading to sin.

### Acts 15:22-29

In the New Testament when Gentiles were being saved, the church leaders decided on some statements to circulate through the Gentile churches. Some of these had to do with abstaining from idolatry and fornication.

Jude says there are others who rush into Balaam's error because they want to get paid—just like he did.

### Teaching of the Nicolaitans

There is no Scriptural description of what the Nicolaitans taught.



The definition of the word helps to get an idea of what it might have been. Some define it as “victor of the people,”<sup>7</sup> and others as “destruction of people.”<sup>8</sup>

They could have been the forerunners of the Gnostics who taught that an elevated group of “spiritual” people had more knowledge than all believers.

Ask your group about the relationship all believers have with Jesus, with God.

Revelation 1:6

All are priests to God

1 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22

There are no people in the church higher than others because there is only one mediator between God and men—Jesus is the Mediator.

He is the High Priest over the house of God, the church.

Since He passed through the heavens to the throne of God, He made the way for believers to be able to come into His presence.

The exhortation is to draw near and hold fast—like the faithful at Pergamum did.

There are none between men and God, and all believers are priests to God.

What about church leaders?

Hebrews 13:7-9, 17 and 1 Timothy 5:17

Christians are to follow those God put over them in areas of church leadership. They're to imitate their faith, after watching their conduct—the results of their faith. Elders are raised up by the Lord to lead His church, and one of the ways they do it is by teaching His Word.

This Hebrews passage parallels Jesus' message to Pergamum. Not only does it teach about faith, but also gives a warning about false teachings. Here they're called varied and strange—things not according to God's Word.

**WARNING AND INSTRUCTION**

Ask your group what they wrote in this box on their chart.

The instruction is the same as it was for Ephesus—repent.

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<sup>7</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G3531.

<sup>8</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G3531.

The warning is:

Jesus will come quickly to this church and use the sword coming from His mouth, God's Word, to war with those holding to the false teaching.

Give time for them to reason through the description of Jesus, the commendation, the reproof and the warning. They have to do with God's Word.

This discussion can have life-changing results for some in your group. You might ask if they know how to recognize the accurate teaching of God's Word. Continuing in inductive study is one way to assure that they do.

### **PROMISE TO OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

What did Jesus say in verse 17?

He will give the overcomer / conqueror  
Hidden manna  
A white stone  
A new name written on the stone  
No one knows it but the one who receives it

Relate this to the commendation.

They held to Jesus' name.

*Note: Remind your group that they'll study all of the words to overcomers / conquerors in a later lesson.*

The clear part of this message to the overcomers is what they would overcome.

They wouldn't hold to either of the false teachings mentioned in this message.

They are the ones who hold fast Jesus' name and don't deny His faith.

And your group understands how to do these things so that they'll be overcomers.

## REVELATION, PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 6

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 2:18-29
- Jesus' message to Thyatira

### REVIEW

After your quick review of Revelation's theme/ purpose and its three main segments, ask about the messages to the previous churches. Tell your group to look at "Jesus' Messages to the Churches" as a visual aid for this discussion.

Ephesus—correct doctrine and work, but useless because left / abandoned first love  
A loveless church

Smyrna—suffering tribulation, faithful  
A refined church

Pergamum—some hold to false teaching, some hold fast Jesus' name and faith  
A compromising church

Love, faithfulness, and sound doctrine are all necessary for a church to function properly. They're all needed to honor Jesus' name, His character.

He's the answer to all the problems within a church, too.

### THYATIRA

Ask what your group learned about the city of Thyatira.  
Tell them to look at the map as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

This was a town about 55 miles northeast of Smyrna<sup>1</sup> and 40 miles southeast of Pergamum.<sup>2</sup> It was on the road from Pergamum to Sardis and Laodicea.<sup>3</sup>

Lydia, the seller of purple in Philippi when Paul went there, was from Thyatira, Acts 16:14-15. The city was known for its purple dye, and they had a prosperous trade in purple cloth. Some think it's possible Lydia brought or sent the gospel to Thyatira from hearing and believing it in Philippi.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 1069.

<sup>2</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 2:18.

<sup>3</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 1069.

Another trade there was brass-working. Inscriptions have been found in its ruins indicating many trade guilds.

The main worship was of Apollo<sup>4</sup> and a local god Tyrimnos, also a sun god.<sup>5</sup>

### DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

What is the description of Jesus in verse 18? How does it contrast with worship of a sun god?

Son of God  
Eyes like a flame of fire, they see all.

Feet like burnished bronze or fine brass; only used here and 1:15, signifies brilliance.

Brilliance and judgment are symbolized in this description.

### COMMENDATION

Ask your group what they noted in the box for commendation on their chart.

Deeds / works, later greater than first (ESV—latter works exceed the first)  
Love  
Faith  
Service  
Perseverance / endurance

Compare and contrast with what Jesus said to the other churches, but watch your time.

*NOTE: In the New Inductive Study Bible there are pages for the same information as the chart in this course. If your group has NISBs, encourage them to fill in these pages as they study their lessons each week. Then when they're done, they'll have their work with them in their Bible. You might encourage them to get an NISB if they don't have one, as there are also charts for the rest of Revelation in it as well.*

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<sup>4</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 2:18.

<sup>5</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 1069.

## REPROOF

What did Jesus say as reproof to this church? Discuss cross-references and word studies.

As in Revelation 2:4 and 14, to the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum, Jesus said He had something against this church at Thyatira.

They tolerate the woman Jezebel, a false prophetess and teacher.

Comparing this to Pergamum, verses 14-15, it seems the majority of the church at Thyatira was tolerating the false teaching and sin. But only some in Pergamum had been lured by the false teaching. It seems the teaching in Thyatira was more blatant than the seductive teaching in Pergamum.

### 1 and 2 Kings

Ahab was the king of Israel and married a woman not of Israel. Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Sidon, and she brought Baal worship into Israel.

She tried to drive out of Israel all true worshipers of God. She even killed His prophets. But when she swore about killing Elijah, she actually spoke of her own death. God said that the dogs would eat her remains, and that's exactly what happened.

Her judgment indicated the severity of what she had done to Israel.

Lead your discussion back to Thyatira. How do Kings and Revelation parallel?

Jesus told the church at Thyatira the severity of what they did as they tolerated Jezebel and her teaching. She brought false teaching into the church, and immorality along with it.

The food sacrificed to idols and the immorality indicate false worship accompanying the false teaching. This was a worse situation than at Pergamum.

Ask your group what they learned about immorality and its consequences.

Immorality is a term which encompasses all forms of sexual sins: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, etc.

These things were being tolerated by a church. Ask your group if that ever happens today. Why does it happen?

### Hebrews 13:4; Romans 2:2

Those who commit immorality will be judged by God.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

God is the avenger. He desires sanctification for His church. It's the process true believers experience.

Psalm 73

The end of the arrogant and the wicked is destruction, sudden terrors.

1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 1

Immorality is sin against one's own body.  
Some horrible diseases are transmitted by immorality.

Proverbs 6 and 7

These chapters tell of how a harlot, adulteress like the one of Thyatira, leads men into death. It's a seductive trap. These men destroy themselves.

Revelation 2:21-23

A warning for all to heed

Instead of tolerating this woman, her teaching and her sin, what should the church at Thyatira have done? Ask your group what they learned about church discipline and why it should be exercised.

Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Timothy 5:19-21

First go in private to the one who has sinned and confront the sin.  
That way the whole church doesn't know about it if the person listens to the correction and turns from the sin.

If needed, take one or two more and go a second time to the one who has sinned.  
At each step there is possibility of the one sinning to stop.

If it continues, if the confrontations are not heeded, then the whole church is to be told of the sin. The rebuke is to be before the whole church, and until repentance takes place, there's to be no association with the "so-called" brother.

Sin is to be cleaned out of the church, not tolerated.  
Believers are to judge sin within the church. Put it out.

Give your group time to discuss how this relates to church now.

**WARNING AND INSTRUCTION**

What was the result of the sin at Thyatira, verses 21-23?

Jesus had given the self-proclaimed prophetess time to repent, but she didn't want to.  
Therefore, she would suffer the judgment.

“repent,” *metanoeo*—“lit., to perceive afterwards . . . to change one's mind”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (electronic edition), published in 1940 and without copyright, G3340.

Matthew 3:1-8

There is “fruit” of repentance. In other words, repentance shows in actions.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

True repentance comes from godly sorrow / grief and leads to salvation. This is contrasted with worldly sorrow / grief which leads to death.

Verse 22 says He also calls others to repent. If they don't, they and the woman will be judged with sickness and tribulation.

Those who came from her, her children, will be killed.  
Immorality results in death, judgment.

Her judgment was severe as were her deeds. She taught the “deep things of Satan” in the church, and it was tolerated.

As a result of that judgment, all the churches would know that Jesus is the One who searches the minds and hearts. Relate to verse 18.

What was the instruction to the righteous of Thyatira?

The burden of the false teaching and resulting sin was burden enough on them. They needed to continue to hold fast until Jesus comes.

*NOTE: Someone might mention that “hold fast” and “repent” have been repeated in these messages several times. If it's brought up, then ask about any other repeated words like “teaching” or references to the devil. But if none are mentioned at this time, then ask about it in a later lesson.*

**PROMISE TO OVERCOMERS**

What did Jesus promise to those who overcame / conquered?

Those who held fast overcame the false teaching and sin.  
They weren't led astray by what they heard and saw.  
They kept His deeds / works to the end.

Those who overcame / conquered, who held fast, would be given authority over the nations. They weren't overcome / conquered, so they can lead, rule effectively.

They'll also receive the morning star—more about that will be studied in Lesson 10.

As you close, you could ask your group if they are paying attention to Revelation 2:7, 11, 17 and 29. If there is time, you could also let them share what has meant the most to them so far in this study.





**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 3:1-6
- Jesus' message to the dead church at Sardis

**REVIEW**

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask them what Revelation 1–5 is about.

Revelation 1	Revelation given to John; he was told to write, saw Jesus
Revelation 2	Write to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira
Revelation 3	Write to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea
Revelation 4	John saw One on the throne in heaven; worship
Revelation 5	The Lamb is worthy to open the book / scroll

Ask what the main theme is of the whole Revelation and what the three main segments are.

Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 tell the theme / purpose for the whole book.

God gave the Revelation to Jesus

Jesus gave it to an angel

The angel gave it to John

John wrote it to the churches

The Revelation is to show His servants the things which must soon take place.

Jesus told John what to write in 1:19:

The things which you have seen

The vision of Jesus, Revelation 1

The things / those which are

His messages to the seven churches, Revelation 2–3

The things / those which will take place after these things / this

Revelation 4–22

You might ask your group if they understand what Revelation is about more than they did when they began this course.

Tell them to look at “Jesus' Messages to the Churches” chart, and ask what the messages in Revelation 2 are about. Ask if they have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church.

Ephesus—don't leave / abandon your first love

Smyrna—don't fear tribulation; be faithful to death

Pergamum—hold fast to Jesus' name, don't deny the faith

Thyatira—don't tolerate false teaching and sin in the church

## SARDIS

Ask what they learned about the city of Sardis. Tell them to look at the map.

It's 30 miles southeast of Thyatira and a wealthy city.<sup>1</sup> The regional capital of the ancient kingdom Lydia, it was a city of influence even to Athens.<sup>2</sup> Its luxurious clothing trade made it famous. But by the time John wrote Revelation, it had deteriorated to rest on its past and not its present.<sup>3</sup>

## DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

How does this message begin? How is Jesus described in verse 1?

Jesus has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, 1:20.

Who / what are the seven Spirits?

### Revelation 1:4

Before God's throne

### Revelation 4:5

Seven lamps / torches of fire burning

### Revelation 5:6

Seven eyes sent out into all the earth

### Zechariah 4:1-14

A lampstand with seven lamps and spouts, and the explanation given for this is verse 6 about God's Spirit.

God told Zerubbabel the temple would not be built by the might and power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Verse 10 says the seven, these eyes of the Lord, these lamps for the lampstand, will be glad when Zerubbabel finishes the house of the Lord, the temple rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity.

The temple was God's dwelling place among His people. It represented His presence with Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 3:1.

<sup>2</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 907.

<sup>3</sup> E. M. B. Green and C. J. Hemer, "Sardis," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 1062.

Proverbs 15:3

This is the third reference studied which speaks of the eyes of the Lord.

*NOTE: Don't think you have to understand everything about the Zechariah passage since you're not studying Zechariah. Just ask about the obvious things in the cross-references.*

Ask your group how they think the Holy Spirit relates to the eyes of the Lord and lamps based on these passages. Help them think out loud and reason with one another about the seven Spirits of God.

If seven is the number of completion or perfection, and Revelation is a book filled with symbolism, then it's not out of order for the Holy Spirit to be the seven Spirits of God.

He is the lamp before the Lord's throne, and the Son is the Lamb there; the Trinity at the throne in heaven. And the Spirit is the Lord's eyes sent throughout the world. The Spirit of God gives illumination and goes throughout the world seeing all that goes on.

Isaiah 11:1-5

This passage gives a description of the Spirit of the Lord who rested on Jesus. He is the same Spirit who indwells believers. There are six things He gives; let your group discuss them.

**REPROOF**

*NOTE: You can effectively discuss this message to Sardis in the order of the text. The reproof, warning and instruction all come before any commendation, which is at the end of this message in verse 4.*

What is the one statement Jesus made before giving the warning and instructions?

Sardis was a dead church although they had a name that they were alive.  
There was no life in almost all of the people in that church.

Give your group time to think or talk about how this might be the case now.

Ask what they learned about spiritual life, or the lack thereof, and how spiritual life is manifested.

John 1:11-13; 10:10; 14:6

Jesus came to give life, and He's the source of life, the only way to have life.  
Only those who truly believe in Him receive eternal life.  
A spiritual birth must take place for eternal life.

Jesus gives the right to be God's children to those who are born of God, which is the same as believing in Jesus.

Romans 8:1-2, 9-11; John 6:63

The Spirit gives life.

He is the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

When one is born of God, the Holy Spirit comes to live within that child of God. If the Spirit is not present, then there is no eternal life abiding within that person. They are spoken of as being dead.

Most of the people at Sardis were not saved; they didn't have the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

The Spirit also is the One Who produces righteousness in believers' lives. He is the source within. Relate this to how Jesus described Himself to the church at Sardis.

Ephesians 1:13; 2:1-5

People who are dead in their sins, like the people of Sardis, can receive life, the Holy Spirit, when they believe in Jesus, are born of God, become His children.

All people start out being dead, and some receive eternal life.

God's mercy and love, nothing of man, make people come to life.

Saved by His grace; made alive with Christ

That's what the church at Sardis was missing.

There is a question in the lesson which asked what will be true if one is really God's. If it has not been answered by this point in your discussion, then you might point your group to it for the answer.

Hebrews 3:6, 12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

These statements are very clear in telling what characterizes true believers.

They are the ones who:

Hold fast their confidence and hope firm until the end

Hold fast the beginning of their assurance firm until the end

Stand in the gospel

Hold fast the Word

This describes the people in the church at Smyrna and Antipas of Pergamum.

The church at Sardis had not held fast to the gospel, the Word of God. Their deeds were not complete; they had not held fast firm until the end.

Give time for your group to discuss personal application of these truths. There is a possibility a few of them might not be saved.

## WARNING AND INSTRUCTION

What are the warning and instruction in verses 2-3? Ask your group what they learned about both.

Wake up

This is a warning call to know spiritual reality.

They were dead and needed to be saved—they needed to realize that fact.

Strengthen the things that remain (ESV—strengthen what remains) and are about to die

According to the immediate context of verse 2 it seems that the things that remain refers to deeds / works. “For” in verse 2 continues the thought of deeds / works not complete.

The deeds / works are not complete in God’s sight.

“deeds / works completed”

—works carried through to the end; accomplish an end

“Completed” is *pleroo*, “to make full.”<sup>4</sup>

Their deeds were not complete, because many of Sardis were dead spiritually. Their deeds were not numerically incomplete but were incomplete because they didn’t have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Hebrews and 1 Corinthians

Those who don’t hold fast aren’t saved.

There can be dead people sitting in churches on a regular basis.

Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8; James 2:14-26

All believers are to have good works as evidence of salvation.

The good works, deeds, are on an individual basis and come from God.

He prepared the works. He is the source of them for each believer.

Relate this to the Spirit being within all Christians.

There are no good works, or deeds, which can lead to salvation.

They are the result of it.

Since the works are born of God and worked out through the Spirit, they are carried out to completion by the individual believer—showing that he has held fast until the end.

Remember what you have received and heard.

Keep it, and repent.

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<sup>4</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992, G4137.

Relate this to the Ephesian church.

Those in Sardis needed to remember and keep the Word of God.  
They needed to repent, a repeated word in these messages.

Matthew 7:21-27

Keeping the Word is doing the will of the Father.

Jesus said that there will be those who have called Him Lord, but they practice lawlessness. Sardis had a name that they were alive, but their deeds didn't match what they said.

Only those who do God's will, His works (deeds) will enter the kingdom. In other words, they are the only ones who are truly saved.

Hearing and acting on His Words are equal with doing His will. Hearing alone is not enough for completed deeds. Incomplete deeds indicate no life.

How does verse 3 end? What will happen? Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson.

If they don't wake up, they won't know when Jesus is coming.  
He'll take them by surprise like a thief, and they won't be ready. They'll still be dead.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

The day of the Lord will be a time of destruction on people who are saying, "Peace and safety." It will come unexpectedly.

Luke 12:35-40; Matthew 24:42-51; 25:1-30

The main point of these parables told by Jesus is to be ready as no one knows when the Son of Man is coming. Be alert, it will be unexpected.

He called His own to be faithful until His return. Faithful is holding fast firm until the end—His coming.

**COMMENDATION**

What was Jesus' commendation to this church? Ask your group what they learned from their study.

Only a few had not soiled their garments and were worthy to walk with Him, verse 4.  
Relate this statement to the garment business of the city.

Revelation 6

White robes were given to those who had been killed for God's Word and their testimony by the time of the fifth seal.

Revelation 7

There is a glimpse of a multitude before the throne in heaven who have on white robes. These must be the rest of the martyrs mentioned in 6:11. They come out of the great tribulation.

Revelation 16:15

A warning is given which is very similar to the message to Sardis. The ones who'll be blessed are the ones who stay awake and keep their clothes.

Revelation 19:7-8, 14

The last references to clothes are the bride of Jesus the Lamb clothed herself in fine linen—the righteous acts of the saints, and the armies following Jesus at His coming on white horses were clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Relate this to Revelation 3:4.

You could ask how 3:4 relates to 3:2.

The many needed to be saved.

The deeds of the few needed to be strengthened or if “few” is a reference to people, the few needed to be strengthened.

Encourage your group to heed the message of this letter and take appropriate action with the character of the Spirit.

**OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

What did Jesus say? How does it relate to this overall message?

He must be clothed in white garments.

Jesus will not erase his name from the book of life.

Jesus will confess his name before the Father and angels.

There were a few people, literally “names,”<sup>5</sup> in verse 4 who had not soiled their garments.

Those clothed in white garments, righteous deeds, will not have their names erased from the book of “life.” And Jesus will confess their names to the Father.

Many in a dead church need to wake up and be saved. The result of their salvation will be completed deeds. Then they also will be clothed in white, and Jesus will confess their name before His Father and the angels.

Ask your group what lessons for life they learned from this study.

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<sup>5</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Rev. 3:4).





## REVELATION, PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 8

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 3:7-13
- Jesus' message to the church at Philadelphia

### REVIEW

You can begin this discussion by asking what your group remembers about the messages to the previous five churches. Tell them to look at “Jesus' Messages to the Churches” and the map as visual aids for this discussion.

Jesus is in the midst of the seven churches and holds in His hand the seven angels of the churches. He knows what goes on with each church and spoke to each situation.

Ephesus—left / abandoned their first love and were in danger of losing their church

Smyrna—suffering tribulation and poverty, they were called to be faithful to death  
This was the only other church to which no reproof was spoken.

Pergamum—in the midst of false teaching where Satan's throne was—some were holding to false teaching. Like Ephesus they were called to repent or Jesus would war against them with the sword of His mouth—God's Word.

Thyatira—also called to repent because they tolerated false teaching and sin

Sardis—a dead church called to repent. Jesus' coming was a warning to them.

### PHILADELPHIA

Ask what they learned about the city of Philadelphia.

Its name means “brotherly love,”<sup>1</sup> and that same Greek word is used several times in the New Testament. It was probably founded by the king of Pergamum Eumenes and named for his brother Attalus.<sup>2</sup>

“Because of its strategic location, it served as a vital link in communication and trade between Sardis and Pergamum to the west and Laodicea and Hierapolis to the east.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G5359

<sup>2</sup> M. J. S. Rudwick and C. J. Hemer, “Philadelphia,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 915.

<sup>3</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 784.

It was a place from which the Graeco-Roman civilization could spread.<sup>4</sup>  
Its location is about 25 miles southeast of Sardis.<sup>5</sup>

The area was subject to earthquakes, and in A.D. 17 a severe one destroyed Philadelphia, but it was rebuilt by Tiberius.<sup>6</sup> That was less than 80 years before John wrote the Revelation.

It was also known for its pagan temples and religious festivals<sup>7</sup> as were some of the other seven cities. Philadelphia was an agricultural center along with the leather and textile industry.<sup>8</sup> The area of the seven churches is still known in Turkey for its leather goods.

## DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

How does the message to Philadelphia begin? What is the description of Jesus? Discuss word studies and cross-references.

Holy

*hagios*—separated, set apart, consecrated.<sup>9</sup>

Luke 1:35

Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. He was holy from His conception throughout His life on earth.

John 6:66-69 and Mark 1:24

Peter spoke for the twelve when he said they knew Jesus was the Holy One of God. The disciples weren't the only ones who knew that fact; even the unclean spirits, demons, knew who He was.

True

as opposed to verse 9 where those of the synagogue of Satan lied when they called themselves Jews.

He has the key of David

Jesus, as a direct descendant of King David, is the true King of kings.  
Revelation 5:5 and 22:16 both say Jesus is the Root of David.

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<sup>4</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 3:7.

<sup>5</sup> M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

<sup>6</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) Re 3:7.

<sup>7</sup> M. J. S. Rudwick and C. J. Hemer, "Philadelphia," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 915.

<sup>8</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 784.

<sup>9</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G40.

What He opens, no one shuts and what He shuts, no one opens.

Keys lock to shut and unlock to open. Only the one with the key can unlock and lock—open and shut.

Isaiah 22:22 (15, 20-22)

The one over the household was given the key of David. The statement in verse 22 is almost the same as that in Revelation 3:7.

The one with the key had the authority for what was opened and shut and who went in and out.

Ask what your group learned from the other cross-references about Jesus' authority and His kingdom.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:14-22

Jesus as the righteous Branch of David will save Judah and allow Israel to live securely. His name is The Lord our Righteousness.

God will keep His covenant with David to have a descendant sit on the throne of Israel.

Luke 1:30-33

Jesus, the Son of the Most High, also the son of David, will reign over Israel forever.

Luke 19:11-27

His enemies, unbelieving Jews in this context, didn't want Him to reign over them. Most still don't recognize Him as the true Holy One of God Who is to reign as King of kings.

Revelation 1:5, 18; Matthew 28:18

He rules over the kings of the earth, but He also has all authority in heaven and on earth. By His blood He has the authority to release people from their sins; and He also has the keys of death and Hades, indicating authority over both.

John 5:21, 26-29

As the Son of Man, the one man who lived the perfect holy life, He has authority to execute judgment. He also gives life as the Son of the Father.

What does all of this mean? How does it relate to His description to the Philadelphia church?

Jesus has authority over who enters the kingdom of God. He opens or shuts the door. Those in the persecuted church at Philadelphia had the open door. Those Jews there didn't; they believed a lie.

## COMMENDATION

What did the Lord say about the church at Philadelphia?

I know your deeds / works.

This is the fourth time He said this in one of the messages.

Ephesus, Thyatira, and Sardis

But in the other two He said He knew something about the church.

To Smyrna—I know your tribulation...

To Pergamum—I know where you dwell

As the One with the key, He put an open door before the believers in this church.

They had a little power

kept His word

did not deny His name

You might ask for a comparison with the church at Smyrna, other than both having no reproof.

The synagogue of Satan was mentioned in connection with both Smyrna and Philadelphia.

Evidently they were being persecuted by the local Jewish synagogue composed of evil men under Satan's control. Although the Jews believed that God loved them because of His covenant promises to Israel, they missed the fact that Jesus was their true Messiah—the Holy One of God. They were saying they were the true people of God, when they belonged to the devil.

### John 8:37-47

Jesus Himself had faced Jews like that. They sought to kill Him because they didn't believe. They were of the devil.

Jesus said He would bring those lying unbelievers to bow at the feet of the true ones who will enter through the open door.

They had kept the word of Jesus' perseverance / endurance, which indicates there was something to persevere through / endure, evidently the lies of the synagogue. Because of their perseverance / endurance, Jesus would keep them from the hour of testing about to come on the whole world.

Ask what your group learned from the word studies and cross-references.

“from” *ek*—can mean “out of”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

“testing / trial” *peirasmos*—can mean trial or temptation.<sup>11</sup>

In this context it means trial or to put to the test.

The Philadelphian church was to be delivered from a specific period of time. That time has a specific purpose—to test / try “those who dwell on the earth.”

John 17:15

In Jesus' prayer for believers, He didn't ask that they be taken out of the world, but that they be kept from the evil one while they were in the world. Relate this to the church at Philadelphia.

John 12:27

When He prayed for Himself, He didn't pray that the Father would save Him “from” that hour about to come upon Him.

Luke 21:34-36

This context looks similar to that of Revelation 3:10. There is a day coming like a trap on those who dwell on the earth. Jesus called those who believe in Him to be alert and on guard, keep His perseverance, so that they escape what is to come.

Ask what your group learned from their study of “those who dwell on the earth.”

They are unbelievers living during the time of the events described in Revelation.

They'll be judged by the Lord for the blood of Christian martyrs.

The two witnesses of Revelation 11 will torment them, but at the death of the two witnesses they'll rejoice.

Their names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life.

They are the ones deceived by the false prophet and the beast.

**WARNING AND INSTRUCTION**

What was Jesus' instruction to this church?

Hold fast so no one takes / seizes their crown. He said He is coming quickly / soon.

It seems like a word of encouragement to the church instead of a warning.

You might review the times in Revelation 2 and 3 when Jesus mentioned His coming.

2:5, 16 and 3:3 are all warnings.

2:25 is a comfort to those in Thyatira who aren't caught up in false teaching.

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<sup>11</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, H8674 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G3986.

At this point, you could also review the other places in chapters 2 and 3 where Jesus calls the church to "hold fast."

In 2:13 He said that the church at Pergamum was holding fast His name although they lived where Satan's throne was.

He told the faithful at Thyatira to hold fast until He comes. Holding fast in that context was not giving in to false teaching and sin.

Then He told the Philadelphian church to hold fast what they had so that no one would take their crown. He was going to come quickly / soon, and they were persevering / enduring.

They were to keep on doing what they had been doing.

With a little power they kept His Word and didn't deny His name.

They kept His word, or command, about patient endurance.

They were enduring with the power they had to withstand the lies of the devil.

### **OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

How did Jesus end this message?

To the overcomers / conquerors

He will make them pillars in God's temple; they'll not go out of His temple.

He'll write on them God's name

name of His city, new Jerusalem from heaven

His new name

They'll be secure.

To end your discussion ask your group how the message of this church is relevant for life in these modern times, especially their own lives.

**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 3:14–22
- Jesus' message to the church at Laodicea

**REVIEW**

You can begin this discussion by asking what your group remembers about the messages to the previous five churches. Tell them to look at “Jesus’ Messages to the Churches” and the map as visual aids for this discussion.

Jesus is in the midst of the seven churches and holds in His hand the seven angels of the churches. He knows what goes on with each church and spoke to each situation.

Ephesus—left / abandoned their first love and were in danger of losing their church

Smyrna—suffering tribulation and poverty, they were called to be faithful to death  
There was no reproof for this church.

Pergamum—in the midst of false teaching where Satan’s throne was  
Like Ephesus they were called to repent or Jesus would war against them with the sword of His mouth—God’s Word.

Thyatira—also called to repent because they tolerated false teaching and sin

Sardis—a dead church called to repent. Jesus’ coming was a warning to them.

Philadelphia—similar to Smyrna, this was a church enduring in the midst of evil  
There was no reproof for this church—they were keeping His Word.

**LAODICEA**

Ask what your group learned about this city.

Laodicea was about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, only 10 miles from Colossae and six miles south of Hierapolis. Colossae was known for its cold mountain stream of water and Hierapolis, just the opposite, for its hot springs. Laodicea had to get its water, dirty and lukewarm, from an underground aqueduct.

Laodicea became the wealthiest of the cities in its area and the commercial center.

Banking was one of its three main sources of wealth. The others were wool production and a medical school producing medicines, especially for the eyes.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently the church was a result of Epaphras spreading the gospel in the area, Colossians 1:3-8 and 4:12-13. Paul had written Colossians about 30 to 35 years previous to John writing the Revelation.

Colossians was to have been read to the Laodicean church after the Colossian church had received it from Paul. The message of Colossians is one of warning, 2:4-8 and 16-23. The letter Paul wrote to the Laodicean church that is referred to in Colossians is not in the Bible, Colossians 4:15-16.

## DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

How does this last church message begin? What is the description of Jesus? Discuss word studies and cross-references, too.

Jesus is the Amen  
The faithful and true witness  
The beginning of God's creation

“Amen,” *amen*—means “sure or truly,”<sup>2</sup> “truly, indeed”<sup>3</sup>  
Jesus is the opposite of what the people in that church were.

The faithful and true “Witness”  
*martus*—“One who has information or knowledge of something, and hence, one who can give information, bring to light, or confirm something.”<sup>4</sup>

Jesus witnessed of the Father, John 1:18 and 14:8-12.  
He spoke the Father's words and did His works, John 5:19, 30 and 8:28-29.

He testified to the churches and to everyone who reads Revelation the words of God which are faithful and true.

In this message He calls attention to the certainty of His words, His witness to this church.

The Beginning (source) of the creation of God  
The Laodicean church had heard this before when they read Colossians 1, but evidently they had not taken heed to the warning in Colossians.

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 1997, Revelation 3:16.

<sup>2</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G281.

<sup>3</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G3144.



As a review of Revelation 1–3, you could ask your group what they remember of how Jesus is described in these chapters. But don't take too much time here.

### **COMMENDATION**

You could ask about the commendation for this church.

There is none. Jesus knew their works—but they were not commended.

Sardis, the dead church, also had no commendation from the Lord.

Two of the seven churches in Revelation had no commendation from the Lord, and there are still churches like that in the world today.

Believers need to be aware of that fact since Jesus drew attention to it in Revelation 3.

You could ask what the Lord commended in the other churches.

Deeds / works, perseverance / endurance, testing false apostles  
Faithfulness in tribulation and poverty  
Holding fast Jesus' name in the midst of where Satan's throne was  
Love, service, not holding to false teaching, not knowing the deep things of Satan  
Keeping His Word, not denying His name

Give your group time to discuss relevant application at any point in your discussion.

### **REPROOF**

You can begin this part of the discussion by asking about the other churches' reproofs.

Ephesus had left / abandoned their first love.  
Some in Pergamum held to false teaching.  
Most of Thyatira had been led astray to immorality and held to false teaching.  
Sardis was a dead church, their deeds were not complete.

Only Smyrna and Philadelphia, the faithful churches in tribulation, were given no reproof.

Ask what your group learned from their study of Revelation 3:15-17.

Work in discussion of the related word study, cross-references, and application.

This church was lukewarm, neither cold nor hot—relate this to the water situation in Laodicea. They were neither cold, refusing the gospel, nor hot, zealous for the gospel.

Jesus said that He would spit, vomit or spew, them out of His mouth because they were lukewarm.

They said that they were rich; you might ask how that relates to the environment of their city. But in contrast, Jesus said that they were “poor” (*ptochos*—“to crouch . . . like a beggar”<sup>5</sup>), so poor that they were destitute. However, they didn’t know it.

They said that they didn’t need anything, but the opposite was true.

You could ask, “From this text alone does it look like the people in that church had a relationship with Jesus?”

Not from what He said about spitting them out of His mouth.

They were not only poor, but also wretched, miserable (pitiable), poor, blind, and naked. Compare this with Romans 7:24-25.

His position was standing outside the door of that church.

Are there churches like that now? Let your group discuss if they think there still are.

#### **WARNING AND INSTRUCTION**

Then you could ask what the solution is according to Revelation 3:18-20.

They needed to buy from Him—He’s the source, the beginning.

Gold

White garments

Eye salve

Gold is perishable, but the gold He wanted them to buy from Him was refined by fire; it was pure. Relate this to 1 Peter 1:6-9 and Psalm 66:8-12.

The glossy black wool of their city made fine garments, but they needed the pure white ones only Jesus can provide. Revelation 6:11; 7:9; and 19:8 describe the white clothes as the righteous acts of the saints. This church had none, only their own deeds of lukewarmness.

Ask your group about the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22 and the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19. How might these references relate to Jesus’ message to the church at Laodicea?

#### Matthew 22:1-14

The parable which Jesus told to the Jewish audience listening to Him was about the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>5</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G4434.

The slaves sent with the invitation could be likened to the Old Testament prophets God sent among His people Israel. As a whole, they rejected Jesus as the Promised One, their Messiah.

In A.D. 70, as well as 586 B.C., Jerusalem was destroyed and burned.

Going to the highways and byways is reference to the gospel going to the Gentiles.

But there was one not dressed in the proper wedding clothes, and he was thrown out into outer darkness. He didn't make it into the kingdom of heaven.

#### Revelation 19:8-9

This tells why the clothes are so important. The white garments signify the deeds / acts of the saints, which are given to believers by the Lord. He's the source.

There were a few people in the church at Sardis who, Jesus said, had not soiled their garments and would walk with Him. They were the ones who were worthy to walk with Him. They were the few who truly knew Him in that dead church.

Ask what they learned about the eye salve and being blind.

Eye salve was needed from the Lord because they were blind, spiritually blind.

#### 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

The god of this world, the devil, has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they can't see the light.

#### John 9

Jesus is the Light of the world, and He alone can open the eyes of the blind.

#### Matthew 23:16-19

Jesus called the religious leaders "blind guides," because they were leading others when they themselves couldn't see.

You might ask what Jesus meant when He advised them to buy from Him.

#### Isaiah 55:1-3 and Revelation 22:17

There is no cost to the one who is thirsty for the true, that which truly satisfies, the water of life.

They needed to see their need for Him instead of focusing on their physical or material conditions. The shame of their nakedness was exposed, and they didn't even know it. Compare this with Revelation 16:15.

They needed His provision, not their own worldly wealth. They were ignorant and blind to the truth.

Ask how verses 19-20 relate to verses 15-18.

The word for “love” in verse 19 is *phileo*, which means affection.

Jesus was extending an invitation to those who might come to Him in these verses. But He also gave a warning in verse 19.

He wanted them to be zealous for Him, not repulsive to Him in their lukewarmness. But to do that they needed to repent, turn from their lukewarm state.

He was outside the door of the church, but if an individual within opened the door to Him, then He would save that one.

You might ask if there were any other clear invitations for salvation in Revelation 2 and 3.

There are none. The other messages give believers exhortations to hold fast and warn unbelievers that Jesus is coming, and they'll suffer punishment when He does unless they repent.

#### **OVERCOMERS / CONQUERORS**

Since the next lesson is all about what Revelation 2 and 3 say about the overcomers / conquerors, you only need to ask for how this part of the message relates to the rest.

The invitation of verse 20 says Jesus will come to the one who opens the door and will dine with him.

The overcomers will sit down with Jesus on His throne.

In evaluating the message to this church, you could ask your group to examine their lives to see if they are lukewarm, 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 John 2:19; Matthew 7:15-23. But also they need to consider if they are in a church where being lukewarm is the norm.

**REVELATION, PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- Revelation 2 and 3
- Overcomers / conquerors

**REVIEW**

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask them what Revelation 1-5 is about.

Revelation 1	Revelation given to John; he was told to write, saw Jesus
Revelation 2	Write to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira
Revelation 3	Write to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea
Revelation 4	John saw One on the throne in heaven; worship
Revelation 5	The Lamb is worthy to open the book / scroll

Ask what the main theme is of the whole Revelation and what the three main segments are.

Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 tell the theme / purpose for the whole book.

God gave the Revelation to Jesus

Jesus gave it to an angel

The angel gave it to John

John wrote it to the churches

The Revelation is to show His servants the things which must soon take place.

Jesus told John what to write in 1:19:

The things which you have seen

The vision of Jesus, Revelation 1

The things / those which are

His messages to the seven churches, Revelation 2–3

The things / those which will take place after these things / this

Revelation 4–22

You might ask your group if they understand what Revelation is about more than they did when they began this course.

Tell them to look at “Jesus’ Message to the Churches” chart and ask what the messages in Revelation 2 are about. Ask if they have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church.

Ephesus—don’t leave / abandon your first love; repent

Smyrna—don’t fear tribulation; be faithful unto death

Pergamum—hold fast to Jesus’ name, don’t deny the faith; repent

Thyatira—don’t tolerate false teaching and sin in the church; repent

Sardis—wake up from being dead and repent  
Philadelphia—hold fast what you have  
Laodicea—repent and open the door to Jesus

## OVERCOMERS

You might begin by asking for the definition of “overcomers / conquerors” from Revelation 2–3. Also ask about cross-references in Revelation, 1 John, and John 16.

*nikao* (from *nike* . . . victory<sup>1</sup>)—“to conquer, prevail,”<sup>2</sup> “to gain a victory”<sup>3</sup>

The apostle John, Revelation’s author, is the main New Testament author who used this word. And in the whole of his writings is the definition of the word.

*NOTE: Other than Jesus’ words in Luke 11:22 and Romans 3:4 and 12:21, John is the only New Testament author who used this word.*

### 1 John 5:4-5

This is a definition of one who is an overcomer.

He’s one who has faith, one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

The believer overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4, as Jesus did, John 16:33.  
the devil, 1 John 2:13-14.  
the spirit of the antichrist in false prophets, 1 John 4:1-6.

Help your group to evaluate whether or not they are overcomers. If not, then there is a problem that’s a matter of life and death.

Overcomers are not constantly overcome by the world and the devil.

### Revelation 12:11

This is another reference to believers overcoming / conquering the devil, but this is a specific group of believers in a time which will be studied in the other Revelation Precept courses.

### Revelation 17:12-14

Jesus the Lamb of God will overcome / conquer the beast and ten kings because He’s the King of kings.

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<sup>1</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G3528.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G3528.

<sup>3</sup> Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 615.

Revelation 21:2-8

This is also future in the new heaven and earth, in the new Jerusalem. It tells of the inheritance of the overcomers / conquerors. That inheritance is described in Revelation 2–3 in the promises to those who overcome.

After establishing who overcomers are, then you can ask the three main questions from the chart in the lesson: What is overcome? How? What is the overcomer given and the result? Lead your group to discuss these in the order of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

**EPHESUS**

Overcome / conquer what?

Left / abandoned their first love

How?

Remember from where they had fallen  
Repent  
Do the deeds / works they did at first  
Persevere and endure for Jesus' name  
Don't grow weary

What is given to the one who overcomes / conquers? Result?

Right / grant to eat from the tree of life in Paradise of God

Genesis 3:22-24

Eating of the tree of life gives eternal life.  
Man was put away from the tree after sinning in the garden of Eden.

Revelation 22:1-2, 14, 19

The tree of life will be in the new Jerusalem.  
Those who have the right to it are the ones in the new city.

Ask if your group thinks this is a promise to only a few believers.  
How many believers receive eternal life?

**SMYRNA**

Overcome / conquer what?

Tribulation, suffering to the point of death

How?

Don't fear suffering  
Be faithful to death

What is given to the one who overcomes / conquers? Any result?

Not hurt by the second death.

Although some of those who were suffering in Smyrna might die, they wouldn't be hurt by the second death.

Revelation 20:14

The second death is the lake of fire.

Everyone not in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire.

Those who have eternal life are not hurt by the second death.

These are the ones who are priests to God and Christ and reign with Him for a thousand years.

This is another promise for all believers, all overcomers / conquerors, all who have faith.

## **PERGAMUM**

Overcome / conquer what?

False teaching, influenced by the devil and immorality

How?

Hold fast Jesus' name  
Don't deny His faith

What is the promise to the one who overcomes / conquers?

Hidden manna

A white stone with a new name on it known by no one but the overcomer.

Ask for discussion of what your group learned in their study of this promise.

Exodus 16

Manna was from God, only for His people, and no one knew what it really was.

Deuteronomy 8

The true church lives by everything which comes from God's mouth, His Word.



John 6

Jesus said He is that bread out of heaven. Those who eat Him partake of the true bread of life and live forever. This is another promise to all believers.

*NOTE: Some might have read about white stones being used for admission tickets to special events at that time and place.*

If the white stone symbolizes an admission ticket to special social events, then overcomers are given the admission to eternal life in the new Jerusalem with God Himself and the Lamb, the King of kings. Outside will be the unbelieving.

**THYATIRA**

Overcome / conquer what?

Tolerating false prophetess who leads to immorality

How?

Don't tolerate false teaching, immorality  
Hold fast until Jesus comes

This message adds that the overcomer / conqueror keeps Jesus' deeds / works until the end. In this message He said He would give to each one according to his deeds.

What is given to the one who overcomes / conquers? Any result?

Authority to rule over the nations with a rod of iron  
The morning star

Ask your group discuss what they learned about this.

Since most of the church at Thyatira tolerated the false prophetess and knew the deep things of Satan, it leads to the assumption that the church was ruled by the false. The rest who didn't hold to that teaching were burdened by the others who ruled, led, that church.

Psalm 2

Jesus quoted this psalm in the message to Thyatira.

It says the nations, peoples devise a vain thing. Their rulers are against the Lord and His Anointed (Messiah, Christ). But He will put His King over them; His Son will receive the nations as His inheritance. He'll break them with a rod of iron.

Then He gives authority to overcomers / conquerors to rule over the nations. The Father gives authority to the Son; the Son gives authority to the overcomers / conquerors.

Luke 19:11-19

Jesus told a parable about the kingdom of heaven to those near Jerusalem.

The citizens of the city represent the Jews of His day who didn't receive Him as their King to rule over them. His slaves represented those who believed in Him. When He returns, He'll assess their ability to rule by what they did with what He left them. Some will rule over 10 cities and others over 5.

Revelation 5:10

The people Jesus purchased for God with His blood from every tribe and tongue and nation are made a kingdom, priests to God and will reign on the earth.

Ask about the morning star.

Revelation 22:16 says Jesus is the morning star.

2 Peter 1:19

This says to pay attention to the prophetic word until the morning star arises in your hearts. This seems to refer to Jesus' second coming.

Daniel 12:1-4; Matthew 13:43

Those who turn others to righteousness will shine like the stars.

Daniel was told about the end times. There will be a time of distress for his people Israel. Those written in the book will be rescued and have eternal life while others will receive everlasting contempt.

Along with that Jesus said, quoting Daniel 12:3, that the righteous will shine as the sun in God's kingdom. That was in His parable about tares in the field, and it was directed to the Jews listening to Him.

There was a question in the lesson, Day Four 4. c., which asked if overcomers / conquerors are being promised Jesus or a position in His kingdom where they will shine brightly. You might ask your group what they think the answer is at this point.

From the context of the whole promise it seems the position in His kingdom is more accurate.

As a review of the promises, an overcomer—a believer, a Christian will:

- Eat from the tree of life in Paradise
- Not be hurt by the second death, the lake of fire
- Receive hidden manna and a white stone with a new name on it
- Receive authority to rule the nations and the morning star

**SARDIS**

Overcome / conquer what?

Being dead

How?

Wake up  
Remember what you've received and heard, and keep it  
Repent

What is given to the one who overcomes / conquers? Any result?

Clothed in white garments  
Name not erased from book of life  
confessed by Jesus before the Father and the angels

You can ask your class what they remember from their previous study of the white garments.

Received from Jesus  
The righteous acts of the saints

Ask how the word "name" is used in this message.

The church had a name that it was alive, but it was dead.  
Those who overcome / conquer will not have their name erased from the book of life.  
Jesus will confess their name before the Father and the angels.

Ask what they learned about the book of life.

Revelation 3  
Jesus erases from it the names of those who aren't overcomers / conquerors.

Psalm 69:19, 22-28  
David spoke about the book of life and names of the unrighteous being blotted out of it.

*NOTE: Exodus 32:32-33 also speaks of sinners' names being blotted out of God's book. You don't need to introduce this into the discussion, but it's referenced here in case it helps you get a better understanding of whose names are erased from the book of life. Sinners.*

Revelation 13:8 and 17:8  
There is a book of life of the Lamb. Many call it the Lamb's book of life.

Those who dwell on the earth, unbelievers, never had their names written in this book. Therefore, it must be different from the book of life from which their names are erased by Jesus.

If that is a correct analysis, then the Lamb's book of life with names written before the foundation of the world is the book of eternal life. And the book of life contains names of those with physical life.

Revelation 20:12, 15

At the great white throne judgment of the dead, unbelievers are judged by their deeds / works written in books. Anyone whose name is not in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire. Those are the names erased by Jesus.

Combining this with what Jesus said in chapter 3, it seems all people's names are at one time written in the book of life, and then erased if they aren't saved—remain dead.

Then at the end the names in the book of life and the Lamb's book of life will be the same.

Daniel 12:1

This speaks of those of Daniel's people, Israel, whose names are found written in the book will be rescued at the time of distress and receive everlasting life.

Now you could ask about Jesus confessing the overcomer's / conqueror's name before His Father and the angels. Also relate this to the whole message to the church at Sardis.

Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9

Jesus will confess before the Father in heaven, and the angels, those who confess Him before men on earth. Those who deny Him on earth will be the ones whose names He erases from the book of life.

Help your group to grasp the importance of confessing Jesus here on earth to the people they come in contact with. It's part of being an overcomer / conqueror.

**PHILADELPHIA**

Overcome / conquer what?

Liars and testing

How?

Keep His Word  
Not deny His name  
Keep the word of His perseverance / endurance  
Hold fast what you have

What is the promise to overcomers / conquerors and is there any result?

Jesus will make the overcomer / conqueror a pillar in God's temple.  
The overcomer / conqueror will not go out from it anymore.  
Jesus will write on him the name of His God,  
the name of the city of His God, new Jerusalem,  
His new name.

“Name” is repeated. Its repetition is significant because it’s a person’s identity. It’s what he’s known by.

Ask what your group learned about these promises.

Revelation 21:1-7, 10, 22

In the new Jerusalem, God Himself will live with men, and the overcomers / conquerors will be there. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in the new city.

Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-10

Paul was talking about Gentile believers becoming fellow citizens with Jewish believers. Believers, true Christians, are all God’s household, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus is the corner stone. The whole building is growing into a holy temple, the dwelling of God in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit inhabits each believer, and each one’s body is the temple of the Spirit.

Peter called believers living stones being built up as a spiritual house on Jesus the cornerstone.

Jesus promised that the overcomer would be a pillar in the temple of God and not go out from it. Believers are the temple of God now (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), and God Himself and the Lamb are the temple in the new Jerusalem. Christians will have a permanent and unshakable place in God’s presence in the new Jerusalem.

Jesus will write on them God’s name and His new name—they will know the fullness of His character.

Let your group think about this; they will completely know God the Almighty and our Lord Jesus the Lamb.

**LAODICEA**

Overcome / conquer what?

Being lukewarm

How?

Buy from Jesus

Be zealous

Repent

Open the door to Him

What is given to the one who overcomes / conquers?

He will sit down with Jesus on His throne.

The comparison is as Jesus overcame / conquered and sat down with the Father on His throne.

Matthew 19:28

Jesus addressed His twelve disciples. His promise was for twelve to sit on twelve thrones to judge Israel's twelve tribes during the regeneration time.

Matthew 25:31

Jesus will sit on His throne. It's after His second coming.

Revelation 5:10 and 20:6

This tells the time of the reign and where it is. It's on the earth for 1,000 years.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3

Paul refers to believers here as saints. They'll judge the world and angels.

Revelation 2:26-27

Overcomers / conquerors, all true Christians, will rule over the nations with a rod of iron.

To end your discussion, you might ask your group to be sure they are truly overcomers / conquerors.

Also ask what they've learned as lessons for life from this course.