

# A Study of The Book of Revelation





## Introduction

Welcome to the study guide for the first three weeks of the sermon series, "Are You Listening?" It is our hope that this series and study will help us to hear King Jesus speaking to us. The original readers were facing persecution for their faithfulness as followers of Jesus. Some were tempted to give up, while others were being led astray by false teaching. God gave John this revelation of Jesus Christ to pass on to these persecuted and possibly compromised disciples. The book of Revelation is about hope in the risen and reigning Jesus *and* the endurance that flows out this confidence in Jesus and God's promised future. As we seek to listen to Jesus, we see Jesus more clearly and follow Him more closely.

We will be using the Know-Grow-Go framework for this study. Disciples are those who **know** Jesus as Lord and Savior, who **grow** together to become like Him, and who **go** on mission with Jesus. Keep this framework in mind as you go through each week's questions.

May 6, 2017

## The Cosmic Jesus (Revelation 1:9-20)

The book of Revelation is a revelation *of Jesus Christ*. This unveiling of Jesus begins in this week's verses. The vision is of "the cosmic Jesus." Jesus is God-in-the-flesh – who was crucified, raised, and now reigns as "the ruler of kings on earth." In the midst of persecution, John receives this vision of Jesus and is prepared to speak Jesus' message to seven churches in Asia Minor in the first century.

## KNOW



While in exile for his faithfulness to Jesus, John is told to write down what he sees and send it to seven churches. Summarize the vision of Jesus John receives in Revelation 1:12-16. What thoughts and feelings arise in you when you read these verses? Why was it unnecessary for John to not "fear" the One speaking to him (1:17-18)?

Jesus reveals himself in relation to the seven churches, who are pictured as "seven lampstands." According to Revelation 1:12-16, 19-20, what seems to be Jesus' relationship to these churches? What does this week's passage reveal about the majesty of Jesus?

## GROW



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John encountered Jesus in a vision and was awestruck. It is possible for Jesus' followers to not fully appreciate His majesty and glory. How do you usually think of Jesus? How might you need to be filled with more awe and wonder in response to Jesus' true identity?

## GO



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John shared in the patient endurance of following Jesus with his original audience. When do you most need another disciple to walk alongside you? How can you connect with other followers of Jesus to encourage them to endure?

## First Love (Revelation 2:1-7)

In the first letter to the seven churches of Revelation 2-3, Jesus exhorts the Church in Ephesus to return to their first love. Although they were patiently enduring persecution for Jesus, their love for Him had grown cold. Jesus' desire is that His disciples would have an obedience that flows out of love for Him.



## KNOW



In Revelation 2:1, Jesus makes Himself known in a particular way to the Church in Ephesus (see also 1:20). What does this verse reveal about Jesus' presence and power for the Church? Why do you think this church needed to be reminded of these truths about Jesus (2:4-5)?

With each of the seven churches, Jesus commends them for their faithfulness and/or exhorts them to repent. How did Jesus commend the Church in Ephesus for their obedience to Him (2:2-3, 6)? How were these disciples in need of renewal (2:4-5)?

## GROW



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Revelation 2:7 contains a promise to “the one who conquers” through faithful endurance. What is that promise (see also Gen. 2:8-9)? When do you feel like it is too difficult to follow Jesus? How might the hope of eternal life in God’s glorious presence encourage you to endure? How can you stoke the fire of this hope?

## GO



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Part of Jesus’ message to the Church in Ephesus was to “remember” the ways in which God had blessed and grown them. Consider where you are at on your walk with Christ. Describe your love for Christ and how you desire to grow in your faithfulness to Him. Share these thoughts with another disciple you trust and seek out their prayers for you.

## Keeping Faith under Pressure (Revelation 2:8-11)

Jesus' message to the Church in Smyrna emphasizes the suffering they will likely face as Jesus' disciples. In Revelation 2:8-11, Jesus exhorts this church to keep their faith under this pressure. It seems that some Jews and synagogues are somehow involved in the persecution they have experienced or will face.

### KNOW



To the Church in Smyrna, Jesus reveals Himself to be “the first and the last, who died and came to life” (see 1:17-18). What good news did Jesus proclaim to this church that was going through “tribulation” and “poverty” in 2:10-11? Why did this church need to hear this good news (2:9-10)?

In 1:5, John described Jesus as “the firstborn from the dead.” This refers to Jesus being the beginning and source of God’s resurrection life. Why is it important to know that Jesus is the One “who died and came to life” (2:8)? How can this encourage Jesus’ followers to endure persecution?



## GROW



Jesus encouraged the Church in Smyrna to “not fear” what they were “about to suffer.” Followers of Jesus in America have not really experienced serious persecution for their faithfulness to Him. What are your thoughts and feelings on the prospect of facing this kind of suffering? How might you need to renew your mind to be in line with Jesus’ thinking on suffering for Him?

## GO



Jesus told the Church in Smyrna that, despite their financial “poverty,” they were actually “rich” in God’s eyes. In Ephesians 1:3, Paul prays, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” How might your day-to-day interactions be different if you saw yourself as spiritually rich? How might this view of yourself empower you to be a bolder witness to Jesus?





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