

“Start” the year by studying “The End”

THE BOOK OF REVELATION



8 Week Study

Begins Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2018, 7pm

Taught by Dr. Joshua Beckley

Updated: 1/21/2018, 8:00am

Click on the page numbers you want to see.

Print all or just the range of pages you want to print

8 Week Study Schedule	Church	Pages to Print
Jan. 10 Intro and Rev. 1	Intro	1-6
Jan. 17 Rev. 2:1-7	Ephesus	7-10
Jan. 24 Rev. 2:8-11	Smyrna	11-14
Jan. 31 Rev. 2:12-17	Pergamum	
Feb. 7 Rev. 2:18-29	Thyatira	
Feb. 14 Rev. 3:1-6	Sardis	
Feb. 21 Rev. 3:7-13	Philadephia	
Feb. 28 Rev. 3:14-22	Laodicea	

A Map of the Area





Keys to Understanding the Book of Revelation

Lies of the devil:

- REVELATION is too “scary”...
- REVELATION is too hard to understand...
- REVELATION is not for me...

TRUTH OF GOD:

- REVELATION is a book of Worship
- REVELATION presents clearest picture of our Glorious Resurrected Savior
- REVELATION was written to “**encourage**” the saints
- REVELATION is the only New Testament book of prophecy

REVELATION depicts **Christ** riding “*out of heaven to **destroy** sin and Satan and to **restore** creation to its original glory for our good and His good pleasure forever.*” ~Chuck Swindoll

Key Verse:

Revelation 1:19 provides a simple outline of entire book.

“the things you have seen”	Chapter 1
“those that are”	Chapters 2–3
“those that are to take place after this”	Chapters 4–22

Key Divisions:

Book of Revelation is understood in groups of “Seven”.

- Ch. 1–3 Seven Letters to Seven Churches
- Ch. 4–6 Seven Seals
Judgments largely generated by the sinfulness of man
- Ch. 7–9 Seven Trumpets
Judgments largely associated with satanic and demonic activity
- Ch. 10–13 Seven Signs
Judgments largely generated by the sinfulness of man
- Ch. 14–16 Seven Plagues/Bowls/Vials
Final series of judgments against those who followed the beast, just prior to the return of Christ
- Ch. 17–19 Seven Dooms
- Ch. 20–22 Seven New Things

Chapter 1 – January 10, 2018



Introduction

“Revelation” – Latin term *revelatio*, referring to:

- The act of revealing or making known
- The thing which is revealed
- In theology, designates God’s own self-disclosure or manifesting of himself, or things concerning himself and the world
- May also mean the “Word” itself, oral or written, which bears such revelation
- Equivalent NT term: apocalypse means unveiling, uncovering, or making someone or something known
- Can also mean the “Word” itself which reveals

Two Kinds of Revelation

1) General Revelation

God reveals himself in nature, in history, and in all people as made in his image.

Ps.10:11; 14:1; 19:1; Acts 14:17; 17:22–29; Rom 1:19–21

2) Special Revelation

God purposes to share his gracious, loving heart intending salvation of all people.

- Articulate language directly spoken (Gn 3:14–19; 6:13–21; 7:1–4; 12:1–3).
- Various means: Angel of the Lord (Gn 18:1–15)
 - Burning bush (Ex 3:1–22)
 - Cleft in the rock (Ex 34:6, 7)
 - Fire and cloud (Ex 19)
- Came through dreams and visions (1 Sm 3:1–14).
- The zenith of God’s revelation was the coming in the flesh of **his beloved Son, Jesus Christ** (Jn 1:14–18; Gal 4:4, 5; Heb 1; 2).
- Jesus’ revelation of the Father and the Father’s gracious will toward all people was direct, accurate, and preeminent (Jn 14).

Mankind would know nothing at all of God’s messianic purposes in Christ, had God not revealed his heart and purposes throughout Scripture.

Background

Written by the apostle John:

- Exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of present-day Turkey.
- Letters from Christ himself to seven actual churches.
- Letters include commendation, criticism, and comfort.
- Then a long series of visions of judgment on the wicked, highly symbolic language.
- The Church is under great distress but assured of the final triumph of Jesus as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16),
- Brings an end the rebellion of humanity and ushers in “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1), where God himself will reign forever and ever (11:15).
- Revelation was probably written between A.D. 95–96.

Prologue - Revelation 1:1-3 ESV

- 1:1a **Purpose** of the Book
1:1b-2 **Producer** of the Book
1:3 **Provision** of the Book

Greetings to the Seven Churches - Revelation 1:4-8 ESV

- 1:4a The **Location** of the Churches
1:4b-6 The **Lord** of the Churches
1:6b The **Legacy** of the Churches
1:7-8 The **Legitimacy** of the Church

The Vision of the Son of Man - Revelation 1:9-20 ESV

- 1:9-11 The **Receiver** of the Vision
1:12-16 The **Revealed** Vision
1:17a The **Response** to the Vision
1:17b-20 The **Reassurance** from the Vision

PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:1-7 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Ephesus** based on what the Lord teaches you.

Personal Study for January 17, 2018

Ephesus "The Loveless Church" 2:1-7	
Who is being spoken to?	
2:1a	
Describe the one who is speaking these words	
2:1b	
Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)	
2:2-3, 2:6	
Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)	
2:4	
Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS	
2:5a	
Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)	
2:5b	
Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)	
2:7a	
Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)	
2:7b	

LESSON 2 – JANUARY 17, 2018

Church of Ephesus The “Loveless” Church Revelation 2:1-7 ESV

Overview

- Christ **Commends** the Ephesian Church for Its faithful practice
- Christ **Condemns** It for Its Lack of Witness
- Christ **Exhorts** It to Overcome This Lack in Order to Inherit Eternal Life

Outline of 2:1-7

1. **ACKNOWLEDGED Work (vs. 2-3)**
"I know your works..."
2. **ABANDONED Work (vs. 4-5a)**
"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first..."
3. **ATONING Work (v. 5b)**
"If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."
4. **AGREED Work (v. 6)**
"Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

About EPHEBUS

- A port city of western Asia Minor at the mouth of the Cayster River.
- Ephesus lay between Smyrna and Miletus.
- Most important city of the Roman province of Asia, located on the western shore of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
- Ephesus was built on a natural harbor whose waves, according to the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, “used to wash up to the temple of Diana.”
- Ephesus was described by Strabo, an early Greek geographer, as the largest commercial center west of the Taurus Mountains.
- Well known as “guardian” of the temple of Artemis (Acts 19:34) [Romans called her, Diana].

Christianity’s Threat

- Gospel threatened Pagan temple and the commerce it produced for the makers of idols.
- Preaching the Gospel almost cost the apostle Paul his life (Acts 19:24, 30–31).
- Associated with the early preaching in Ephesus:
 - Priscilla and Aquila (18:18–19)
 - Timothy (1 Tm 1:3)
 - Erastus (Acts 19:22)
- According to Irenaeus, an early Christian writer, apostle John, after his exile on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:9), returned to live in Ephesus until time of emperor Trajan (AD 98–117).
- The commendable practices of the Christian community described in the letter to the Ephesians had been largely abandoned by the time John wrote Revelation (Rev 2:4).

City of Ephesus

- Founded by Ionian Greeks at a location where Cayster River emptied into Aegean Sea gulf.
- A city for about 1,000 years when Paul arrived on his third missionary journey (Acts 19).
- The worship of Artemis in Ephesus was as ancient as the city itself.
- The temple, built in middle of sixth century BC, was largest edifice in the Hellenistic world.
- The first of monumental size ever to be constructed entirely of marble.

NICOLAITANS

- Heretical sect in the early church
- Mentioned by name twice in the book of Revelation:
 - Church at Ephesus was commended for hating the works of the Nicolaitans (2:6)
 - Church at Pergamum was criticized for having members who held their doctrine (2:15)
- Since the specific sins condemned at Pergamum—the eating of food sacrificed to idols and the practice of immorality—were also present at Thyatira (Rev 2:20), it is commonly thought that the woman Jezebel was a leader of the Nicolaitans in that church.
- In the letter to Pergamum, their sins are equated with the teaching of Balaam (Rev 2:14; cf. Num 25:1–2; 31:16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11),
 - Balaam advised Balak, the king of the Moabites, to bring about Israel’s downfall by inviting them to worship the Moabite gods and engage in intermarriage and the sexual immoralities connected with Moabite religious practices.
 - Thus, the Jews would have been separated from God and his protection.
 - In Jewish thought, Balaam was the symbol of all that led men to obscene conduct and the forsaking of God.
 - The ungodly practices at Thyatira are called the “deep things of Satan” (Rev 2:24).

The Early Church Also Threatened By Idolatry and Immorality So Prevalent In The World

- The necessity for frequent warning in the NT reveals the gravity of the problem.
- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:20) called upon the Gentiles to abstain from eating food that had been offered to idols and sexual immorality.
- Paul called for a voluntary avoidance of this kind of fare for the sake of those who were weak or immature in the faith (1 Cor 8).
- He strongly condemned actual participation in:
 - Idol feasts (1 Cor 10:14–22)
 - fornication in general
 - temple prostitution in particular (6:12–20)

Who the Nicolaitans were is More Difficult to Determine

- The tendency among the church fathers was to identify them as followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, a Gentile convert to the Jewish faith, who had become a Christian and was chosen to be one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5).
- Both Irenaeus and Hippolytus believed that he had fallen from the faith.
- Clement claimed that the heretical and immoral Nicolaitans were not actual followers of Nicolaus but falsely claimed him as their teacher.
- In any event, there is no direct evidence available.
- Since the 19th century it has been common to view the name as a translation into Greek of the Hebrew name Balaam.
- This is in accord with the allegorical, symbolical nature of Revelation and the apparent linking of the two names in the letter to Pergamum (Rev 2:14–15).

LESSON 2 – JANUARY 17, 2018

Church of Ephesus The “Loveless” Church Revelation 2:1-7 ESV

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Acts 19:1-10; 19:21-41 and 20:17-37. Discuss the climate of Ephesus of the Church and the city?
2. At the time John writes this letter to the Church, what some of the reasons John says they have lost their first love?
3. Think about your own spiritual journey, what areas of devotion in your life have slacked, since you first got saved?
4. What do you think the Lord is saying to you about what you need to do to rekindle that devotion?
5. Pray for one another concerning those areas that need rekindling.

PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:8-11 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Smyrna** based on what the Lord teaches you.

Personal Study for January 24, 2018

Smyrna "The Persecuted Church" 2:8-11	
Who is being spoken to?	
2:8a	
Describe the one who is speaking these words	
2:8b	
Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)	
2:9a	
Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)	
2:9b	
Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS	
2:10a, 2:10c	
Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)	
N/A	
Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)	
2:11a	
Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)	
2:11b	

LESSON 3 – JANUARY 24, 2018

Church of Smyrna (Myrrh) The “Persecuted” Church Revelation 2:8-11 ESV

Overview

- Christ **commends** the Church of Smyrna for enduring tribulation
- Christ **encourages** the Church of Smyrna to continue to be faithful in anticipation of imminent, more severe persecution, in order to inherit eternal life and heavenly kingship

About Myrrh

- First mentioned as a principal ingredient in the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23).
- Gift brought by the wise men from the east, who came to worship infant Jesus (Matt. 2:11).
- It was used in embalming (John 19:39),
- It was also used as a perfume (Esther 2:12; Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17).
- Custom of the Jews to give those condemned to death by crucifixion “wine mingled with myrrh” to produce insensibility.
 - This drugged wine was probably partaken of by the two malefactors
 - But when the Roman soldiers pressed it upon Jesus “*he received it not*” (Mark 15:23)

About SMYRNA (Rev 1:11; 2:8–11)

- It is the modern Izmir, located in Turkey.
- Inhabited at least 3,000 years before Christ.
- The Aeolian Greeks were replaced by the Ionians.
- The city, along with Miletus and Ephesus to the south, flourished under Ionian dominance.
 - **Ionians** were one of four major tribes the Greeks divided into during ancient period.
 - The other three being the Dorians, Aeolians, and Achaeans.^[1]
- Ionian dialect (and Dorian and Aeolian) the three major linguistic divisions of Hellenic world
- “**Ionian**” defines several groups in Classical Greece:
 - In the narrowest sense, referred to the region of Ionia in Asia Minor.
 - In a broader sense, described all speakers of Ionic dialect (Ionia proper also included populations of Euboea, the Cyclades, and many cities founded by Ionian colonists.
 - In the broadest sense, described all those who spoke languages of the East Greek group, which included Attic.

The city was conquered by the Lydians whose capital was Sardis

- The **Lydians** were an Anatolian people living in Lydia, a region in western Anatolia, who spoke the distinctive Lydian language, an Indo-European language of the Anatolian group.
- The site was left in ruins for nearly three centuries until its re-founding by Alexander the Great in 334 BC at a site farther south along the gulf.
- Although built by the energy of the Seleucids, the city recognized the coming dominance of Pergamum and entered into an alliance with its king.
- Later, with remarkable foresight, she transferred her allegiance to Rome, and in 195 BC built a temple in which Rome was worshiped as a deity.
- Reward for Smyrna’s early commitment to rising Roman influence, the city prospered under Roman rule, partly as a rival to Pergamum and partly as a rival to prosperous island of Rhodes.
- Because they had been an ally of the Romans, the people of Smyrna thought it would be to their credit to build (in AD 26) a temple in which the Roman emperor would be honored.
- This city became the seat of the Caesar cult that afflicted the church so seriously during the latter half of the first century.

Historical Timeline

- The **Seleucid era** or *Anno Graecorum* (literally "year of the Greeks" or "Greek year"), sometimes denoted "AG", was a system of numbering years in use by the Seleucid Empire and other countries among the ancient Hellenistic civilizations.
- It is sometimes referred to as "the dominion of the Seleucidæ," or the Year of Alexander.
- The era dates from Seleucus I Nicator's re-conquest of Babylon in 312/11 BC after his exile in Ptolemaic Egypt,^[1] considered by Seleucus and his court to mark the founding of the Seleucid Empire.
- According to Jewish Tradition, it was during the sixth year of Alexander the Great's reign (possibly Alexander the Great's infant son, Alexander IV of Macedon) that they began to make use of this counting.^[2]
- The introduction of the new era is mentioned in one of the Babylonian Chronicles, *the Chronicle of the Diadochi*.

Revelation 2:8 speaks of the city as being "dead and then alive"

- A possible allusion to the period of 300 years when it lay devastated until revived by Alexander and the Macedonians.
- Ancient writers (Appollonius and Aristides) spoke of Smyrna as having the "crown of life."
- This was a way of describing the hilltop behind the city as if it crowned Smyrna on top, with its feet at the seashore, known as "the Crown of Smyra."
- The promise of "the crown of life" to the Smyrnan believers probably plays off this image.
- This promise was given to believers in Smyrna who would remain faithful through persecution.

References to "synagogue of Satan" (Rev 2:9) and to the devil putting them in prison (Rev 2:10)

- Reflects the tribulation probably experienced under Roman emperor Domitian (c. AD 95).
- Crime punishable by death to refuse to worship the image of the Roman emperor as "lord."
- Many Christians were compelled to choose between "Caesar as Lord" or "Jesus as Lord."
- To choose Jesus was to choose martyrdom.

SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

- A reference to Jewish persecutors of the Church (Rev 2:9; 3:9).
- Members of the "synagogue of Satan" were persecuting churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia.
- In Revelation, Jesus denounces them despite their claims to Judaism and the synagogue.
- May also refer to Christians who sought protection from the synagogue during times of difficulty.

IRONIC

- Jews' attack against Smyrnan church demonstrated that Jews were not only "false Jews" but also "a **synagogue of Satan**," and that the church, by implication, was the "true Israel."
- Some commentators demur on the identification of the church with latter-day Israel.
- Nevertheless, the identification is confirmed not only by broad contextual indicators (e.g., 1:6, 7, 9, 12; 2:17; 3:9, 12; 5:9–10; 7:4–9, 15–17; 11:1–4) but also by the fact that in the immediate context the church is seen as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about Israel.
- Identification is enhanced by association of the church's trial with Daniel and his friends (2:10).
- The false accusations against the saints that induced oppression identify the Jews with "satan" ("false accuser"), since this is also a characteristic trait of the beast in persecuting God's people ["blasphemy"] in 13:1, 5–6; 17:3–6; cf. John 8:44.
- Such collusion could lead to various economic measures taken by the Roman authorities against Christians, sometimes in the form of bans against practice of trades (e.g., expulsion from trade guilds) and often imprisonment (see Heb. 10:34, where Christians are said to suffer loss of property for their faith).

LESSON 3 – JANUARY 24, 2018

Church of Smyrna (Myrrh)
The “Persecuted” Church
Revelation 2:8-11ESV

Outline of 2:8-11

1. I know Your _____ (v.9)

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

2. I know Your _____ (v.10)

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.”

3. I know Your _____ (v.10b)

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:12-17 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Pergamum** based on what the Lord teaches you.

Personal Study for January 31, 2018

Pergamum "The Compromising Church" 2:12-17	
Who is being spoken to?	
2:12a	
Describe the one who is speaking these words	
2:12b	
Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)	
2:13	
Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)	
2:14-15	
Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS	
2:16a	
Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)	
2:16b	
Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)	
2:17a	
Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)	
2:17b	