

## *Acts 2 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Eight: Jesus' Revelation to John, Part 1 – Revelation 1-4*

#### Overview

- 1) Compare and contrast the opening verses of the book (1:1-4) with the closing verses of the book (22:18-21.) **Similarities: the opening and closing words both indicate that all that lies between them is extremely valuable, both claim it is the testimony (revelation) of Jesus Himself, and both emphasize that He is coming soon. Difference: the opening promises a blessing to all who read it, while the closing warns of a curse on any who alter it.**
- 2) Find the word or theme that is repeated throughout the book of Revelation in the following verses:
  - a) 1:4, 11, 12, 16, 20; 2:1; 3:1; 4:5, 5:1, 6; 8:2; 10:4; 12:3; 15:6-8; 17:9-10 **The number seven**
  - b) 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14 **The word “blessed” (seven blessings are also given)**
  - c) 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3 (a name for the central figure of the book) **“Lamb” (Jesus Christ)**
  - d) 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 11:16-18; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-4, 6-8 **Doxologies, worship and praise to God**
- 3) According to Revelation 1:10; 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 4:2 and John 16:13, how does God reveal truth today? What do you hope to learn from this book? Will you ask Him now to teach you as you study it? **God reveals truth through His Spirit. Personal sharing**

#### Read Revelation 1.

- 4) What keys to the identity of the one who was “like a son of man” (1:13) are given in Revelation 1? Record additional insights from Daniel 7:9, 13-14 and Ezekiel 1:24-28 (John would have been well acquainted with the Old Testament). **In Revelation 1 and Daniel 7, He had authority: He stood among the seven lampstands, which are the seven churches of Revelation 2-3 (1:12, 20), held seven stars (which represented the angels of the seven churches [Rev 1:20]) in His right hand (Rev 1:16), and sat on a throne (Da 7:9). In Daniel 7, He was given glory and in Rev 1 and Ez 1, He had a glorious appearance: His robe reached His feet and a golden sash was around His chest. “His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters... Out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” (Rev 1:14-16); “...like glowing metal, as if full of fire... and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow... was the radiance around Him” (Ez 1:27-28). In Daniel 7 and Revelation 1, He was worshipped (Da 7:14; Rev 1:17): in both passages, He was declared Eternal (Da 7:14, Rev 1:17-18) and in Revelation 1, He said He had been dead but is now forever alive (v 18). The one “like a son of man” can only be Jesus Christ.**
- 5) Consider the history of John’s relationship with Jesus by reviewing the following passages: Matthew 4:21-22, Luke 8:51-56, Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 14:33-43, John 13:21-26 (John is “the disciple whom Jesus loved”), John 20:2-5, 8, and Acts 1:2-3, 9. Try to imagine yourself in John’s place in Revelation 1:9-18. What thoughts and feelings might he have had? **John had seen the transfigured (glorified) Christ during His earthly ministry (Mt 17), as well as His resurrected form (Acts 1). However, nothing in the Gospel accounts suggests that those who saw Jesus after His resurrection were as overwhelmed by His appearance as John was in Revelation 1. John must have been simultaneously thrilled and terrified. As the “disciple Jesus loved,” perhaps he longed to cling to his precious Savior and friend. Nevertheless, he was so powerfully moved by His glory that he fell prostrate and immobile (“as though dead” [perhaps John wondered if he was dead!]). Since Jesus’ voice sounded like “rushing waters” (different, more majestic, than His earthly voice), John may even have been uncertain of His identity, until He revealed He was the “Living One” who “was dead” but now forever alive.**
- 6) Spend a few minutes worshipping the Lord Jesus in a prostrate position (lying face down on the ground) and then record anything about this experience that you may want to share with your study group. **Personal sharing**

Read Revelation 2 and 3.

7) Use summarizing words or phrases from the seven letters in Revelation 2-3 to fill in the chart below.

Name of Church	Description of Christ	Commendation (if any)	Condemnation (if any)	Exhortation/Warning	Reward
Ephesus	"Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands"	Hard work and perseverance, intolerance for wicked men, tested false apostles, not grown weary in enduring hardships, and hated practices of the Nicolaitans	Forsaken their first love	Do the things they did at first and repent or their lampstand will be removed from its place.	The right to eat from the tree of life
Smyrna	"Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again"	Rich despite afflictions and poverty; slandered		Don't be afraid despite ten-day imprisonment and persecution. Be faithful.	Not be hurt at all by the second death
Pergamum	"Him who has the sharp, double-edged sword"	Difficult city in which to live, yet remained faithful and did not renounce Christ	Hold to the "teaching of Balaam" and of the Nicolaitans	Repent or Christ will fight against them with the sword of His mouth	Hidden manna and a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it
Thyatira	"The Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze." He who searches hearts and minds and will repay each according to his deeds.	Deeds of love, faith, service, and perseverance, in increasing proportion	Tolerate prophetess "Jezebel"	Suffering and death of Jezebel and her followers, unless they repented. To the others: "Hold to what you have until I come."	Authority over the nations; the morning star
Sardis	"Him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars"	A few who had not soiled their clothes	Incomplete deeds; reputation for being spiritually alive but were actually dead	"Wake up!" Strengthen what remains and is about to die. Remember, obey, repent, or "I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come to you."	"Walk with me, dressed in white", never blotted from the book of life but acknowledged by Christ before the Father and angels.
Philadelphia	Holy and true; holds the key of David. "What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open."	Despite little strength, they did not deny Christ's name but endured patiently		To hold on to what they had	Acknowledgement they were loved by Christ by those who claimed to be Jews; kept from the testing to come on the earth; given an "open door"; made a pillar in God's temple; the name of God, of His city, and of Christ written on them
Laodicea	"The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation"		Neither hot nor cold. Boastful, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. About to be spit out of His mouth.	Buy from Him gold refined in the fire, white clothes, and eye salve. Hear His voice and open the door.	Fellowship with Christ and right to sit with Him on His throne (rule with Him)

- 8) Based on these letters, what is Jesus Christ looking for in His church? **Passionate love, fixed commitment, perseverance/faithfulness, willingness to suffer for Him, deeds that are like His and that honor Him, love and protectiveness of His truth, seeing Him as the answer to all their needs, precious and intimate fellowship with Him.**
- 9) The congregation at Ephesus was indicted for having “forsaken their first love.” They were exhorted to repent and do the things they had done at first. What kinds of things indicate that a believer has a love for Jesus that is unchanged from when they first loved Him? See Jeremiah 2:2; Matthew 22:36-39, 24:12; John 14:15; 1 John 4:20-21; and Revelation 3:20. Does this describe you? **Sin causes our love for Christ to cool. Those who love as they did at first are fully devoted to Him, eager to obey Him, wholeheartedly pursue intimacy with Him, and love fellow believers. (Some commentators suggest that the trouble with the believers at Ephesus was that they failed to love one another. Others suggest they lost their enthusiasm for personal, intimate fellowship with Jesus.) Personal sharing**

#### From Revelation 2-3

- 10) Using words or phrases from your chart above, how would you describe the church of Jesus Christ in the region in which you live? **Answers will vary**
- 11) According to Revelation 1:20, the seven churches were represented by lampstands in the vision John was given. Why would the churches have been represented by lampstands (1:20)? See John 8:12 and consider the purpose of a lampstand. **Just as a lampstand holds up light so that it casts further into the darkness, the Church represents Christ on earth by holding up the light of His truth so that it shines out into a dark world.**
- 12) John found Jesus standing among the lampstands (1:12-13, 20). Recall John 8:12 (Question 11) and read John 15:4-5. What will you do this week to encourage your own local congregation to represent Christ better or depend on Him more completely (take care not to speak disapprovingly of your local church in your sharing)? **Holding up Jesus Christ and His truth must be the central focus of every local congregation. Apart from Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the World and our Living Source, the Church (lampstands) loses its purpose and power. Personal sharing**

#### Read Revelation 4.

- 13) Jesus called John to the throne of God in heaven to see “what must take place” (4:1).
- Note the fluctuation between locations in the scenes of Revelation by contrasting 4:1 and 7:1 (other examples are in 7:9-11; 8:1, 7-12; 9:13-15; 10:1-2; 11:12; 12:7-9; 13:11; 14:1, 8, 14-16; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1-3; 19:11, 19; 20:1-2, 7-8, 11). The drama of Revelation takes place in heaven and on earth.
  - Consider this constant shift between the two locations in the context of God sitting on His throne. What do the following verses reveal about the significance of a dignitary sitting on his throne (in other words, what executive role does the throne symbolize?): Psalm 9:4, 7, 11:4, Daniel 7:9-10, Matthew 19:28, 25:31-33, Revelation 6:10 with 6:16-17, and 20:11-13? (This fact is central to the drama in Revelation.) **Throughout Revelation the scene is constantly shifting from heaven and earth, and the relationship between the two is clear: what happens in heaven is reflected on earth. What happens on earth is responded to in heaven. God’s placement on His throne speaks of judgment, which is the story of chapters 4-20.**
  - How would this reminder have encouraged believers who were enduring persecution (2:13, 3:10) at the time John received the Revelation (the end of the first century)? **Believers who were being persecuted were encouraged to persevere in faithfulness, because a day is coming in which God will bring all to justice.**

**14) How are God and His Son Jesus Christ portrayed in Revelation 1-4 (include any names given to them)?**

- Jesus' appearance is described in language that conveys His regality, fierceness, and glory (1:12-16 and 2:18). We are told He loves us (1:5b) and rebukes and disciplines those He loves (3:19). He is described as having a sharp, double-edged sword, which is a portrait of Him as Judge (2:12). He is "holy and true" (3:7) and the giver of rewards (2:7, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21). He sovereignly holds the key (power over) salvation, judgment, and the door of God's Kingdom (3:7-8). He desires our fellowship (3:20). He is "the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (1:5), "the First and the Last," "the Living One" who was dead and is forever alive (1:17-18, 2:8), and "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation" (3:14).
- No physical description is given of God Himself, only of colors emanating from precious stones and a rainbow cloud (4:3a) surrounding His heavenly throne, where He is eternally worshipped (4:4-11). He is worthy of glory, honor, and power, and worshipped as the Creator of all things (4:11). He is "the Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8).

**15) In light of God's vigilant watch from heaven over all that occurs on earth, which of the descriptions or names of God that you listed in Question 14 encourages you about His involvement in your own life today and why is it especially encouraging? **Personal sharing****