

LETTERS TO THE 7 CHURCHES

REVELATION 1-3

Revelation 1

The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave to show his servants what must soon take place, made it known by sending his angel his servant John,² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ.³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, the time is near.

⁴John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you, him who is, and who was, and who is to come, from the seven spirits before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, firstborn from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us, has freed us from our sins by his blood,⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

⁷“Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn for him.” So shall it be! Amen.

⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, Almighty.”

⁹I, John, brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God, the testimony of Jesus.¹⁰ On the Lord’s Day, as I was in the Spirit, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,¹¹ which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.”

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, in a robe reaching down to his feet with a golden sash around his chest.¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, his voice was like the

sound of rushing waters.¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last."¹⁸I am the Living One; I was dead, now look, I am alive for ever and ever! I hold the keys of death and Hades.

¹⁹"Write, therefore, what you have seen, is now and what will take place later."²⁰The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

QUESTIONS:

What/Who is Revelation/revealed?

What/Who is it about?

Who is John? What is his relationship to Jesus?

Where is John? How did he get there?

PRAYER

To the Church in Ephesus

²“To the angel ^[a]the church in Ephesus: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, have not grown weary.

⁴Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵Consider how far you have fallen! Repent do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand its place. ⁶But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, I also hate.

⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, will give the right to eat from the tree of life, is in the paradise God

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev. 2:1-7 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It's important to note that small group members don't need to explain the "why" behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev. 2:1-7 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn't notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

What are is the church commended or praised for? What are they doing well?

What is the church rebuked for? What are they doing poorly?

What situations do you think the church is in? Can you imagine how they got here?

Describe why they would respond or act this way.

How is our situation / culture the same / different?

How is McLaurin like / unlike this church? What are we doing well and what are we doing poorly?

PRAY:

What would Jesus want for us? What steps does He ask us to take?

To the Church in Smyrna

⁸“To the angel of the church in Smyrna: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, died and came to life again.⁹I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, are a synagogue of Satan.¹⁰Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, you will suffer persecution for ten days, faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.

¹¹Whoever has ears, let them hear the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

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PRAY:

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To the Church in Pergamum

12 To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.¹³I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

¹⁴Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols committed sexual immorality.¹⁵Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.¹⁶Repent! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, will give

some of the hidden manna. will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev. 2:8:17 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It's important to note that small group members don't need to explain the "why" behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev. 2:8-17 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn't notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

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PRAY:

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To the Church in Thyatira

18 To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.¹⁹ I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

²⁰Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.²² So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

²⁴Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you,²⁵ except to hold on to what you have come.'

²⁶To the one who is victorious I will give authority over the nations—²⁷that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter will dash them to pieces like pottery'^(b)—just as I have received authority from my Father.²⁸ I will also give that one the morning star.²⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear the Spirit says to the churches.

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev. 2:18-29 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It's important to note that small group members don't need to explain the "why" behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev. 2:18-29 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn't notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

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To the Church in Sardis

3“To the angel^[a] the church in Sardis: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits^[b] God and the seven stars. know your deeds; have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.² Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time will come to you.

⁴Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes.They will walk with me, dressed in white,they are worthy.⁵The one who is victorious, like them, be dressed in white.will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life,but will acknowledge that name before my Fatherhis angels.⁶Whoever has ears, let them hearthe Spirit says to the churches.

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev 3:1-6 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It's important to note that small group members don't need to explain the "why" behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev 3:1-6 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn't notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

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To the Church in Philadelphia

⁷“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia: These are the words of him who is holy, true, holds the key of David. He opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.⁸ I know your deeds, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, claim to be Jews though they are not, are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹I am coming soon, on to what you have, that no one will take your crown.¹² The one who is victorious will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear, the Spirit says to the churches.

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev. 3:7-13 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It's important to note that small group members don't need to explain the "why" behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev. 3:7-13 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn't notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

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To the Church in Laodicea

¹⁴“To the angel of the church in Laodicea: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵I know your deeds, you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. Be earnest and repent. ²⁰Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²Whoever has ears, let them hear the Spirit says to the churches.”

QUESTIONS:

Have someone read Rev. 3:14-22 once. Read slowly. As the scripture is being read, have each small group member think about one thing that stands out to them. Perhaps a piece of dialogue, a word, a character, an interaction, a verse. Spend a couple minutes sharing these ideas. It’s important to note that small group members don’t need to explain the “why” behind their thought that will come later.

Have someone else read Rev. 3:14-22 a second time. As the scripture is being read, is there something that you as small group members notice that you didn’t notice the first time? If so, talk about this. Take a few minutes to expand on question 1. Now is the time to share why you think that piece of dialogue was interesting or important for example. Or perhaps you could explain how that verse stood out to you and why? If small group members have questions regarding a word or a verse or a character within this scene, ask the group and dialogue about it together.

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