



“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.”

And when I turned to see who stood behind me, I found no one there, but I turned back and saw seven thousand people standing around me, and I heard a loud voice saying to me, ‘Write what you see.’ And when I turned to see who was speaking to me, I found no one there, but I wrote down what I saw and what was said to me. And when I finished writing, I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. The one who is unjust, let him be unjust still; the one who is righteous, let him be righteous still; and the one who is holy, let him be holy still. Behold, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to give to each one according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will not defile their clothes and will stand before the throne of God and will worship him. Do not add to what is written here, and do not subtract from it, for I will bring judgment on anyone who does so. I am the Lord God who created the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water. Blessed are those who do the commandments of these prophecies of this book. The time is near. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. I am Jesus, who have sent the angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.’ The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And who hears, let him come. And who is thirsty, let him come. And who wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. I, Jesus, have sent the angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.’

1:19

REVELATION SERMON SERIES



Term 2 Bible Study Booklets

ONE LORD: Eight Churches

From Patmos to the Heavenly Throne Room in nine easy lessons.

This term we turn from Jesus' words and actions in Matthew's Gospel to the words of encouragement written for those who follow Jesus some 50 years later, written by another of Jesus' apostles, John; we turn to the opening of the Book of Revelation.

These words were most probably written by John the Apostle while he was in exile (imposed by the Roman authorities) on the island of Patmos, off the coast of modern-day Turkey. By the time we are working on this series all of us will most probably, like John, still be exiled from our church gatherings by the Covid 19 threat. Two thousand years may separate us, but the full truth is that these words are still vitally significant and totally true in each very different age.

The section of Revelation that we will look at comprises the introductory vision, seven letters to churches and then a 'dip of the toe in the water' of the main section of the gist of the revelation.

May our Sovereign Lord, Jesus, who is indeed the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, grant to us understanding, encouragement and motivation as we read and study this section of his Word.

Greg Holmes, March 2020

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Program

Study	Passage	Church	Title*
1 Commencing May 3	Rev 1:1-20	One LORD	Alpha and Omega
2	Rev 2:1-7	Ephesus:	Lost Love
3	Rev 2:8-11	Smyrna:	Suffering Saints
4	Rev 2:12-17	Pergamum:	Fornicating Faction(!!!)
5	Rev 2:18-27	Thyatira:	Compromising Christians
6	Rev 3:1-6	Sardis:	Sinful Slumber
7	Rev 3:7-13	Philadelphia:	Persevering Pillars
8	Rev 3:14-22	Laodicea:	Prosperous Paupers
9	Rev 4:1-11	One Church	Heavenly Host

The titles essentially come from **Keener, C The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation** (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000).

RESOURCES

Barnett, P, Revelation – Apocalypse Now and Then (Reading the Bible Today) (Sydney South, Aquila, 2001)

Bewes, R. The Lamb Wins! A guided tour through The Book of Revelation (Ross-Shire, Christian Focus, 2000).

Chester, T. Revelation for You (God's Word for You) (United Kingdom, The Good Book Company, 2019). *I highly recommend this little book as an easily accessible, readable lay persons 'commentary' on Revelation*

Keener, C The NIV Application Commentary : Revelation (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000).

Morris, L, "Revelation" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1987).

Also, the outline of Book of Revelation (Part 1) on the Bible Project website. <https://thebibleproject.com/all-videos/>

Please note that as many of you may be doing these 'solo' that the booklet entitled "Thoughts, Notes and Answers" is available to everyone via the KAC website or from the foyer of the Church Point Centre.

Revelation: Some Background.

The Author

Whilst there has been some discussion about who the author of this letter is (he calls himself John in 1:1), ancient tradition and much modern scholarship have come to the conclusion that the author is John the Elder (named in 2,3 John) who is also the Apostle John who wrote John's gospel.

It is most probable that John was at this time an exiled elder (in both position and age) of the Church at Ephesus (in modern day Turkey) and the letter was written in the 80s or 90s AD. He writes from the Greek Isle of Patmos, the place of his exile.

The Literature

The majority of Revelation, though not so much the part we are dealing with here, is what is called apocalyptic literature. It is full of potent symbols, symbolic numbers, mystifying visions and terrifying beings all which combine to demonstrate that God is sovereign and Jesus is Lord. We will look a bit more into this style of literature when we move further into the book at some later stage.

The Message of Revelation

Keener in the introduction to his NIV Application Commentary notes: *"As Billy Graham points out, rather than getting lost in the smaller brushstrokes, debating all the details, we need to step back and catch the majesty of the book's "grand design". We can acknowledge ambiguities and uncertainties and even differ from other Christians on some larger end-time scenarios, such as the nature of the Millennium, but the most important applications to our lives today are usually clear. In discussing New Testament teaching about Jesus' return, can we miss the summons to holiness in readiness for Christ's return, one of the most pervasive*

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Second-Coming themes in the New Testament (Mark 13:33–37; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:6–7, 23; Titus 2:12–13; 1 Peter 1:7; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 John 2:28–3:3)?

What then is Revelation’s message? We mention several points below:

- *That God is awesomely majestic, as well as sovereign in our troubles.*
- *That Jesus’ sacrifice as the Lamb ultimately brings complete deliverance for those who trust him.*
- *That God’s judgments on the world are often to serve notice on the world that God will avenge his people.*
- *That regardless of how things appear in the short run, “sin does not go unpunished”, and God will judge.⁷⁵*
- *That God can accomplish his purposes through a small and persecuted remnant; he is not dependent on what the world values as power.*
- *That worship leads us from grief over our sufferings to God’s eternal purposes seen from a heavenly perspective.*
- *That proclaiming Christ invites persecution, the normal state of committed believers in this age.*
- *That Christ is worth dying for.*
- *That a radical contrast exists between God’s kingdom (exemplified in the bride, the new Jerusalem) and the world’s values (exemplified in the prostitute, Babylon).*
- *That the hope God has prepared for us far exceeds our present sufferings.*
- *That God’s plan and church ultimately include representatives of all peoples.*

Revelation also proclaims Christ’s Lordship more explicitly and frequently than some parts of the New Testament; under normal circumstances we confront opposition not by softening our witness for Christ but by testifying more boldly.”

Study 1: Revelation 1:1-20

ONE LORD: Alpha and Omega

Before You Start

What are your impressions of the book of Revelation? What do you expect that you personally, and we as a church, can learn from it?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 1:1-20

The Text

1. Read 1:1-3. What was (is) the process of receiving the message of this revelation?
2. Read 1:4-6. To whom and from whom is this greeting? What is the status of the recipients?
3. Read 1:7-8. What truth do these verses remind us of?
4. Read 1:9-11. How did John receive this revelation?
5. Read 1:12-20. What do the images imply about Jesus?

Connections

1. What do you need to do to be 'blessed' by God (v3)?

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2. Read Matthew 17:1-6 (Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). How does this chapter relate to the picture of Jesus at his Transfiguration?
3. Read Colossians 1:15-20. This is another exalted picture of Jesus. What relationship can you see to this chapter of Revelation?
4. What does the first word of this book, 'revelation', mean about what it contains?
5. What does this chapter add to the picture of Jesus we see as the wandering Rabbi in Palestine?

Impact

1. Tim Chester. "Revelation For You:" *"What aspects of John's vision of the risen Christ particularly comfort you? Which of them disturb or challenge you?"*
2. Jesus is Alpha and Omega (beginning and end). How is he your beginning and end?

Study 2: Revelation 2:1-7

8 Churches: Ephesus – Lost Love.”

Before You Start

Consider or discuss what you know of Ephesus from other Biblical material.

Listen Carefully to Revelation 2:1-7

(You will notice that the first 5 questions of this and the next 6 studies are the same. This is because of the very similar structure (though not content) of these 7 Letters.

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is ‘known’?
3. What criticism is there?
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

Connections

1. What is the Ephesians’ strength?

REVELATION 1-4
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2. What does it mean to have 'forsaken your first love'?
3. We have little idea who the Nicolaitans were or what they did. However, what practices do you think God hates?
4. What characteristics of the Ephesian Church should we emulate?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Ephesus?
2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

For this and the next 6 studies you may want to start a chart like this*:

CHURCH AT:	Positives	Negatives	Encouragments
<i>Ephesus</i>			

*A full-page version is available through Greg Holmes (gregholmes@bigpond.com)

Study 3: Revelation 2:8-11

8 Churches: Smyrna – Suffering Saints.”

Before You Start

As a church are we rich or are we poor? Consider or discuss.

Listen Carefully to Revelation 2:8-11

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?
3. What criticism is there?????
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Connections

1. What does I know 'your poverty - yet you are rich' mean?
How is that a comfort?

2. 'Do not be afraid' in verse 10 seems to preface some very scary stuff. Why shouldn't they be afraid?
Note Revelation 1:17; Matthew 10:26.

3. How is this church being slandered?

4. Who is the comforter in all this?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Smyrna?

2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 4: Revelation 2:12-17

8 Churches: Pergamum – Fornicating Faction.

Before You Start

How should a church deal with those in its midst who obviously sin?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 2:12-17

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?
3. What criticism is there?
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

Connections

1. What is the importance of the double mention of the 'sword' (v12, v16)?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

2. “Where Satan lives”? Consider or discuss where Satan lives in our world and culture.
3. To what sins is ‘Balaam’ tempting the Pergamumites? How do they relate to our culture and lives today?
4. *“The warnings against intimate relations with unbelievers (Ps. 1:1; Prov. 13:20) caution against imbibing the world’s values, not against being with others to promote Christ’s values (Matt. 11:18–19; Luke 15:1–2).”* (Keener) Consider or discuss...

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Pergamum?
2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 5: Revelation 2:18-27

8 Churches: Thyatira – Compromising Christians.

Before You Start

In our present circumstances what temptations are there for the church to compromise?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 2:18-27

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?
3. What criticism is there?
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Connections

1. Who is Jezebel and what is she doing, and what are the consequences for her and all who 'follow' her?
2. What is the problem with 'tolerating' (v20) her?
3. In v19 what is the contrast here between Ephesus (see 2:4) and Thyatira? What warning and encouragement is there here for us?
4. Note v25. How do we do this?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Thyatira?
2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 6: Revelation 3:1-6

8 Churches: Sardis – Sinful Slumber

Before You Start

How easy is it to 'fall asleep' in our Christian lives?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 3:1-6

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?
3. What criticism is there?
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Connections

1. What is the problem with their reputation? What warning is there here for all churches?
2. Remember! (v3) Calls the reader to do what specifically?
3. Read Romans 13:11-12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11. What is the antidote to sleepiness?
4. At this stage let's consider what "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (v6 in this one) means and how do we do it?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Sardis?
2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 7: Revelation 3:7-13

8 Churches: Philadelphia – Persevering Pillars

Before You Start

Consider or discuss: What are the main challenges to us persevering as Christians?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 3:7-13

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?
3. What criticism is there????!
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Connections

1. What does it mean, 'to persevere'?
2. "I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name." (v8) What does this have to say to us about the Christians' strength?
3. Note v11. What warning and encouragement is there in this verse (and v12)?
4. What is it that is attractive about being 'a pillar in the temple of my God'? What will happen there?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Philadelphia?
2. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 8: Revelation 3:14-22

8 Churches: Laodicea – Prosperous Paupers

Before You Start

Consider or discuss, again, what it means to be rich and to be poor.

Listen Carefully to Revelation 3:14-22

The Text

1. Who speaks? How is he described?
2. What is 'known'?!!??
3. What criticism is there?
4. What warning is given?
5. What promise is given to those who overcome?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

Connections

1. What is the problem with lukewarm water? With lukewarm Christians?
2. What is the warning for all ages in v17? And what is the antidote (v18 see Isaiah 55:1-6)?
3. Note v20. In this context what is this verse about? Note v19.
4. What great privilege does v21 offer?

Impact

1. What about our church is similar to the church in Laodicea?
2. From: Tim Chester. "Revelation For You." *"Which of the seven churches is the closest match to you and your church? Based on his words in Revelation 2 – 3, what might the risen Christ say to your church?"*
3. How can you put the criticisms, praises, and encouragements in this letter to work in your day to day Christian life?

Study 9: Revelation 4:1-11

8 Churches: One Church – Heavenly Host

Before You Start

What do you imagine heaven to be like?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 4:1-11

The Text

1. 4:1. Where are we now? Who speaks? What is his invitation??
2. What is central to the heavenly scene?
3. What impression do you get of this place?
4. What song is sung (said - v8c and v11)? And what can we learn about praise from it?

As an extra now read Chapter 5 and answer the same questions.

Connections

1. Look at 1:10. What does this voice now say. Why is it significant that it is the same voice?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches

2. Re-read v2,3 and note Isa. 6:1–5; Ezek. 1:4–28; Dan. 7:9–14. What sort of place is God’s throne room? What description of God do these passages give?
3. Who might the 24 elders be?
4. And what are the ‘four living creatures’ all about?
5. In earthly terms does this sound like a workable sort of place, really?

Impact

1. From this passage, what is the heavenly ‘church’ all about?
2. Barnett: *“Worship is the expression of agreement by the people of God about the truth of God.” Consider or discuss.*
3. Make a summary about what churches should and should not do, say and profess’ from these letters” What makes a ‘good’ church?

REVELATION 1-4
ONE LORD: Eight Churches



KIAMA ANGLICAN CHURCHES