



## The Words of Jesus Series

# Revelations to the Apostle John

Messages to the Seven Churches, Final Promise of Return

Context: Revelation 1-3 & 22

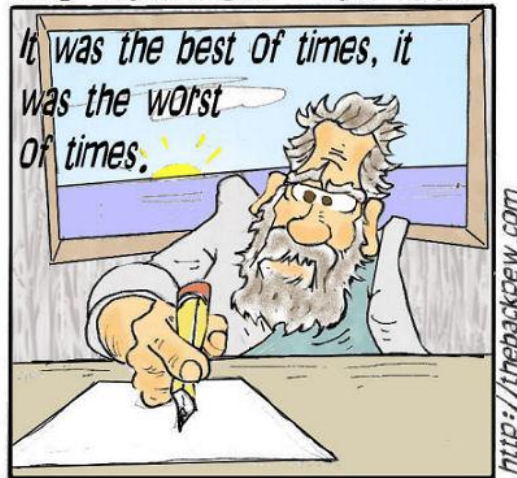
**Lesson 1 – Patmos, Ephesus, Smyrna & Pergamum** (Revelation 1:1 – 2:17)

**Lesson 2 – Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia & Laodicea** (Revelation 2:18 – 3:22)

**Lesson 3 – Final Promises** (Revelation 22:1-21)

Jesus Christ appears to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos and gives him messages for seven churches in Asia Minor. Then after John is shown an extensive vision of the end times, Jesus tells John a bit about paradise and promises to return for us one day.

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



From the Island of Patmos, the apostle John pens his first draft of the book of Revelations. **Revelations 1:1-2**

### Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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**Lesson 1 – Patmos, Ephesus, Smyrna & Pergamum** (Revelation 1:1 – 2:17)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

[1A] Revelation 1:1-3 How was the message of Jesus Christ communicated? By an angel to John

[1B] Revelation 1:4-7 Who is the faithful witness, firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth? \_\_\_\_\_

[1C] Revelation 1:8 Who is the Alpha, Omega, was, is, is to come, and Almighty? \_\_\_\_\_

[1D] Revelation 1:9-11 Where was John? \_\_\_\_\_

[1E] Revelation 1:12-16 What was coming out of His mouth? \_\_\_\_\_

[1F] Revelation 1:17-20 What were the seven lampstands? \_\_\_\_\_

[1G] Revelation 2:1-3 Whose validity did they test? \_\_\_\_\_

[1H] Revelation 2:4-5 Unless they did what their lampstand would be removed? \_\_\_\_\_

[1I] Revelation 2:6-7 Whose deeds did they hate? \_\_\_\_\_

[1J] Revelation 2:8 Who is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

[1K] Revelation 2:9 The false Jews were of what synagogue? \_\_\_\_\_

[1L] Revelation 2:10-11 Those who are faithful to death will receive what? \_\_\_\_\_

[1M] Revelation 2:12-13 What did they not deny even in the days of Antipas? \_\_\_\_\_

[1N] Revelation 2:14 What are some of them eating? \_\_\_\_\_

[1O] Revelation 2:15-17 To what teaching were some of them holding? \_\_\_\_\_

[1P] Compare Revelation 1:16 & Revelation 2:16 with Matthew 10:34 & Ephesians 6:17. Are they all talking about the same sword? Why or why not?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

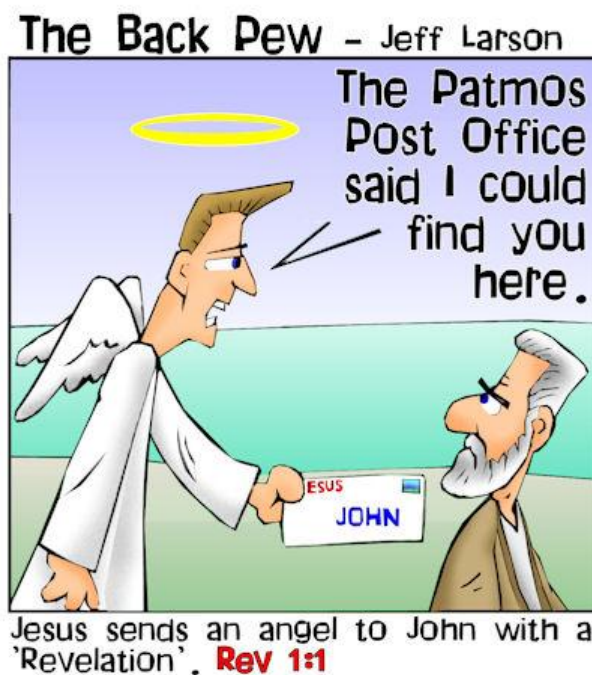
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**Lesson 1 – Patmos, Ephesus, Smyrna & Pergamum** (Revelation 1:1 – 2:17)

- [1A] Revelation 1:1-3 How was the message of Jesus Christ communicated? By an angel to John  
 [1B] Revelation 1:4-7 Who is the faithful witness, firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth? Jesus Christ  
 [1C] Revelation 1:8 Who is the Alpha, Omega, was, is, is to come, and Almighty? The Lord God  
 [1D] Revelation 1:9-11 Where was John? Island called Patmos  
 [1E] Revelation 1:12-16 What was coming out of His mouth? A sharp two-edged sword  
 [1F] Revelation 1:17-20 What were the seven lampstands? The seven churches  
 [1G] Revelation 2:1-3 Whose validity did they test? Those calling themselves apostles  
 [1H] Revelation 2:4-5 Unless they did what their lampstand would be removed? Repent  
 [1I] Revelation 2:6-7 Whose deeds did they hate? Nicolaitans  
 [1J] Revelation 2:8 Who is speaking? The first and the last who was dead but came to life  
 [1K] Revelation 2:9 The false Jews were of what synagogue? The synagogue of Satan  
 [1L] Revelation 2:10-11 Those who are faithful to death will receive what? The crown of life  
 [1M] Revelation 2:12-13 What did they not deny even in the days of Antipas? The Faith  
 [1N] Revelation 2:14 What are some of them eating? Things sacrificed to idols  
 [1O] Revelation 2:15-17 To what teaching were some of them holding? Nicolaitans

[1P] In my opinion, it is two different metaphors that come together in Revelation 2:16. I believe in Revelation 1:16 and Ephesians 6:17 the sword is a figure of speech representing the Word of God. Certainly that is explicit in Ephesians. Also, it is clear from the context of Matthew 10 that the sword is a metaphor for conflict, as opposed to peace mentioned earlier in the verse. In Revelation 2:16 I think both symbols are meant. He is letting them know that if they do not repent the truth (the Word of God) will have a war with the lies they believe, their self-deception. What are you deceiving yourself about?

**For further thought:**

- (1a) Thinking about Revelation 2:6 & 15: Who were the Nicolaitans and what did they teach?  
 (1b) In my Bible the quoted words in Revelation 1:8 are in red indicating they are the words of Jesus Christ. Would you make them red if you were translating a red letter Bible? Why or why not?  
 (1c) In each of these three messages to the individual churches it starts with praise, moves to rebuke, and ends with a conditional promise of eternal life. What can this teach us about our own communications?  
 (1d) In each of these three messages to the individual churches the speaker identifies himself with a different picture. Are these differences significant? If so, in what way? If not, why are they different?

**My further thoughts:**

(1a) No one knows for sure who the Nicolaitans were, but early Christian writings suggest that they were followers of the Deacon Nicolas mentioned in Acts 6:5 who later fell away and formed a cult. He taught tolerance of, and compromise with, other religions of the day. Whether it was this Nicolas or not, the context of Revelation 2:14-15 certainly seems to suggest they did commingle their religious practices. That would certainly be offensive to God.

**Lesson 2 – Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia & Laodicea** (Revelation 2:18 – 3:22)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

[2A] Revelation 2:18-19 How is Thyatira praised?

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[2B] Revelation 2:20-24 Is the prophetess criticized for preaching or for the content of her message?

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[2C] Revelation 2:25-29 Where does His authority come from? \_\_\_\_\_

[2D] Revelation 3:1 They have a reputation of being alive but they are what? \_\_\_\_\_

[2E] Revelation 3:2-3 What are they to do? \_\_\_\_\_

[2F] Revelation 3:4-6 How many people does He have at Sardis? \_\_\_\_\_

[2G] Revelation 3:7-8 What has been put before them? \_\_\_\_\_

[2H] Revelation 3:9-10 What is about to come on the whole world? \_\_\_\_\_

[2I] Revelation 3:11-13 To whom is it promised that God's name will be written on them?

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[2J] Revelation 3:14-16 What two things are they not? \_\_\_\_\_

[2K] Revelation 3:17 What do they not know? \_\_\_\_\_

[2L] Revelation 3:18-22 What does He do to those He loves? \_\_\_\_\_

[2M] Revelation 2 & 3 - In my opinion the messages in the churches in chapter three have a slightly different pattern than those in chapter two. What do you think?

Think & Pray \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE BACK PEW - JEFF LARSON**



Your faith is not hot, or cold, but luke-warm. So I will spit you out like room temp 'church' coffee. **Rev. 3:14-27**  
(The church of Laododa)

**Lesson 2 – Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia & Laodicea** (Revelation 2:18 – 3:22)

[2A] Revelation 2:18-19 How is Thyatira praised?

Love, faith, service, perseverance, and improvement in deeds

[2B] Revelation 2:20-24 Is the prophetess criticized for preaching or for the content of her message?

Content of her message

[2C] Revelation 2:25-29 Where does His authority come from? His Father

[2D] Revelation 3:1 They have a reputation of being alive but they are what? Dead

[2E] Revelation 3:2-3 What are they to do? Repent

[2F] Revelation 3:4-6 How many people does He have at Sardis? A few

[2G] Revelation 3:7-8 What has been put before them? An open door

[2H] Revelation 3:9-10 What is about to come on the whole world? A time of testing

[2I] Revelation 3:11-13 To whom is it promised that God's name will be written on them?

He who overcomes

[2J] Revelation 3:14-16 What two things are they not? Cold or hot

[2K] Revelation 3:17 What do they not know? That they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked

[2L] Revelation 3:18-22 What does He do to those He loves? He reproves and disciplines them

[2M] To the four churches in chapter two the pattern of the messages I see is:

(1) self-identification, (2) praise, (3) rebuke, and (4) a conditional promise of eternal life.

In chapter three the praise is missing or barely found. The churches in chapter two have perseverance, do not tolerate evil, test messages for validity, endure of tribulation and poverty, hold fast to His name and the faith, have love, and/or do service. On the other hand in chapter three; Sardis has a good reputation but it isn't true: Philadelphia has barely kept His word; and Laodicea is lukewarm. Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but that is the way I see it.

**For further thought:**

(2n) Which of the churches in Revelation 2-3 is most like your church? Why?

(2o) Compare Revelation 2:26-27 with Psalm 2:7-9. What did you learn?

(2p) With every message to a church He repeats, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." What does it mean? (Hints: Ezekiel 3:27 & Daniel 12:10)

(2q) Thinking about Revelation 3:19: Does God love you? How do you know?

(2r) Compare Luke 12:36 and Revelation 3:20. What did you learn?

(2s) Thinking about Revelation 3:18: What is "gold refined by fire" talking about?

(2t) Thinking about Revelation 3:11: What crown? (Hint: Revelation 2:10)

**Lesson 3 – Final Promises** (Revelation 22:1-21)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

[3A] Revelation 22:1 Who share the throne? \_\_\_\_\_

[3B] Revelation 22:2 What did the leaves of the tree for? \_\_\_\_\_

[3C] Revelation 22:3-5 Where does the light come from? \_\_\_\_\_

[3D] Revelation 22:6-7 How long before He comes? \_\_\_\_\_

[3E] Revelation 22:8-9 What did the angel object to? \_\_\_\_\_

[3F] Revelation 22:10-11 What are those who are holy to do? \_\_\_\_\_

[3G] Revelation 22:12-13 How long before He comes? \_\_\_\_\_

[3H] Revelation 22:14-15 How is the right to enter the gates earned? \_\_\_\_\_

[3I] Revelation 22:16 Who is the bright and morning star? \_\_\_\_\_

[3J] Revelation 22:17 How much does the water of life cost? \_\_\_\_\_

[3K] Revelation 22:18-19 Who loses their part in the tree of life and their place in the holy city? \_\_\_\_\_

[3L] Revelation 22:20-21 How long before He comes? \_\_\_\_\_

[3M] Are the trees of life mentioned in Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 22:1-3 the same tree? How do you know?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

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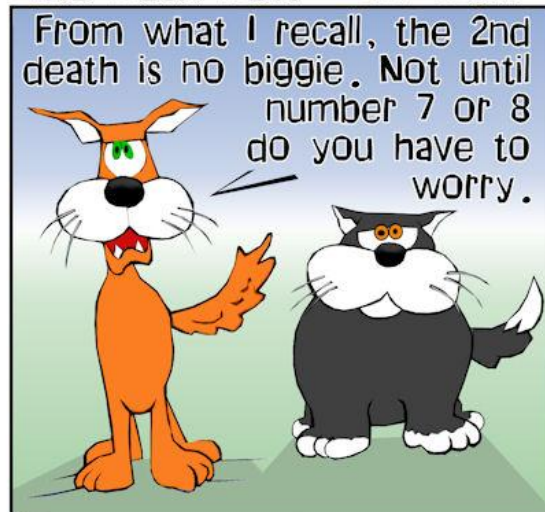
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**The Back Pew** - Jeff Larson



The 2nd Death.. a Lake of Burning Sulphur!  
**Rev 21:8** Note: Despite working with 9 lives instead of the standard 1 life. **DON'T** listen to your CAT regarding issues of life & death.



**Lesson 3 – Final Promises** (Revelation 22:1-21)

- [3A] Revelation 22:1 Who share the throne? God and the Lamb
- [3B] Revelation 22:2 What did the leaves of the tree for? Healing the nations
- [3C] Revelation 22:3-5 Where does the light come from? The Lord God
- [3D] Revelation 22:6-7 How long before He comes? He comes quickly
- [3E] Revelation 22:8-9 What did the angel object to? Being worshiped
- [3F] Revelation 22:10-11 What are those who are holy to do? Keep themselves holy
- [3G] Revelation 22:12-13 How long before He comes? He comes quickly
- [3H] Revelation 22:14-15 How is the right to enter the gates earned? By washing our robes
- [3I] Revelation 22:16 Who is the bright and morning star? Jesus
- [3J] Revelation 22:17 How much does the water of life cost? Nothing
- [3K] Revelation 22:18-19 Who loses their part in the tree of life and their place in the holy city?  
Those who remove words from God's word
- [3L] Revelation 22:20-21 How long before He comes? He comes quickly

[3M] I think it is highly probable that both scriptures are talking about the same tree. I have a number of reasons for thinking this but the two main reasons are: (1) Comparing Revelation 22:3 "There will no longer be any curse ..." with Genesis 3:22-24 "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life." (2) Also, it is a "forever" kind of tree. Why get rid of one tree, make another tree, and call them the same thing?

**For further thought:**

- (3n) Thinking about Revelation 22:11: Which category do you fall into? Do your actions really match your self-assessment or are you fooling yourself?
- (3o) Thinking about Revelation 22:2: How can one tree be on both sides of a river?
- (3p) Compare Revelation 22:18-19 with Deuteronomy 4:2. What is the same? What is different?
- (3q) Compare Revelation 22:5 with John 3:21, 1 Peter 2:9 and 1 John 1:5. What did you learn?
- (3r) Compare Revelation 22:5 with Isaiah 60:19. What is the same? What is different?
- (3s) Compare Revelation 22:5 with Psalm 18:28 and Psalm 27:1. What did you learn?
- (3t) What did you learn in this course that you would like to remember?
- (3u) If someone asked you what this course was about, what would you tell them?
- (3v) What scripture from this course would be best to memorize? Why?