

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place" (Revelation 1:1a)

What did God want His bond-servants to see, to know? What is going to shortly take place? What should we be watching for?

We are setting out on an exciting study as we begin to look at the book of the Revelation and see what these end time events are all about.

Day 1

In part one of Revelation, we are only going to take a close look at the first three chapters. Our focus is to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. There are some very important lessons in these messages for the church today. Remember to lift your study in prayer, and allow the Spirit to teach you and lead you into truth, and then allow God to use these truths to renew your mind and transform your life.

1. At the end of this book, you will find Observation Worksheets on Revelation chapters 1-5 and 22. We are going to be looking over these chapters this week so that we can put the book of Revelation into the proper context. Your first assignment is to read through chapter 1 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Who wrote the book of Revelation?
 - b. Where was he when he wrote it?
 - c. Why was he there?
 - d. What are the circumstances surrounding the writing of this book? What was he doing?
 - e. To whom was the book written?
 - f. Why was he writing it? What was his purpose in writing to these people?

2. Reading through chapter 1 again, and answer the following questions. Don't let any of your thoughts enter into these questions, let the text speak for itself!

a. Just from this chapter, what would you say the book of the Revelation is all about?

b. Why is it important to read and hear the things that are in this book? Are there any benefits in studying this book? Make sure you note the verse number(s) next to your answers.

c. John was told to write about three specific things. What verse tells you the three things he was to write? What are the three things that he is supposed to write about?

d. If he was to write about three things, then we should be able to find where he stops writing about one of those things and starts writing about another. This should give us a layout of the book of Revelation.

3. Now we are going to read chapter 1 one more time. This time we are going to look for and mark key words. You may want to use an index card and mark these down on the card along with the way you are going to mark them. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to mark, you are just trying to make these words stand out. I will tell you how I may mark them, but you are free to mark them anyway you want. If you find other key words, feel free to mark them and add them to your card.

a. See (saw, look, have seen) - I use a pair of blue glasses

b. Church - I make a little green square building with a roof with a cross on top

c. Prophecy - I draw an orange arrow pointing forward

d. Jesus - red cross

e. God - purple triangle

f. Holy Spirit - purple dove

4. On page 6 you will find a Revelation 1-5 at a Glance chart. From all that you have looked at in chapter 1, what would you say the main theme of the chapter would be? Try to use words from the text because this will help you begin to memorize the Word, keep you in context, and force you to use God's words instead of your own. Write this theme in the Chapter Theme column next to the 1 on the At a Glance chart.

Day 2

1. Today you are going to read chapters 2 and 3. There are a couple more words or phrases that we are going to add to your index card. You want to mark these, along with the words we put on there yesterday as you read through these chapters. I will let you come up with your own markings this time. Just a hint, when you are marking phrases that are long, you may just want to underline them in different colors.
 - a. And the angel of the church in _____ write
 - b. I know
 - c. But
 - d. Overcomes
 - e. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 - f. Repent
2. Record your chapter themes for chapter 2 and 3, like you did for chapter 1.
3. Yesterday, we saw that John was told to write three things. Did you find them in Revelation 1:19? List the three things that he was to write about below.
4. Where do you think chapter 2 and 3 fit in to that outline? Remember that you have to put yourself in John's shoes. Look at it from his perspective when you answer this question.

Day 3

This is going to be a long day, but I hope you will be blessed by what you see. We are going to look at chapters 4, 5, and 22 today. This is not the focus of our study, so we are not going to spend much time on these chapters, just enough to keep us in context.

1. Read through chapter 4.

a. Mark any key words that are on your index card. Don't add any more from this chapter. Again, this is not the focus of our study.

b. Write down the three things that John was supposed to write about from Revelation 1:19. You should soon have these memorized!

c. Where do you think chapter 4 belongs in his structure of this book?

d. Is there a specific verse that helped you come to that conclusion?

e. Add a chapter theme to your At a Glance chart.

2. Read chapter 5.

a. Mark any key words that are on your index card. Don't add any more from this chapter.

b. Add a chapter theme to your At a Glance chart.

3. On the Revelation 1-5 At a Glance chart there is a column for Main Subject Divisions. We are going to take the time to fill this out now.

a. Write down the three things that John was supposed to write about.

- b. Now take these divisions to your At a Glance chart and write them next to the chapters that fit with those divisions.
 - c. You should now be able to see how John laid out the book of Revelation. Incredible isn't it?
4. Now let's look at Revelation 22. Read through it carefully, and as you do, mark every reference to "prophecy" and "church(es)" as you did in the rest of Revelation. These are the **only** things you need to mark!
- a. Read Revelation 1 again. You will see some of the same phrases and terminology used in these two chapters.
 - b. On your observation worksheets of Revelation 22, write down any parallels from chapter 1. Put the verse from chapter 1 next to the verse in chapter 22 along with any comments you might have.
 - c. In chapter one, John is telling you what he will write about. In chapter 22, he sums it up. You looked at how the book of Revelation is set up compared to the three things that John was to write about. Now here is a big question for you to ponder. According to the markings of the word "churches," would you say the first three chapters are for the church, or is the whole book of Revelation for the church? Explain why you think what you do.

There are some very interesting things to think about, aren't there?

Revelation 1-5 at a Glance

	Chapter Themes	Main Segment Divisions
Author:	1	
Recipients:		
Date:	2	
Purpose:	3	
Key Words:	4	
	5	

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near (Rev 1:3)

Blessings are for those who read, hear, and heed this book. The blessing has been promised to you. Are you ready to heed?

Day 4 and 5

1. Chapter one begins with an encounter with John and Jesus. Throughout the first couple chapters there is a key phrase that it is repeated. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." If you truly want to hear - know, understand, and obey - then ask God to open your eyes and your ears and show you the truths in this book.
2. Read chapter 1 several times. Let its words wash over you. It is so full of wonderful information and sets the tone for the whole book. Without understanding what is going on in this chapter you will miss the message of the book.
3. Do your observation worksheet by making sure that you have marked all the key words on your card, including God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.
 - a. You also want to see if there are any other key words or phrases in this chapter that you would like to mark at this time.
 - b. Make a list of everything you learn by marking these key words. You can write what you have learned about the Godhead (God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) in the margin of your observation worksheets. The rest of the words, you will want to make your list on a separate piece of paper. Remember, you are only making your lists for chapter 1 at this point in time.
4. Find the verse that promises the blessing and write it down below.

5. Also write out the verse that shows us how this book is laid out by John - Revelation 1:19

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 1
Overview

6. Take the time to meditate on this chapter. Think about it. Pray about it. Work to understand its symbolism. Next week we will take a closer look at this chapter.
7. You may want to start memorizing parts of this fabulous book. Start with Revelation 1:1-3 and 1:19. You should have them almost memorized anyway!

The blessing is there for those who are willing to heed. Ask that God would give you a pliable heart!

Day 1 and 2

1. There are couple of words that we need to know the meanings of before we go any further. Use your Word Study tools (Strong's Concordance, Word Study New Testament) to write the number, the transliteration, and the definition of the following words.

a. Revelation - Revelation 1:1

b. Shortly - Revelation 1:1

c. Communicated - (signified, KJV) - Revelation 1:1

d. Blessed - Revelation 1:3

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 2
Chapter 1 and Church of Ephesus

2. Keeping these words in mind, read through the first three verses of chapter 1 again.
3. Turn to chapter 22:6-8. These are parallel verses that you should have seen in our study last week. Keeping both of these passages in mind draw a picture of how this message was given. By drawing a picture, you are forcing yourself to see the events clearly in your mind which will help you to be able to communicate these truths to someone else. Take the time to do it. It is worth the effort, and it will act as a warm up for the challenge of Revelation - Part 2!
4. Let's have a little English lesson. Way back when, you may remember learning the difference between a simile and a metaphor. Since you are probably a little rusty in this area, let me give you a simple definition of both.
 - a. Metaphor - this is an implied comparison between two things that are different. For instance Jesus said, "I am the Vine." Jesus is not actually a vine, but He is comparing Himself with one to make a point - just like the life comes through the vine to the branches, so we are like the branches and our life has to come through Him.
 - b. Simile - this is an expressed or stated comparison of two different things and will always use words like such as, like, as. For example, "He is as strong as a bull." In other words he is very strong just like a bull is strong.

c. Now that you have the definitions of these two words, let's see if you can find any of these types of phrases in chapter 1.

5. Let's look at Daniel 7:9-14 for a moment. We are going to be able to get some help from Daniel since he described a lot of these same events for us.

Metaphors	Similes

a. Who is on the throne in these verses and how is He described?

b. Who is presented to the One on the throne and how is He described?

c. List the order of events in these verses. Make sure that you take it step by step and don't miss what is said about their dominion!

6. Now note the similarities between the descriptions in Revelation chapter 1 and Daniel chapter 7.

Day 3

Have you been around any new Christians lately? Do you see how excited they are about Christ, about getting to know Him, and telling everyone they meet about Him and what He has done for them? Did you ever think to yourself, "That won't last long. This is just a honeymoon period." Did you ever want to tell them they shouldn't be so zealous?

Did you ever stop and ask yourself, "Was I like that when I first came to Christ?" If you were, did you ever wonder what happened to that excitement? Do you ever long to go back to that honeymoon period? Then, listen to the message to the church of Ephesus. This message is for you!

1. Quickly skim over chapter 2 and 3 of Revelation. These are the letters to the churches. As you look over each of the seven letters, do you find the same topics or same format being used in each one? List what you observe.
2. On page 24, you will find a map of Asia Minor. Mark or highlight where John is as he is writing this revelation. Now number the cities where the churches are located in the order that John addresses them. Ephesus would be #1, Smyrna would be #2, etc. Now trace the path of these letters.
3. At the end of this lesson, on pages 25 and 26, you will find a chart entitled "Jesus' Message to the Churches." Fill in the section of the chart that pertains to the church of Ephesus.
4. What would you say is the main problem with this church?
5. Is the message the Jesus gives through John only for those people in the church of Ephesus, or could that message pertain to us as well? Is there a repeated phrase through chapters 2 and 3 that show us that the message was not just for one particular church?

6. Look at how Jesus describes Himself to this particular church. Do you see any relationship between His description, their problem, and the warning or instruction that He gives?
7. This church had lost their first love. The honeymoon was over. Was that the end of them? Was it all over? Was there any way for them to recover? Answer those questions from the text.
8. Below are some verbs as they are used in Revelation 2:4-5. I have listed the verb mood, voice, and tense for you as well as what that means. Take these insights back to the verses, and see if it helps you in your understanding of these verses any better.
- a. Left
 - i. means to leave or forsake
 - ii. aorist active indicative
 - iii. A statement of fact at sometime in the past - at some point in time you left your first love
 - b. Remember
 - i. To call to mind or remembrance
 - ii. Present active imperative
 - iii. Imperative - is a command - present tense means it is a continual, habitual action - you must continually call to mind
 - c. Have fallen
 - i. To fall
 - ii. Perfect active indicative
 - iii. It is a fact that at some time in the past you fell and the results have continued into the present
 - d. Repent
 - i. To change one's thinking or think differently
 - ii. Aorist active imperative
 - iii. Command - it is a punctillar action - do it, do it, do it (not a once and done deal!)

b. I John 5:1-3

c. John 15:10

d. I John 2:15-16

e. James 4:4

f. Now we are going to go back to the Old Testament. To put you into the context of the passages, Israel was just about to cross over into the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. These words were to encourage the people to cling to the Lord their God and to love Him with all their hearts. These things are also written for us as well, as the Old Testament was written for our example and instructions (I Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4).

i. As you read these passages, mark the words "heart," "obey," and "love" each in a distinctive way. Make sure to mark any synonyms as well.

ii. Watch for the connection of how they will live their lives if they truly love God.

Deuteronomy 28:45-47

- 45 "So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.
- 46 "They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.
- 47 "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things;

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

- 1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you,
- 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,
- 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.
- 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.
- 5 "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

- 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

- 15 "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;
- 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.
- 17 "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them,
- 18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it.
- 19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,
- 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

3. Let's go back to the New Testament. We are going to that great chapter on love, I Corinthians 13. Our purpose is to see how love expresses itself in our lives. Before you read the passage let's put it in context. This chapter comes in the middle of a lengthy teaching on Spiritual gifts. The teaching on Spiritual gifts begins in chapter 12 and ends in chapter 15. Paul gives us information on who has the gifts, what they are, how they are given, and how those gifts are to be used in cooperation to make the body work.

a. Keeping in mind that this love chapter is in the midst of how we are to serve (do the deeds) in the body of Christ, what do you learn about love that might have helped the church of Ephesus, and will in turn, help us today?

b. How can you apply living out this love to yourself and to the church in general?

Did you ever stop to think that doing the "right thing" with the wrong motive is sin?

Do you realize how easy it is to work so hard for God that we completely lose sight of God?

We don't start off with the intention to sin, but one little bad choice leads to another, which leads to another, and before we know it, we have left our first love, and we have placed our feet squarely on a slippery path. Remember where you have fallen (what was that one bad choice you made?), repent, and go back to doing the deeds you did at first!

Day 5

1. If we go to the book of Acts, we see the church in it's babyhood. The zeal and enthusiasm must have been something to behold. How did they live out their love for God? What deeds were they doing? Look up the following passages and take note of how "first love" should look.

a. Acts 2:41-47

b. Acts 4:32-35

c. Acts 5:27-42

2. From all that you have looked up and studied to this point, what do you think it means to leave your first love? What do you think the church of Ephesus had ceased doing?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 2
Chapter 1 and Church of Ephesus

d. Do you have a desire to share with others the joy and peace you have found through Jesus Christ? Do you long to be able to help others to experience a relationship with Christ so that they can walk in the newness of life and have the hope that is within all true believers?

e. Do you have a desire to share what you have with others and to reach out to those in need with your material possessions, your money, your time, and your energy?

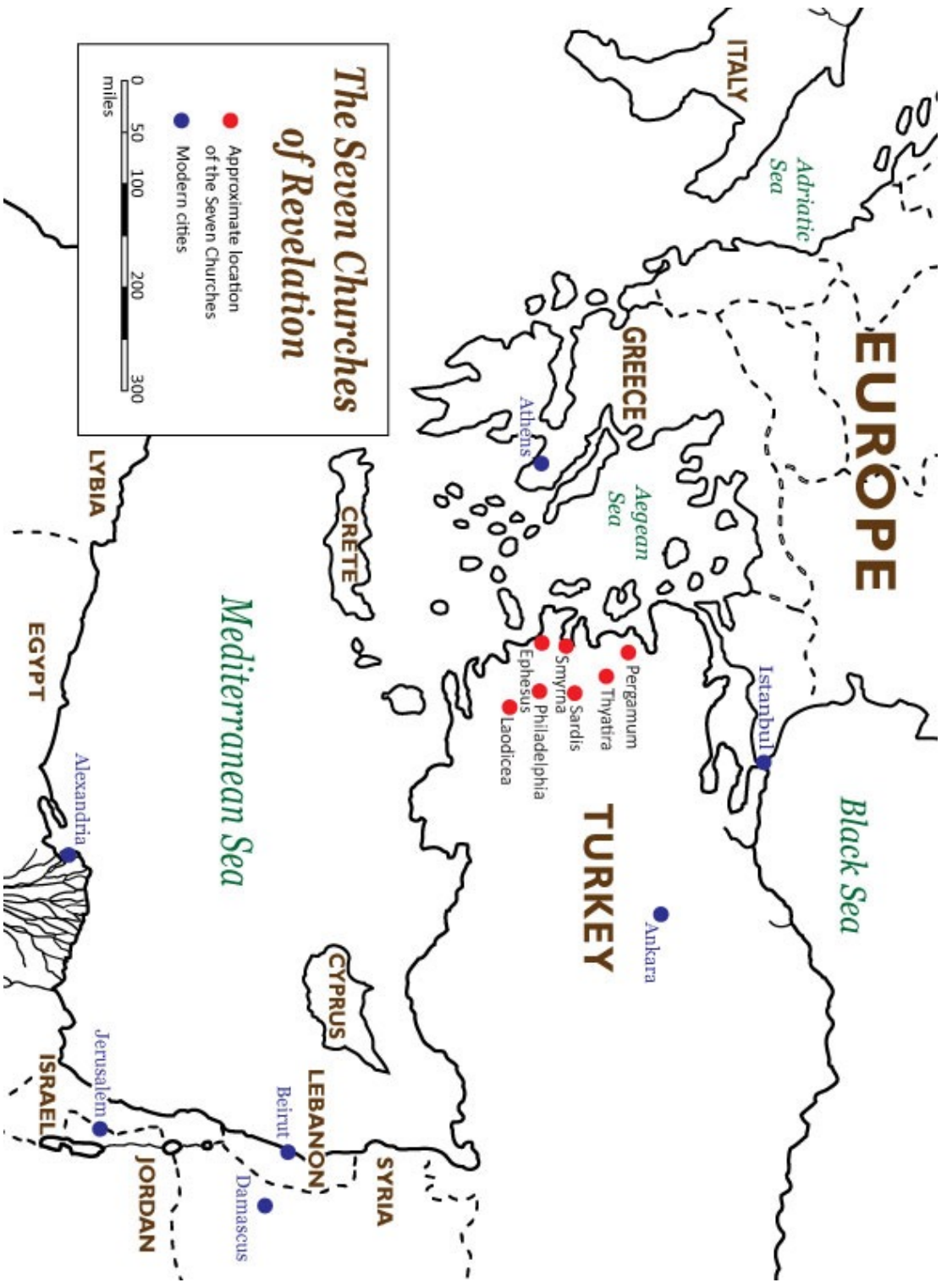
f. Do you have a desire to seek God's direction in everything you do? Do you desire to accomplish His purpose with your life?

If in your heart, you answered "no" to any of these questions, then you have already left or are in danger of leaving your first love. "Remember from where you have fallen, repent, and do the deeds you did at first. . . . He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 2
Chapter 1 and Church of Ephesus

4. If you want to look at a commentary to see what you can learn about the church in Ephesus, feel free to do that. Just make sure you don't go beyond that. You wouldn't want to ruin your own discovery of the precious truths that are before you. You have plenty of room to write your observations below. Have fun!

Map of Asia Minor



Jesus' Message to the Churches

	Description of Christ	Commendation I know . . .	Reproof I have this against you	Instruction and/or Warning	Promise to Overcomer
Ephesus					
Smyrna					
Pergamum					
Thyatira					

Jesus' Message to the Churches

	Description of Christ	Commendation I know . . .	Reproof I have this against you	Instruction and/or Warning	Promise to Overcomer
Sardis					
Phila- delphia					
Laodicea					

"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Revelation 1:17b-18).

Do you live in fear?

What are you afraid of?

People?

Circumstances?

Suffering?

The future?

Dying?

Don't be afraid. He is the first and the last. Jesus already suffered; He already died; He already rose from the dead as first fruits - a promise of the hope that we have to follow Him. Hang on to your seats, this week will be quite the study.

Day 1

1. We are going to look at the next two churches this week, Smyrna and Pergamum. Let's start with Smyrna. Read Revelation 2:8-11. Record the information for Smyrna in the appropriate column on the chart located in lesson 2 on page 25.
2. Now let's do the same thing for the church of Pergamum. Read Revelation 2:12-17. Fill in the column for Pergamum.
3. That's it for the today. We will take a couple of days to look at each of these churches to understand why these letters were written.

Day 2 and 3

1. Read Revelation 2:8-11 once again. Look at the way Jesus is described to this church and notice the problems that they were having. Do you see a relationship between the two? What do you observe?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

5. Now let's read through that I Corinthians passage and put it into context. Read I Corinthians 15:20-26 and record what you learn about first fruits.

6. Let's do a couple more cross references and see what else we can learn about first fruits and the first-born.

a. Revelation 1:17-18

b. Acts 2:22-32

7. **Do this only if you have time! If you are running short on time, please move on to #8.**

I don't want you to get overwhelmed! In our discussing group, we are going to cover the topic of "Hades" and "Hell." There is a difference between the two of these. Since Jesus is said to hold the keys to Hades this is where we will spend the most amount of time. In case you don't get to the discussion group, or if you want to study this topic on your own, I am including the steps to study and the cross references, but I encourage you not to get bogged down in this assignment. Please do this, only if you have time.

a. Look up the Greek word for "Hades" (hell, KJV) in Revelation 1:18. Write down what you learn about this word.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

b. Read Acts 2:22-33 and write down what you learn. Don't forget to ask yourself the 5 W's and H questions. Who, what, where, when, why, and how.

c. Luke 16:19-31 - It may help you to try to draw out a picture of what is being described in these verses.

d. Revelation 20:13-14

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

e. Finally it is said that Jesus has the keys to Hades. What do we learn about keys in Scripture?

i. Read Isaiah 22:20-23 and record what you learn.

ii. Revelation 3:7

iii. What did Revelation say that Jesus had the keys to, and why do you think He has them? What is He going to do with them? How does this relate to the idea of first fruits?

iv. How do you think that these words might be an encouragement to the church of Smyrna?

8. Smyrna is known as the suffering church. The last topic that we want to look at is how and why the Christian is to suffer. I am going to give you many verses on the suffering in a Christian's life. You may not get through them all, but at least you will have the list that you can refer to at any time. Unfortunately we live in a society that has the mindset that if a follower of Christ has enough faith, they can get whatever they want, live a carefree life, have health and wealth, and live happily ever after. Is that truly what the Bible teaches about our walk with the Lord? These verses should help you understand the true meaning and purpose of a life devoted to Christ.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

a. Let's start by looking the meaning of a couple of words.

i. Tribulation - Revelation 2:9-10

ii. Poverty - Revelation 2:9

iii. Go back to chapter 1 of Revelation. Do you see any similarities between John and the church of Smyrna?

iv. How could Jesus call these people "rich" when they were so poor?

1. II Corinthians 8:9

2. Matthew 6:19-34

b. Now what was Jesus' instructions to this suffering church?

c. Let's see what the Scriptures say about suffering. Record what you learn from each verse. Keep in mind the instructions that Jesus had given to Smyrna because those instructions apply to us as well.

i. John 15:18-21

ii. II Timothy 3:12

iii. Hebrews 2:10

iv. Hebrews 5:8

v. I Peter 2:20-21

vi. I Peter 1:6-7

vii. I Peter 4:12-14

viii. I Thessalonians 3:2-5

ix. II Timothy 1:7-8

x. Philippians 4:13

xi. II Corinthians 1:5

xii. Luke 12:11-12

xiii. Psalms 56:3-4

xiv. James 1:2-4

xv. I Thessalonians 5:15-18

xvi. I Corinthians 10:13

xvii. Romans 8:28-31

xviii. Job 2:9-10

xix. Job 6:10

d. Now for a couple of quick application questions.

i. Will true followers of Christ suffer?

ii. What have you learned from these verses that you need to heed when it comes to suffering?

Day 4 and 5

1. For these last two days we are going to focus our attention on the church of Pergamum. Read over Revelation 2:12-17 to put yourself in context. Here is a church that was holding on to some false teachings and Jesus described Himself as the One who has the sharp two-edge sword (verse 12) and the One who would make war against them with the sword of His mouth (verse 16). Those are some pretty strong words. Are we guilty of holding to false teachings? Allow God's word to search your heart and purify you from anything that may be contrary to His word! Lift your time to Him in prayer and let the Spirit examine you life.
2. Let's start by seeing what the word says about that sword. Note what the sword is and how it is going to be used and by whom. Look up these verses and record what you learn.

a. Hebrews 4:12

b. Ephesians 6:17

c. Revelation 19:15

d. Isaiah 11:4

3. We see that the people lived where Satan's throne is, but they held fast to Jesus' name. What is so significant about holding fast to a name. Let's look at a couple of verses and see the significance of names, especially the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Record what you learn from each verse.

a. Psalms 138:2-3

b. Isaiah 9:6

c. Matthew 1:21-23

d. Philippians 2:9-11

e. Acts 4:12

4. If you were to deny His name, what would you be denying according to these verses?

Have you ever denied His name?

5. This church hadn't denied His name nor His faith. What would it mean to have denied His faith? Look up these verses and record what you learn.

a. Jude 3-4

b. II Peter 1:20-21

c. II Peter 3:1-2

d. II Timothy 3:16a

e. Matthew 5:17-19

f. Luke 24:25-27

g. Revelation 22:18-20

6. Have you earnestly contended for your faith? What would happen if you had to lay your life down to protect your faith? Would you be willing to contend for the faith then? There are millions who have done just that through the years. Were they fools?

7. These people had not denied Jesus' name nor the faith even though they lived where Satan's throne was. Satan - the father of lies. The one whose first words in the Bible were, "Indeed, has God said . . ." He wants people to doubt God's Word (the truth) and follow after his lies. So even after the wonderful commendation that the people of Pergamum were given, Jesus says that He has something against them. What does He have against the church of Pergamum?

8. What exactly was Balaam teaching Balak? Do you know why he might have done that?

9. **Do this only if you have time! If you are running short on time, please move on to #10.** In our discussing group, we are going to cover the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. In case you don't get to the discussion group, or if you want to study this topic on your own, I am including the steps to study and the cross references, but I encourage you not to get bogged down in this assignment. Please do this, only if you have time.
 - a. What was wrong with the teaching of Balaam? He was a prophet wasn't he? Shouldn't we listen to all "prophets?"

- b. The story of Balaam and Balak is found in Numbers 22:1-25:9. Glance through these chapters and answer the following questions.
- i. What did Balak the king want Balaam to do and why?

 - ii. Why couldn't Balaam do what the king wanted?

 - iii. Now read Revelation 2:14 again. Why would Balaam teach Balak what he did?

 - iv. Balaam couldn't curse the people because God wouldn't allow him to, but it seems that Balaam had a plan B. Now read carefully Numbers 25:1-9 and Numbers 31:16-18. Was Balaam successful in his teaching to Balak?

 - v. Baal-peor was a false god, an idol, that the people worshipped. It was a very acceptable practice in those days. Immorality was a big part of Baal worship. Before the Gentiles came to salvation in Jesus Christ, this immorality and false god worship was what you did. When people turned to the Lord, this was something that needed to be put aside. Read Acts 15:22-29 and see the exhortation that was given to Christians.

 - vi. Read Jude 11-16 and note what God says about those who do not put aside these practices.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

vii. Look at the world and the church today. Do you see any of this going on around us? These are Jesus' words to the churches. What do we need to heed?

c. Now for the topic of the Nicolaitans. Very little is known about this group, but we will see them from the Scripture and see what we can learn from history to try to get a grasp on why the Bible warned against them.

i. They are only mentioned twice in the Scriptures, here in Revelation 2:15 and again in Revelation 2:6. What do we know about them from these Scriptures?

ii. Looking at the word - it comes from two words: *nikos* (victory, to conquer) and *laos* (the people, the laity) so it would mean "victory over the people." It implies that these people were somehow dominating the believers or acting superior to them. This may possibly be referring to a group of people called the Gnostics, who were those who said they held "special revelation" and were therefore more spiritual and had more knowledge of God than the ordinary people. They thought that gave them the right to dominate the people. Others think that this may refer to certain "clergymen" or "priests" thinking that their ordination placed them in a special group and gave them a position of power over the common people. They had a closer relationship to God than ordinary people; therefore, the ordinary people had to come to them in order to get to God. Let's look at a couple of cross references to see if that is what God's word says.

1. Revelation 1:6

2. I Timothy 2:5

3. Hebrews 4:14-16

4. Hebrews 10:19-22

5. Hebrews 13:7-9 and 17

6. Matthew 27:51 (Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45)

iii. From these Scriptures is there anyone spiritually between God and man?

iv. Is there an authority structure within the church?

v. How is it that we can take these teachings and so easily distort them in the church?

10. One last question for this week. How does the way Jesus describe Himself to this church relate to what He says to the church of Pergamum, and what do we need to be careful to heed in our own lives?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 3
Churches of Smyrna and Pergamum

11. If you have time, you can look up the church of Smyrna and Pergamum in your commentary and see what they have to say. You can record your insights below.

"I know your deeds." How many times do we stop and think that Jesus knows our deeds. He is the one who sees our hearts and knows our motives. We may be able to fool a lot of people, including ourselves, but we are not going to be able to fool Jesus. There are many churches that are pretending to be churches, but they are not fooling Jesus. Wake up! His return is coming soon. Are you going to be ready?

Day 1

1. Let's take a look at the next two churches, Thyatira and Sardis. Let's start with Thyatira. Read Revelation 2:18-29. Record the information for Thyatira in the appropriate column on the chart located in lesson 2 on page 25.
2. Now do the same thing for the church of Sardis. Read Revelation 3:1-6. Fill in the column for Sardis.
3. We'll stop there for today. Remember that if we are to take heed to what is written, we must take time to meditate on these words, to give our minds time to dwell on the teachings and warnings. Also seek the Lord as to where you stand. Are there any of these things that apply to you? If so, what do you need to change in your life?

Day 2 and 3

1. Let's focus our attention on Thyatira for the next couple of days. What was Jesus' complaint against Thyatira?
2. Who is Jezebel? Let's find out what we can about her, so we can understand why tolerating her is so bad. List everything you learn about her from Revelation 2:18-29.
3. Now record what you learn about Jezebel from the Old Testament.
 - a. I Kings 16:29-33

b. I Kings 18:4, 13, 19

c. I Kings 19:1-3

d. I Kings 21:23-26

e. II Kings 9:22, 30-37

4. What do you think the connection is between the Jezebel in the Old Testament and the warnings about tolerating her in the church?

5. Jesus calls this church to repent and this is not the first time. Do you truly understand what repentance is? Look up the word *repent* in a Greek study too and write down its transliteration and its definition.

6. If someone repents, what will you notice about their actions and behaviors? There is a lot of controversy over this issue in the church today. It is important that we understand this if we are going to heed what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 4
Churches of Thyatira and Sardis

7. Jesus says that He gave Jezebel time to repent, but she didn't. How would He or anyone else know if she had repented?
- a. Look up Matthew 3:1-8. Record what you learn about repentance.

 - b. Look up II Corinthians 7:10-11 and note what comes in a person's life when true repentance comes.

 - c. What did Jesus say He would do to Jezebel and those who followed her if they did not repent?

 - d. What will all the churches (notice it says churches not just church) learn from this?
8. Did you ever notice how there are people who think they can get away with sin because they haven't been caught? God must not have noticed because they haven't been struck by lightning. Everything seems to be going just fine. Is that truly the case? Read these verses and record what you learn.
- a. Revelation 2:21-23

 - b. Romans 2:2

 - c. Psalm 73:1-20

9. Immorality runs through the church today. Let's define immorality so that we know exactly what it means. Immorality is not conforming to God's standards. In the realm of sexual immorality, it is anything that doesn't fall in line with God's standards for the sexual relationship. That means any sexual relationship between a man and a woman outside the bonds of marriage is wrong. Living together, sex within a dating relationship, homosexual relationships, pornography, masturbation, and the list could go on and on, are by God's Word and definition immoral! Let's read what God says in His word.

a. Hebrews 13:4

b. I Corinthians 6:18

c. Romans 1:26-27

d. Proverbs 6:32-35

e. Proverbs 7:7, 10, 21-27

f. I Thessalonians 4:3-6

10. The church in Thyatira tolerated Jezebel. What should they have done instead? What should our churches do if we have Jezebels among our members?

a. Matthew 18:15-20

b. I Corinthians 5:1-13

c. I Timothy 5:19-21

11. How does Jesus describe Himself to this church and why?

Day 4 and 5

For the next two days we are going to focus our attention on the church of Sardis. Read through Revelation 3:1-6.

1. Did you see anything different about this church than any of the other churches we have looked at so far? Explain what you saw.

2. Again, notice how Jesus is described in this letter and compare that to what you see with this church. Why might this explanation have been used?

3. What do you think the seven Spirits represent? When doing an inductive study of the Bible, we want to let Scripture interpret Scripture, so the question should be, "Are these mentioned anywhere else?" The answer is yes, so let's take a look at them.

a. Revelation 1:4

b. Revelation 4:5

c. Revelation 5:6

d. Zechariah 4:1-14

i. This one might take a little explanation in order for it to make sense to you. Not many people are very familiar with this book, so let's set the context of this chapter. The Jews had been taken into captivity by Babylon from 605-586 BC. After 70 years of captivity, they were released under Cyrus, the king of the Medo-Persian empire. He allowed the people to return to their land to rebuild the temple that had been destroyed in 586 BC. The temple was started under Zerubbabel in 536 BC. Two years later the construction stopped, and the temple sat. Construction began again in 520 BC, and continued under much opposition until it was finished in 516 BC. Zechariah covers the time period from 520-489 BC when the construction began again and through the temple's completion.

ii. Read this passage carefully and try to draw a picture of what you see in this passage. Make notations as to what each symbol you draw represents.

iii. What do you learn about the temple (house) and the Spirit? You also want watch the usage of the word seven. What does that represent?

e. Proverbs 15:3

f. Isaiah 11:1-5

g. With everything you have looked up, what do you think Jesus meant in Revelation 3:1 about the seven Spirits?

4. What was the condition of the majority of the church in Sardis?

5. According to Scripture where does Spiritual life come from and how does it show itself in the life of a Christian?

a. John 1:11-13

b. John 6:63

c. John 10:10

d. John 14:6

e. Romans 8:1-2, 9-11

f. Ephesians 1:13

g. Ephesians 2:1-5

6. What will show in our lives if we are truly His?

a. Hebrews 3:6, 12-14

b. I Corinthians 15:1-2

7. Deeds or works has been a key word throughout the letters to the churches. Let's take a look at the places where they are mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 as well as a couple of other places in the Bible. Record what you learn about the believer and the deeds (works) that they do. How important is this relationship?

a. Revelation 2:1, 5 (keep it in context)

b. Revelation 2:19, 22-23

c. Revelation 3:1-2

d. Revelation 3:8

e. Revelation 3:15

f. Ephesians 2:8-10

g. Titus 3:5-8

h. James 2:14-26

8. Do you think the majority of the church at Sardis had heard the Word of God and heeded it or just heard it? Remember who it is that gets the blessing in Revelation 1:3!
- a. Look up Matthew 7:21-27. Which of the houses in this passage stands, and why does it stand?

 - b. Do these passages contradict Ephesians 2:8-10 where we are told that salvation is a free gift? If you can't answer this question, go back and read the passage in James again.
9. What are the specific instructions given to the church of Sardis?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 4
Churches of Thyatira and Sardis

a. Very carefully read this passage and record to whom Jesus will come as a thief.

b. **If you have time** you may want to read some another passages that talk about this same event and the warning of being ready.

i. I Thessalonians 5:1-6

ii. Luke 12:35-40

iii. Matthew 24:42-51

iv. Matthew 25:1-30

10. There were a few that had not soiled their robes in Sardis. Read the following verses and see if you can get a better understanding of what that means.

a. Revelation 6:9-11

b. Revelation 7:9-14

c. Revelation 16:15

d. Revelation 19:7-8, 14

e. Do you see any relationship between the few in Sardis and the promise made to the overcomers?

f. In light of what you have studied, what does this make you think about the majority of people in the church of Sardis?

11. What have you learned from this letter to the church of Sardis that you can apply to your life?

12. **If you have time left**, you can check your commentaries and see what they tell you about the churches of Thyatira and Sardis. There is room on the next page as well to write your observations.

Each of us as Christians has the opportunity to be a witness to the world around us. This can be by the words we speak, the lives we live, or the testimony of our lives while enduring persecution. What kind of witness are you being to your corner of the world? Does your testimony clearly point people towards God, or when they look at your life are they confused by the inconsistency of your words and your actions? Let's see what we can learn by looking at these last two churches and observe their testimony to the people of their time.

Day 1

1. We are down to our last two churches, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Let's give it our best effort as we deal with these churches. Read Revelation 3:7-13 and record what you learn about the church of Philadelphia on the chart on page 25 of lesson 2.
2. Do the same thing for the church of Laodicea after reading Revelation 3:14-22.
3. Is there anything at this point that you can learn from these churches that you can apply to your life? Prayerfully record what you have observed, and remain teachable to hear what the Spirit says to you.

5. Jesus is described as holy throughout the Scripture. Let's look at a couple of references. Note how Jesus is described, but also look at who is describing Him and record that as well.
 - a. Mark 1:24

 - b. Luke 1:35

 - c. John 6:66-69

6. Jesus is described three ways in this passage. First He is holy. Second He is true. Jesus is held up as being true, but look at what the people are living with. They are living among those who are living a lie. What are these people lying about?

7. The last way that He is described is as the One "who has the key of David" and what He opens no one will shut and what He shuts, no one will open. Only those in authority have keys. Did you know that this is a prophecy? Take a look at Isaiah 22:22 and write the verse out below.

8. Who were the ones that were opposing the church in Philadelphia?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 5
Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea

9. How did the Jews feel about Jesus? Did they accept Him as the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, the One who was going to sit on David's throne? He was the One who was prophesied about, and the Jews missed this by a mile. Look at some of these cross references and not was being said about the One to come.

a. Jeremiah 23:5-6 - really think about these verses and record what they are saying and who fulfilled them.

b. Jeremiah 33:14-22

c. Luke 1:30-33

10. Now let's see how Jesus is described in Revelation in relationship with David.

a. Revelation 5:5

b. Revelation 22:16

11. What does Jesus have authority over? Write what you learn from each of these verses.

a. Revelation 1:5

b. Revelation 1:18

c. Matthew 28:18

d. John 5:21, 26-29

12. Let's reason this through for a moment. If Jesus has the keys of David and He has power over the kingdom that has been promised to David, it could be that those who called themselves Jews were telling the Christians of Philadelphia that they would never enter the kingdom because they were trying to come through Jesus. If that was true, what would Jesus have been conveying to them by saying that He opens and shuts, and He has set an open door before them?

13. Jesus promises this church that He will keep them from the hour of testing. Our purpose at this time is not to discuss the rapture and tribulation period (that comes in the later courses), but let's look at the WHY He is going to keep them from the testing, and who that testing is coming for.

14. It may be beneficial to take a minute and look up the phrase of those who "dwell on the earth." It is a repeated phrase throughout Revelation. Jot down what you learn about these people from the following verses.

a. Revelation 6:10

b. Revelation 8:13

c. Revelation 11:10

d. Revelation 13:8

e. Revelation 13:14

f. Revelation 17:8

g. Luke 21:34-36 - I know this isn't Revelation but you need to look at it anyway. Record everything you learn about a day coming suddenly, like a trap.

15. I will keep you from the hour of testing. That word "from" is the Greek word "ek." It can be translated as "through" or "out of." Look up these couple of verses that use this word so that we can get a feel for how it is used in Scripture.

a. John 17:15

b. John 12:27

16. Briefly state what the promise is to those who overcome.

Day 4 and 5

1. Our final church. You don't want to miss the message of this church. Make sure that you spend time in prayer, asking God to open your understanding as you work through this church.
2. What is different about this church than all the others?
3. How does Jesus describe Himself to this church and why do think He uses this description?
4. Fill out the chart below to compare what is going on with this church.

Their Condition	What They Can Be/Have	What They Must Do

5. What will happen to them if they don't do what Jesus tells them to do?

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 5
Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea

6. In order to understand the message that Jesus has for this church, you need some background information on Laodicea. This was a rich city. It was on the crossroads of three major highways and was a major commercial and financial center. It was known for manufacturing beautiful black wool and for its famous medical school that developed an eye salve known for curing eye diseases. It was an extremely wealthy city, so wealthy that when an earthquake destroyed the city, they had enough money to rebuild without any financial assistance.

The major problem in Laodicea was the lack of water. They had no water themselves, so they needed to depend on other cities to send water through stone pipes. Cold pure water was piped underground from Colossae and hot water came from Hierapolis. By the time the waters reached Laodicea, they were both luke warm - neither hot nor cold.

Keeping this in mind, read through this letter again. Can you see how Jesus' message was appropriate for them?

7. With all that you have observed, how would you describe their spiritual condition? Do you think they were aware of their condition?

8. Jesus describes Himself as "the Amen." *Amen* means something that is binding, true, trustworthy. Why describe Himself in this way?

9. The second way He describes Himself is that He is the "faithful and true Witness." A "*witness*" is one who has information or knowledge that they share to bring things to light or confirm events. Let's take a look at how Jesus was a faithful and true witness. Record what you learn from each of these verses.

a. John 1:18

b. John 14:8-12

c. John 8:28-29

d. John 5:19, 30

e. The book of Revelation also portrays Jesus as faithful and true in other places. Take a look at these.

i. Revelation 19:9, 11

ii. Revelation 21:5

iii. Revelation 22:6

iv. Revelation 22:16

v. Revelation 22:18

10. The third way Jesus describes Himself is as "the Beginning of the creation of God." The Greek word for beginning here is *arche* and it means the cause. This was not the first time the Laodiceans were told this. You might be interested in knowing that the book of Colossians was written to them as well (Colossians 4:12-16). Read the following verses to see what they have been told before.

a. Colossians 1:15-23; 2:1-5 (watch for the teachings connected with Jesus' part in creation - remember that Colossae was the place from which the Laodiceans received their cold water.)

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 5
Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea

b. Colossians was written around 60 AD. Revelation was written around 95 AD. Do you think anything had changed between the time of the two letters?

11. Do you think it is possible for a person to be a member of a church and not a true child of God? Look at the following verses and record what you learn.

a. II Corinthians 13:5

b. I John 2:19

c. Matthew 7:15-23

12. Do you think that the people of Laodicea were saved or lost? Give reasons for your answer.

13. Jesus describes these people as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Let's take a look at each of these statements.

a. Wretched - #5005 in the Strong's - talaiporos - it means enduring toils and troubles, afflicted. It is used one other place in the Bible. Look up Romans 7:24-25. Do you see a relationship with what is said in Romans and what is going on in Laodicea?

b. Miserable - #1652 in the Strong's - eleeinos - pitiable, worthy of pity. This also is only used one other place in Scripture. Look up I Corinthians 15:19 and record what you learn.

- c. Poor - #4434 in the Strong's - ptochos - it means reduced to beggary, begging, destitute.
- i. Why would Jesus describe this rich city as poor?
 - ii. What would they need to do to become rich? Who could help them?
 - iii. They were told to buy what they needed from Jesus. Look at the following verses and record what you learn. Watch the terminology used. These verses paint a beautiful picture for us.
 1. Isaiah 55:1-3
 2. Revelation 22:17
- d. Blind - how and why were they blind, and what was the cure?
- i. Matthew 23:16-19
 - ii. II Corinthians 4:3-6
 - iii. Could their eye salve heal their blindness? If not, what could? Read the following verses.
 1. John 9:1, 6-7, 17-31, 39

e. Naked - the same people who made that wonderful black wool clothing? What were they to be clothed in, and where would that come from?

i. Revelation 6:11

ii. Revelation 7:9

iii. Revelation 19:8

iv. Revelation 16:15 - look at the admonishment.

v. Read Matthew 22:1-14 and compare that with Revelation 19:9. How important is it to have the right clothing on?

14. Jesus is standing outside the door knocking. The church had locked Him out. The people had locked Him out. They didn't need Him because they had everything under control themselves. They didn't need anyone's help. What about you? Have you locked Him out of your life? Do you think you can go it alone in this world? Search your heart carefully and prayerfully. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 5
Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea

15. If you have time and would like to look any information on these two churches, please do so. The more you understand, the more you will stand in awe of Jesus' messages and how applicable they are to our lives.

Revelation Part 1
Lesson 5
Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea

To he that overcomes . . .

Who are the overcomers?

What will they look like?

What will they do?

What will they receive?

That is our topic of study this week. Hang on. It will be an eye opener. We have bought into an easy "believism" in this country. If you allow these words and warnings to sink into your mind and heart, it will put your feet back on the right path.

Day 1 through 3

1. Each letter has a word to those who overcome. Are all Christians overcomers? Is it possible to be a Christian and not be an overcomer? Who are these people? When we see the promises made to the overcomers, we need to know and understand if we are part of them. Let's start by looking at what the word means. Look up the word from Revelation 2:7 in your Greek study tools. Write down the definition of overcomer.
2. Next, we want to look at each reference to overcomers in the Scriptures. Many are in Revelation, but John mentions them in his other books as well. As you read ask yourself the 5 W's and an H. Who overcomes? How are they described? What have they overcome and how? What will they receive? What happens if they don't overcome? When will they receive what has been promised? Make sure you understand the context of every verse(s). When you are done with each verse, transfer all your information onto the chart located on pages 79-80. Fill in the columns of the chart for each reference that you looked up. You may not find information for all the columns from each reference so don't panic. It may help you to draw a line through your chart to separate references, or change pen colors each time you go to a new passage.
 - a. Revelation 2:7
 - b. Revelation 2:11

c. Revelation 2:17

d. Revelation 2:26-28

e. Revelation 3:5

f. Revelation 3:12

g. Revelation 3:21

h. Revelation 12:11

i. Revelation 17:12-14

j. Revelation 21:2-8

k. I John 2:13-14

l. I John 4:1-6

m. I John 5:4-5

n. John 16:33

3. When you have finished the chart, take some time to look over what you have recorded. There are a couple of things that you need to think about and process.
 - a. Look at the overcomers "gift" compared to Jesus' message to that particular church.
 - b. Do you think that the benefits for overcoming belong just to the people of that particular church, to just the seven churches of John's day, or to all Christians down through the ages? Give a reason as to why you think the way you do.

Day 4 and 5

The last thing that we want to do is look at what the overcomers are promised. This should help to solidify in our minds, who these people are. It will help us to understand the significance of being an overcomer and the consequences of not overcoming. Always make sure that you check the context of what you are reading, and always ask those 5 W' and an H.

1. In Revelation 2:7 the overcomer will be granted the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God. What is the tree of life, and what are the implications of being able to eat from it?

a. Genesis 3:22-24

b. Revelation 22:1-2, 14, 19

c. If a person wasn't an overcomer, what would they miss?

2. The overcomers in the church in Smyrna were promised that they would not be hurt by the second death. Let's see who participates in the second death and who doesn't.

a. Revelation 2:6, 14-15

b. Revelation 21:8

c. What would be the result of not being hurt by the second death?

3. Pergamum's overcomers were promised hidden manna and a white stone. These are not quite as easy to understand since there is not much mentioned about them in the Bible, but here are a couple things to look at.

a. Let's look at the manna first.

i. Exodus 16:13-15, 26-35

ii. Hebrews 9:1-5

iii. Deuteronomy 8:3

iv. John 6:31-40, 48-51

b. There are many opinions about the "white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it." The Greeks used white stones for voting on the innocence or guilt of an individual - a white stone meaning innocent and a black stone meaning guilty. In the Roman world, it was a custom of the Roman Empire to present people with white stones with the individual's name written on it. This stone then served as an admission ticket to a special feast. (Is there a feast coming in the book of Revelation? Could it be admission to the wedding feast of the Lamb?)

4. The last church mentioned in chapter two was the church in Thyatira. They were told that those who kept His deeds until the end would have authority over the nations, rule them with a rod of iron, and receive the morning star.

a. We will start with the ruling with a rod of iron.

i. Revelation 2:26-27 quotes from Psalm 2:8-9. Read through Psalm 2 and record what you learn.

ii. Read the parable in Luke 19:11-19 and notice the reward that is mentioned.

iii. Revelation 5:10

iv. Revelation 3:21 (We will look more at this verse later.)

b. Now we will look at the morning star.

i. Daniel 12:1-4

ii. Matthew 13:43

iii. II Peter 1:19

iv. Revelation 22:16

c. From these Scriptures can you see how ruling the kingdom and the light of the morning star may be connected?

5. To the church in Sardis the overcomers were promised white garments and that their name would not be erased from the book of life but will be confessed before God and His angels.

a. We have looked a several Scriptures that had to deal with the white garments, so let's focus on the book of life.

i. Revelation 13:8

ii. Revelation 17:8

iii. Revelation 20:12, 15

iv. Revelation 21:27

v. Psalm 69:19, 22-28

b. What would be the consequences of having your name erased?

c. What is the importance of our names being confessed before the Father and His angels?

i. Matthew 10:32-33

ii. Luke 12:8-9

d. If you were not an overcomer in this case, what would that mean?

6. The overcomers in Philadelphia were told that they would be made a pillar in the temple of His God and will not go out from it anymore. Jesus would also write on him the name of His God, the name of the city of His God, the new Jerusalem, and His new name.

a. Read these verses and see if you can come to a conclusion of what John is trying to say about being a pillar in the temple.

i. Revelation 21:1-7, 10, 22

ii. Ephesians 2:19-22

iii. I Peter 2:4-10

iv. What is your conclusion to what this will mean?

b. What is Jesus' new name? There is not Scripture that tells us (Revelation 19:12), but throughout the Bible we have seen that names show a person's character or position. Whatever it means, what a privilege it will be for us to share His name.

c. What are the consequences for those who do not overcome?

7. To Laodicea He writes that the overcomer will sit with Jesus on His throne. What a magnificent promise!

a. Matthew 19:28

b. Matthew 25:31

c. I Corinthians 6:2-3

d. Revelation 5:10

e. Revelation 20:6

f. Revelation 2:26-27

g. Now with everything you saw over this last week, see if you can answer a couple of these questions.

i. Who are the overcomers?

ii. How does someone become an overcomer?

iii. What does it mean if someone is not an overcomer?

iv. Are all Christian's overcomers, or can you be a Christian and not an overcomer?

THE OVERCOMERS

Scripture	What is Overcome?	Who Overcomes and How?	What is the Overcomer Given and What is the Result?

THE OVERCOMERS

Scripture	What is Overcome?	Who Overcomes and How?	What is the Overcomer Given and What is the Result?