

Small Group Leaders' Guide

Revelation 1 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Main Idea

Revelation is not primarily a puzzle to decode; it is a revelation of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 1, we see Jesus as the One who reveals God's plan, redeems His people by His blood, and reigns with authority over His church, history, death, and eternity.

Warm Up

Opening Question

When you hear the word "Revelation," what comes to mind first: fear, curiosity, confusion, hope, excitement, or something else? Why?

Leader's Tip

- Encourage honesty. Many people feel intimidated by Revelation because of symbols, judgments, and end-times debates. Help the group begin with the central point: Revelation reveals Jesus.
- Greek Word:
 - Revelation — Greek: apokalypsis - Means "unveiling," "disclosure," or "revealing." Revelation is not meant to hide Jesus but to unveil Him.

Know It

Jesus is the One Who Reveals

Read Revelation 1:1–3

Discussion Questions

- According to verses 1–3, who is the source of this revelation?
- Who receives the message and passes it along?
- What blessing is promised in verse 3?

Key Truth

- Jesus reveals what God wants His servants to know. Revelation is meant to prepare, bless, and strengthen God's people.

Leader's Tips

- Point out the chain of communication in the passage: God gives the revelation to Jesus, Jesus sends it through His angel to John, and John testifies to the churches.
- Greek Words: (Just for your information you can use if you would like)
 - Servants - douloi: Means “bondservants” or “slaves.” This describes believers as those who belong to Christ and live under His authority.
 - Blessed - makarios: Means truly blessed, favored, or spiritually fortunate. Revelation promises blessing to those who read, hear, and obey.
 - Keep – tēreō: Means “to guard,” “observe,” or “hold fast.” Revelation is not merely for information; it calls for faithful obedience.
 - Time – Kairos: Refers to an appointed or significant time, not merely chronological time. The message is urgent because God’s appointed time is near.

Jesus is the One Who Redeems

Read Revelation 1:4–8

Discussion Questions

- How is God described in verse 4?
- What titles are given to Jesus in verse 5?
- What has Jesus done for His people according to verses 5–6?
- What does it mean that Jesus has made believers “a kingdom” and “priests”?

Key Truth

- Jesus loves His people, frees them from sin by His blood, gives them a new identity, and will return in glory.

Leader's Tips

- Help the group see that redemption is personal and costly. Jesus does not merely inspire us; He saves us by His blood.
- Greek Words: (Just for your information, use if you would like)
 - Grace – charis: God’s undeserved favor and kindness toward sinners.

- Peace – eirēnē: Peace, wholeness, and reconciliation.
 - Hebrew Connection: shalom means peace, completeness, welfare, and flourishing with God.
- Faithful Witness – ho martys ho pistos: Jesus perfectly testifies to the truth of God. The word martyr is also where we get the word “martyr.”
- Firstborn – prōtotokos: This does not mean Jesus was created. It means He is supreme, preeminent, and first in rank. He is the victorious One over death.
- Set free – from Greek luō: Means to release, loose, or liberate. Jesus frees His people from bondage to sin.
- Blood – haima: Points to Jesus’ sacrificial death. Redemption comes through His atoning blood.
- Kingdom – basileia: Refers to reign, rule, and realm. Believers now belong to the reign of God.
- Priests – hierēis: Those who serve in God’s presence and represent God to others.
 - Hebrew Connection: kohen means priest. This connects to the Old Testament calling of God’s people to be a priestly people.
- Alpha and Omega: The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This means God is the beginning and the end, sovereign over all history.
- Almighty – pantokratōr: Means “all-powerful” or “ruler over all.” God is not threatened by earthly powers.

Jesus is the One who Reigns

Read Revelation 1:9–20

Discussion Questions

- Where is John when he receives this vision?
- How does John describe himself in verse 9?
- What does John see when he turns around?
- What details about Jesus stand out to you most in verses 13–16?
- How does John respond when he sees the risen Christ?

Key Truth

- Jesus reigns over His church, over death, and over all things. His glory should humble us, comfort us, and strengthen our faith.

Leader's Tips

- John is suffering on Patmos, but Jesus appears in glory. The church may face affliction, but Jesus is present among His people.
- Greek Words: (Just for your information use if you would like)
 - Affliction – thlipsis: Pressure, trouble, distress, or persecution. Following Jesus does not remove suffering, but Jesus is with His people in it.
 - Endurance – hypomonē: Steadfast perseverance under pressure. Revelation calls believers to remain faithful.
 - Lord's Day – kyriakē hēmera: A phrase referring to the day belonging to the Lord, commonly understood as Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection.
 - Churches – ekklēsiai: Gathered assemblies of God's people. Revelation was written to real churches facing real pressures.
 - Lampstands – lychniai: The lampstands symbolize the churches. The church is called to bear light and witness in a dark world.
 - Angel – angelos: Means "messenger." In Revelation 1:20, the seven stars are identified as the angels or messengers of the seven churches.
 - Like the Son of Man – homoion huion anthropou: This title connects to Daniel 7, where "one like a son of man" receives everlasting dominion. Jesus is the divine King who reigns forever.
 - Hades – hadou: The realm of the dead.
 - Hebrew Connection: Sheol is the Old Testament term often used for the grave or realm of the dead. Jesus holds authority even over death.

Share It

Personal Reflection Questions

- Which picture of Jesus in Revelation 1 do you most need to remember right now: Revealer, Redeemer, or King?
- Where are you tempted to look for security besides Christ?

Leader's Tip

- Keep the conversation centered on Jesus. Revelation can easily lead to speculation, but Revelation 1 leads us to worship, repentance, courage, and obedience.

Live It

Application Points(You can focus on one or two you don't have to cover the whole application points here)

- **Listen to what Jesus reveals:** Revelation promises blessing to those who read, hear, and keep God's Word.
 - **Ask:** Am I approaching God's Word with curiosity only, or with obedience?
- **Rest in what Jesus has done:** Jesus has loved us, freed us from sin, and made us a kingdom of priests.
 - **Ask:** Am I living as someone still enslaved to sin, shame, or fear—or as someone Christ has set free?
- **Stand firm because Jesus reigns:** John was suffering, but Jesus was still ruling. The church may face pressure, but Jesus is among His lampstands.
 - **Ask:** Where do I need endurance right now?
- **Worship Jesus with reverence:** John fell at Jesus' feet. The risen Christ is not small, weak, or distant. He is glorious.
 - **Ask:** Has my view of Jesus become too casual?
- **Do not be afraid:** Jesus says, "Don't be afraid." He is the Living One, alive forever.
 - **Ask:** What fear do I need to surrender to Jesus this week?

This Week's Challenge

Read Revelation 1 once each day this week. Each day, write down one description of Jesus and one response you should have to Him.

- Example:
 - Jesus is "the faithful witness."
 - My response: Tell the truth and trust His Word.

Leader's Tip

- Encourage specific application. Instead of “I need to trust Jesus more,” ask, “Where specifically do you need to trust Him this week?”

Prayer

- Praise - Praise Jesus as the One who reveals, redeems, and reigns.
- Confession - Confess where you have ignored His Word, doubted His rule, or lived as though fear is stronger than Christ.
- Thanksgiving - Thank Jesus for loving us and setting us free from our sins by His blood.
- Requests - Ask God for endurance, courage, obedience, and a deeper vision of Christ's glory.

Leader's Closing Encouragement

End by reminding the group: Revelation begins not with charts, beasts, or speculation, but with Jesus. The safest place for believers is not knowing every detail about the future, but knowing the One who holds the future.