



Revelation

LETTERS TO THE CHURCH.

“Blessed is the one
who reads aloud
the words of this
prophecy, and
blessed are those
who hear it and
take to heart what
is written in it,
because the time
is near.”

REVELATION 1:3

How to use this book:

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

- Use this book to help you read your Bible every day. You will find a guide that will help you read through scriptures related to our sermon series. Scribble down your thoughts and questions and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word. Additionally, we've recommended a verse to memorise each week.
- Listen to our Spotify playlist by searching for the 'The Bridge Church – Songs We Sing' playlist.
- Please make note of and pray too, for the mentioned 'What's On' events in our term calendar.

CONNECT GROUPS

- Take this guide with you to your Connect Group each week. Bible Studies based on the Sunday Bible talks have been provided for each week, so you could use this space to write down comments, questions and prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.

CHURCH

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

Dear Church,

2022 is our “Year of Loving the Nations!”

God’s heart is for all people from all nations, and God is powerfully at work in many different cultures in extraordinary ways. As we grow in our awareness and expectations of what God is doing in other parts of the world, our vision of God, who He is and what He could and is doing in our own part of the world, will increase. If we are disciples of Jesus, we are already part of God’s global church.

We long to humbly learn from the ways Christians are serving in different contexts, and to engage in Jesus’ global mission by praying, partnering, giving and going.

We aspire to be a church with increasing ethnic diversity, seeking to reach those God is bringing to our own community from the different nations. We want every member of our church to share God’s heart for the nations, and to engage in God’s work prayerfully and practically, both locally and globally.

In 2022, we’d love every member to have this mindset. “Think Global: Act Local”! We believe the most on fire Christians are those seeing the powerful work of God among the nations and longing to see it here.

HERE ARE 4 STEPS TO HELP US ‘THINK GLOBAL: ACT LOCAL’

#1: PRAY: Adopt a nation: We want every member of church to adopt a different nation, so we cover the approximately 200 different countries. We want you to learn about their culture, traditions, religions, and the gospel landscape. We’d love you to pray for that nation regularly. What is your nation?
Pray for that nation.

#2: PARTNER: Intentionally connect with 1 of our existing mission partners. Here at The Bridge Church, we have the privilege of supporting 21 wonderful mission partners who are serving Jesus all over the world. We’d love you to partner with one of them intentionally and meaningfully in 2022, subscribe to their newsletter, pray regularly, send them an encouraging note or gift.

#3: GIVE: Jesus said, ‘where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’. Maybe 2022 could be a year where you give ‘above and beyond’ your regular giving, to global gospel need, an individual or mission agency.

#4: GO: Go on a missions conference, a short term mission, a regional church mission or beach mission. Maybe you could serve at Everyday English, to connect with the nations who are coming to us here in Sydney.

Looking forward to this first quarter, here are some things I’m excited about:

- Planting a new 5.30pm congregation at Macquarie Park – to reach all who live in that area (university students, the residential colleges, the local community)
- Preaching through Revelation 1-3 ‘Letters to the Church’, seeing what Jesus thinks of his global church, for both encouragement and rebuke!
- Praying intentionally and expectantly at our Central Prayer Evenings (1st Wednesday of every month)
- Re-launching all our Connect Groups, Kids, Youth and Young Adults activities
- Our Community Care ministries (Greenway Community Housing, our Aged Care ministry to both James Milson Village and Lansdowne Gardens, Everyday English), seeking to continue loving our neighbour and loving the nations that God has brought to Sydney
- Welcoming many new people to our church, running Belonging so people can hear our history, mission and ministries, and seeing new people integrated well
- An increased digital presence through our social media and YouTube, as well as continuing online church.

Three important dates to remind you of:

1. AGM: Our Annual General Meeting is on Monday 21st February, 7:45pm. Please do come along to hear how God has been at work in 2021, as well as elect men and women to the important roles of wardens and parish council.

2. Easter 2022 is Friday 15th and Sunday 17th April. Please make it a priority to stay around for Easter and remember the death of our Saviour and celebrate the Empty Tomb! We'd love lots of our regulars to be around to welcome visitors and celebrate together.

3. Winter Escape: Remember to put the date for our all-church weekend away in your diary. June 10-13th - Don't miss it, it's going to be amazing!

Please do pray that as we love the nations, God would increase our vision of who He is and what He is doing in and through the global church!

For the glory of Jesus,
Paul Dale

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P D Dale". There is a short horizontal line underneath the signature.

(Senior Pastor).

Overview of Revelation

DATE:

95AD (Many liberals try to date it later, but no evidence for their claims)

AUTHOR:

John, the beloved, the same Apostle who penned the Gospel and the three epistles that bear his name. This is not really in dispute as it is stated clearly several times: (Rev 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8)

TITLE:

The Revelation from Jesus Christ. (Not ‘revelations’!). The word Revelation translates the Greek word ‘ap-ok-al-oop-sis’, which means ‘an unveiling’

KEY VERSE:

Rev 1:19 ‘What you have seen’ / ‘What is now’ / ‘What will take place later’

THREE KEYS TO UNLOCKING REVELATION:

Paul Barnett suggests the following keys to unlocking Revelation:

1. Crack the code – John wrote in ‘code’, perhaps because the ‘harlot’ and ‘sea beast’ are Rome, and he doesn’t want to be charged with treason; or perhaps because the shift from history to eternity can’t be captured by simple prose; or possibly for both those reasons? John’s symbolism engages us to think. Each symbol (see table below) forces us to think more deeply about the lesson taught. The one thing we don’t want to do is take the symbol literally.

The colour white, the images of the throne and the crown	= Conquest and rule (divine, human, satanic)
Sea beast and Harlot	= Roman emperor and his government
Land beast / false prophet	= Roman provincial governors
Seven	= God and eternal perfection
Six	= Satan’s claim to divinity

- Three and a half years (42 months) = A period within human history which will come to its end – unlike God's eternity
- Twelve = Leaders of the redeemed
- Twenty Four = Leaders from old and new covenants
- One hundred and forty four thousand = Redeemed from Israel
- Ten = A round figure
- One Thousand = A great number or a very long period
- Lion = Nobility
- Ox = Strength
- Eagle = Speed
- Man = Wisdom
- Lamb = Helplessness
- Horn = Power
- Eye = Knowledge
- Right Hand = Authority

2. Learn the layout: Revelation is perhaps the most carefully structured book in the New Testament. The whole ‘letter-book’ (with an epistolary introduction in 1:4-6 but called a book in 22:6-18) is really a long letter. The epilogue (22:6-7) echoes the language of 1:1-3, and between these two boundaries, the whole book purports to be a vision (‘Revelation’) which was given to John on Patmos (an island he was imprisoned on) on the Lord’s day (1:9-10). The phrase ‘I was in the Spirit’ (1:10) marks the beginning of the vision, and those words appear again to mark significant transitions (e.g. 4:2, 17:3, 21:10).

There are in fact 2 visions: The first, described in chapter one, relates to the grim condition of the churches in the 7 cities of Roman Asia (the letters to them rise from it).

The second vision is in Revelation 4 to which the rest of the book is devoted. This second vision relates to the awesome journey God's people must make (Rev 4-20), before the New Jerusalem descends upon them (Rev 21-22). After entering the now opened door of heaven and seeing the Enthroned One (and 'death-wounded lamb'), John traverses the four episodes which are to be the destiny of believers within history.

Each episode contains 7 elements, indicating its divine God-ordained character. After the 6th element is an interlude. The 7th is then the bridge to the next 'episode'.

The 1st episode describes tyranny (6-7), the 2nd chaos in creation (8-11), 3rd persecution of believers (12-14) and the 4th the destruction of the earth (15-16). The big error is seeing them end on end – rather than overlapping. The tyranny, chaos, persecution and destruction in cycles of 7 occur throughout history (symbolically '1000 years'). Difficulties disappear when the episodes are concurrent rather than consecutive.

We suggest the following structure:

Chapter 1 : Vision of John on Patmos

'What you have seen' (Chapters 2 & 3) : THE 7 CHURCHES OF ASIA

'What is now' (Ch 4-5) : HEAVEN OPENED

'What is to come' (Ch 6-22) :

6-7: TYRANNY

8-11: CHAOS

12-14: PERSECUTION

15-16: DESTRUCTION

17-20: THE END OF EVIL

21-22: THE NEW JERUSALEM

3. Centre on Christ – the thrust of Revelation is not the future (an Armageddon battle to come). The message of the book will be permanently closed to those who approach in such a way – for 3 reasons.

- 1) Armageddon is only passingly mentioned the one time (16:16). Battle language is used, but only to provide the tone and setting for the momentous return of the victorious Christ.
- 2) There is no actual description of the return of Christ in this book. The promise and hope of his coming is there (1:7; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 17, 20) – but without detail of when or how. This is curious, given the vivid descriptions of the destruction of the harlot, beast, false prophet and dragon – followed by the new heaven and earth.
- 3) The great emphasis on the already completed victory of Christ. Revelation makes clear that the great end-time battle of God is not in the future, but the past. It has been fought and won. Jesus is ‘the’ blood-stained Victor. The language of conquest is past tense and completed (Rev 3:21, 5:5, 11:15)

Like the rest of the New Testament, Revelation sees the great victory in the past, not the future – perhaps the most important key to unlocking its mysteries.

The most urgent call John has is for his readers to worship the true God and redeeming Lamb – not the powers of this world and Rome. Worship was about loyalty. To worship Caesar is to deny Christ, and to worship the Lamb was to deny Caesar. Their challenge is ours – to live worshipping Christ, saying ‘no’ to every alternative.

THE GOSPEL IN REVELATION

It appears different to other letters in the New Testament – but is it? Like other letters, it opens with a pronouncement of grace and peace from the Trinitarian God ('Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ...' – Rev 1:4-5).

The Father and Spirit are evident throughout. God is spoken of as the majestic Enthroned One. His sovereignty spans history. Rather than focus on his ‘fatherly’ actions – He is surrounded by His heavenly army (host) governing the universe in all its chaos. Ultimately bringing the nations to acknowledge His righteous actions (15.4). The Spirit is actively inspiring the work of John. Repeatedly we are told John prophesies ‘in the Spirit’ (Rev 1:10; 17:3; 21:10)

But the real focus is on Jesus Christ. He shares entirely the glory of God and the authority of God. He rules not just because of His deity, or what will come – but what he has already done: ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,’ (Rev 5:9).

Perhaps the very centre of Revelation’s message is found in the words ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah... has conquered’ (5:5). The aorist tense of the verb teaches it is an already completed victory. The lack of direct object to the verb indicates it is unlimited and absolute. It says next to nothing about the life of Jesus (perhaps Revelation 12 – comparable to Herod in Matthew 2). But like the letters of Paul and Peter – and their preaching in Acts – we are pointed to Jesus’ death, resurrection, ascension, rule and return.

The final thing to note is the two-beat rhythm. Often in Revelation, expressions of worship are offered (to the Enthroned One and Lamb) in response to gospel-statements. The first beat is ‘evangelical’, the second is worshipful response (e.g. the four living creatures declare: ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ and the 24 elders respond: ““Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”)

SHARING CHRIST’S CONQUEST

Christ has Conquered, but Revelation recognises that evil still exists. There are no romantic illusions: tyranny, chaos, persecution and destruction still exist. The surface of the world is the scene for unfolding horror. Revelation attributes evil within the world and within history to the Devil. At the same time, God is mercifully restraining evil.

So, in Revelation, while a quarter of mankind is killed in the tyrant's wars (6:8), 3 quarters are to be spared (similar pattern recurs in chapters 8-9). God is not the source of evil and humanity must shoulder responsibility for their lack of repentance too (9:20-21). At this point God restrains evil, awaiting the final judgement. At this point the Devil is chained (Rev 20) – yet at the same time is persecuting faithful Christians (Rev 13). The Devil's persecution now is in response to the victory Christ has over the Dragon (Rev 12). Christians share in the victory by faithfully enduring – by displaying patience. The conquest of Christians set out in Revelation is the humble triumph of patient faith in the face of deadly opposition (physically it is not reached in political or military terms here on earth – but in the New Jerusalem). Those who conquer will receive all the blessing of that New Jerusalem (21:7).

THE PROBLEMS FACING JOHN'S READERS

Why was there need to conquer? Three basic problems:

- 1) Jewish hostility: the 'synagogue of Satan' at Smyrna and Philadelphia (2: 9 & 3:9) refer to the problems created for Christians by the Jewish community. Jews were disliked in Greco-Roman society – but well connected and established. After the sacking of Jerusalem in AD 70, Vespasian compelled Jews to pay the 'fiscus Judaicus' (temple tax to pay for the Roman temple to Jupiter). Christians weren't required to – which would have increased hostility. The benefit for Jews of this tax, though, was that they were immune from pressure to participate in the Imperial cult.
- 2) Heretical infiltration: false teachings had entered the churches of Roman Asia. John's readers would've understood what was meant by 'the teaching of Balaam' (seemingly a compromise in idolatry and sexual morality) and the 'Nicolaitans' (who we know nothing of). We can only guess at the particulars – but can understand the difficulties of internal pushes to leave the gospel.
- 3) Caesar Worship: life for gentile converts was difficult. The culture was saturated with a variety of gods and temples (covering all the possibilities); consulting astrologers and diviners was commonplace; and the desire to control conditions meant magic was widespread.

Sexual immorality (including temple prostitution, homosexuality and paedophilia) were part of gentile religious life. Christians were encouraged to engage, not withdraw, from this world. In Asia, where Caesar worship originated, pressure was mounting against those who would not join in.

REVELATION 2-3 – THE 7 CHURCHES OF ASIA



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Christ sends a message through his 7 angels to each of the churches of Asia, with each following this pattern:

Description of Christ – the one writing to them
 Praise – for the good Christ knows of them
 Rebuke – for their failings
 Exhortation – a call to repent
 Promise – for those who ‘have ears to hear’

EPHESUS (REV 2:1-7)

Ephesus is close to Patmos (where John is imprisoned), a large city of the times, about 250,000. As a harbour port, it was commercially powerful. Ephesus was also a ‘free city’ (self-governed, rather than under Rome’s direct authority). It was also famous for its patron deity, Artemis. They had a massive temple built in ‘her honour’. This fame had a drawback. The sanctuary offered at the temple brought a high criminal population to the city.

The Church in Ephesus has existed for about 40 years. We don’t know the practises of the Nicolaitans today – but we do know something of the response to Christians. Tacitus (Proconsul of Asia in AD 110) said ‘Christians hated the human race’ and ‘were hated’. Pliny described Christianity as ‘insanity’, ‘a contagion’, ‘superstition’ and ‘obstinacy and unbending perversity’.

SMYRNA (REV 2:8-11)

Smyrna was a powerful commercial city of about 250,000. Like Ephesus it was a free-city (meaning it wasn’t under the governance of Rome). It was the glory of Asia for its planned and beautiful town – it had a famous library, a famous stadium, a famous amphitheatre. It also has a lot of temples – one even to the Roman Emperor himself.

Jews of the Empire enjoyed a privileged position. By paying a temple tax, Jews didn’t have to join the cultic worship of Rome. It was a privilege Christians didn’t enjoy – so they risked persecution from both Rome and the Synagogue. Polycarp (the Bishop of Smyrna who had been taught by John himself as a young man) was burned to death in Smyrna for not renouncing Christ.

PERGAMUM (REV 2:12-17)

Pergamum’s location meant it never enjoyed the wealth or population of the great cities Ephesus and Smyrna. Yet according to Pliny, it was the most famous city of Asia. It was the capital city of pro-consular Asia - the seat of Roman governance in the region (think ‘Canberra’!). This also meant Pergamum was a huge centre of Roman Emperor worship. In 29BC, Emperor Augustus approved a temple for himself. Within the church, Pergamum had problems with false teaching. There was the teaching of Balaam – compromising with idolatry and sexual immorality. They also had been influenced by the now unclear teaching of the Nicolaitans.

THYATIRA (REV 2:18-29)

Thyatira was on the main road from Pergamum to Syria - and the least important of the 7 cities to receive a letter in Revelation. It was a prosperous town (Lydia in Acts 16, who traded in purple cloth, came from there). The powerful trade and craft guilds demanded compulsory membership. These guilds also engaged in cultic worship of both Greek and Roman deities.

Not surprisingly, this was a big pressure on Christians. Within the church of Thyatira, the teaching of Balaam had entered – a teaching of compromise in terms of idolatrous practise and sexual immorality. From what is written it seems a particular prophetess – whom John labels ‘Jezebel’ (after the evil queen in Israel’s history).

SARDIS (REV 3:1-6)

Sardis was an important city at the junction of 5 major roads. Its centralised location gave Sardis both wealth and importance. Being located in a high point of a mountainous ridge, Sardis also commanded regional control. In AD 17, it was damaged severely by earthquake. A generous donation from Emperor Tiberius was given to rebuild it – again suggesting its importance to the region.

In this letter, no mention is made of either internal compromise for the church or external oppression.

PHILADELPHIA (REV 3:7-13)

Philadelphia was a frontier city. It was the last bastion of Greek civilisation before the wild tribes - people of the interior. It gave it somewhat a cultural ‘missionary’ role. It is possible that in Philadelphia, the Christians had tried to stay a part of the synagogue (to avoid Roman pressure to Emperor worship and pay the ‘temple tax’ with the Jews instead). The city was economically weak. Continued earthquakes meant it was always ‘re-building’. Along with that, in AD 92, laws were passed to reduce vineyard culture for the sake of growing more corn – Philadelphia’s chief produce had been grapes. This poverty meant Philadelphia was a city people left, rather than flocked to.

LAODICEA (REV 3:14-22)

Laodicea is located near where the Maeander River meets its tributary, the Lycus. It is also strategically located near the main road that links Pergamum to Attalia. Being placed next to both sea and land routes made it a major city and great commercial centre.

Christianity had been there about 40 years when John wrote. It was a great, established church. Key leaders in the broader church came from this area (Bishops Papias and Polycarp). It naturally led to a high-self opinion – perhaps even a misplaced confidence.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Many people will tell us we're wasting our time reading and meditating on Revelation because it's too difficult and obscure, but Jesus tells us otherwise: Rev 1:3 'Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near' Rev 22:7 'Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.'

The book of Revelation is not beyond our ability to understand and believe and obey. So please don't miss out on the blessing promised for all who keep what is written in it.

What's On This Term:

FEBRUARY

Wed 2nd	Everyday English Commences Central Prayer (this month at Kirribilli)
Thu 3rd	Playtime at Kirribilli Commences
Fri 4th	Playtime at Macquarie Park Commences
	Bridge Kids Fridays & Ignite Commences
Sun 6th	Term 1 sermon series launch – Revelation : Letters to the Church (9 weeks)
Mon 7th	Playtime at Neutral Bay Commences Connect Groups Commerce
Tue 8th	Belonging Course Commences (3 weeks) Christianity Explored Launch (7 weeks) Foundations Term 1 Commences
Wed 9th	Deeper Maturity Course Commences (Semester 1)
Sun 13th	Greenway Community Housing Ministry Commences (2nd & 4th Sundays all year)
Mon 14th	Young Adults Gathering
Sat 19th	Creative Team Vision Morning
Sun 20th	Baptism Information Session
Mon 21st	AGM
Sun 27th	Divorce Care Course Commences (8 weeks)
Mon 28th	Alpha Invite Training Night Young Adults Gathering

MARCH

Wed 2nd	Central Prayer (this month at Macquarie Park) Ash Wednesday
Sun 6th	Belonging Intensive First Sunday in Lent
Mon 14th	Wellbeing & Care Seminar – Marriage and Relationships Alpha Invite Training Night
Sun 13th	Second Sunday in Lent
Tues 15th	Belonging Course Commences (3 weeks)

MARCH (Continued)

Sun 20th	Baptism Sunday Third Sunday in Lent
Mon 21st	Recharge for Men
Sat 26th	“Thinking Ministry?” brunch
Sun 27th	Mission Activities Week Commences
	Fourth Sunday in Lent
Mon 28th	Alpha Invite Training Night

APRIL

Fri 1st	Okay Parents – Teens and Mental Health event
Sat 2nd	Women’s Refuel Mini-Conference
Sun 3rd	Final Kids Church for Term 1
w/c 4th	Final Playtime, Everyday English, Bridge Kids Fridays and Ignite for Term 1
Wed 6th	Central Prayer (this month at Neutral Bay)
Sun 10th	Palm Sunday
Thu 14th	Maundy Thursday
Fri 15th	Good Friday Services
Sun 17th	Easter Sunday Services

“Whoever has ears,
let them hear what
the Spirit says to
the churches. The
one who is victori-
ous will not be hurt
at all by the second
death.”

REVELATION 2:11

Sermon 1: Revelation 1:1-8

SUNDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 1:1-3

Tuesday: Revelation 1:4-8

Wednesday: Revelation 1:9-16

Thursday: Revelation 1:17-20

Friday: Revelation 1

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 1:5-6 ‘To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to
him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen

Connect Group: Revelation 1:1-8

W/C 7TH FEBRUARY

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

When is it helpful to look at the ‘big picture’ rather than every detail? What are some helpful/unhelpful ways to try and find the meaning behind the numbers and symbolism in Revelation?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 1:1-3

What does the word, ‘revelation’ mean generally? What makes this revelation different?

Who is this revelation from? When is the revelation for? How was it revealed to John? Why are the roles of God and Jesus repeated?

What is to be the response to those that have read and heard this revelation?

What does it mean that the ‘time is near’? Revelation was now written nearly 2000 years ago – is time still ‘near’? What does it look like to live as though the ‘time is near’?

NOTES:

Read Revelation 1:4-8

What are the names and attributes used to describe God in this passage (v4, v8)? What is the significance of these names to you? How is your life influenced by these names of God?

How is Jesus described? What is the significance of each of these attributes?

How are we described? What is the overall picture that emerges about God, Jesus and our relationship to them?

Is this how the world sees Jesus? What does v7 promise? What are the false teachings about Jesus that will be dispelled by his coming?

What do you look forward to about Jesus' return? Do you think that the world is ready for it? How can we be prepared?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that he is the Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty, who is, and who was, and is to come
- Praise Jesus for his love, for freeing us, making us to be a kingdom and priests to serve him

Sermon 2: Revelation 1:9-20

SUNDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 4:1-8

Tuesday: Revelation 4:9-11

Wednesday: Revelation 5:1-10

Thursday: Revelation 5:11-14

Friday: Revelation 2:1-7

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 1:17 Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last”

Connect Group: Revelation 1:9-20

W/C 14TH FEBRUARY

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

What comes to mind when you think, ‘persecution?’ Do you think that you have faced persecution for your faith?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 1:9-20

Why was John on the island of Patmos? What does ‘companion’ suggest about what is happening to God’s people at the time? What does it mean to be partners with those who are being persecuted?

Seven is a number signifying completeness, fullness – what do you think might be the significance of sending a letter to seven churches?

What is the most striking about these series of imageries in v13-16? Which attributes of Jesus are being highlighted through them?

NOTES:

What was John's reaction when he saw this? How did 'son of man' comfort him?

What are the seven stars and seven golden lampstands symbolising? Why do you think that a lampstand is used as the symbol of the role of church in the world? What does Jesus' presence amongst the lampstands demonstrate?

What attribute of Jesus is emphasised in v17-18? How might that be a comfort to those enduring hardship and suffering?

What comforts you in times of suffering and hardship? How do you think this vision would have comforted John?

Are there any persecuted Christians that you are aware of? What are some practical ways to help brothers and sisters in Christ under persecution?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that Jesus, the conqueror of life and death is always with his church
- Pray for heart, love and commitment to partner with persecuted Christians around us
- Pray for our cross-congregational mission partner, Voice of the Martyrs, that supports persecuted pastors. For specific prayer points you may like to visit their website <https://vom.com.au/pray-for-the-persecuted-church/>

Sermon 3: Revelation 2:1-7

SUNDAY 20TH FEBRUARY

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 6:1-8

Tuesday: Revelation 6:9-17

Wednesday: Revelation 7:1-12

Thursday: Revelation 7:13-17

Friday: Revelation 2:8-11

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 2:7 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Connect Group: Revelation 2:1-7

W/C 21ST FEBRUARY

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

Did you ever really love something at first, but then the excitement and novelty wore off after a while? What was it? Why did it change?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 2:1-7

How is Jesus described in this passage?

How is the church in Ephesus praised?

How is the church in Ephesus rebuked?

What is the church in Ephesus exhorted to do?

What is the church in Ephesus promised by God?

NOTES:

What can our church learn from this letter to Ephesus? Anything that we are also doing well? Anything that we need to be rebuked by?

What is tragic about a Christian person losing their ‘first love’? Reflect on when you first fell in love with Christ. How did your life reflect this love?

How does this letter expose the inadequacy of religious legalism? Do you obey God out of love for him or because that is what you are supposed to do?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that he sees our perseverance, hard work and endurance
- Pray that God will help us to keep renewing and refreshing our love for Him
- Praise God that he warns when we stray, forgives when we repent and promises eternal life to the faithful

Sermon 4: Revelation 2:8-11

SUNDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 8

Tuesday: Revelation 9:1-12

Wednesday: Revelation 9:13-21

Thursday: Revelation 10

Friday: Revelation 2:12-17

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 2:11 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. w/

CENTRAL PRAYER:

7:45pm Wed 2nd March meeting will be held at Macquarie Park

Sermon 5: Revelation 2:12-17

SUNDAY 6TH MARCH

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 11:1-14

Tuesday: Revelation 11:15-19

Wednesday: Revelation 12

Thursday: Revelation 13

Friday: Revelation 2:18-29

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 2:17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it

Connect Group: Revelation 2:12-17

W/C 7TH MARCH

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

When has there been a time when you needed to compromise about something? What was it about? What happened as a result?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 2:12-17

How is Jesus described in this passage?

How is the church in Pergamum praised?

How is the church in Pergamum rebuked?

What is the church in Pergamum exhorted to do?

What is the church in Pergamum promised by God?

NOTES:

What can our church learn about from this letter to Pergamum? Anything that we are also doing well? Anything that we need to be rebuked by?

What would be our equivalent of food sacrificed to idols or sexual immorality? How is Jesus going to fight against these practices? What do you think the sword in his mouth symbolises?

How might Christians be tempted to compromise their convictions in the spirit of tolerance? What steps can we take to protect ourselves and the church from compromising our beliefs?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that even living where Satan has his throne, he is able to save his people and keep them true to his name
- Pray that God will expunge from our hearts any hints of idolatry or false teaching
- Pray that we may cling to God's word and fight to keep it pure

Sermon 6: Revelation 2:18-29

SUNDAY 13TH MARCH

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 14:1-13

Tuesday: Revelation 14:14-20

Wednesday: Revelation 15

Thursday: Revelation 16

Friday: Revelation 3:1-6

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 2:26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations

Connect Group: Revelation 2:18-29

W/C 14TH MARCH

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

Who are some leaders (religious or otherwise) that are widely known about and admired? What is it about them that draws people to them?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 2:18-29

How is Jesus described in this passage?

How is the church in Thyatira praised?

How is the church in Thyatira rebuked?

What is the church in Thyatira exhorted to do?

What is the church in Thyatira promised by God?

NOTES:

What can our church learn about from this letter to Thyatira? Anything that we are also doing well? Anything that we need to be rebuked by?

If false teachers do teach some true things, how can we as a church be on guard against being led astray by them? What are signs that a church may be following a person more than they are following Jesus?

How is the mercy and patience of Christ seen in this passage, even in judgement?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that he sees our love and faith, service and perseverance
- Pray that we can be a loving community for repentant sinners, whilst also carefully guarding the truth of the gospel

Sermon 7: Revelation 3:1-6

SUNDAY 20TH MARCH

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 17:1-18

Tuesday: Revelation 18:1-8

Wednesday: Revelation 18:9-20

Thursday: Revelation 18:21-24

Friday: Revelation 3:7-13

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 3:5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.

Connect Group: Revelation 3:1-6

W/C 21ST MARCH

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

What are some organisations or people that have a good reputation? How did they earn this? Do you know of a time when a good reputation has actually hidden the weaknesses of a person or an organisation?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 3:1-6

How is Jesus described in this passage?

How is the church in Sardis praised?

How is the church in Sardis rebuked?

What is the church in Sardis exhorted to do?

What is the church in Sardis promised by God?

NOTES:

What can our church learn about from this letter to Sardis? Anything that we are also doing well? Anything that we need to be rebuked by?

Read the list below of signs of a church that is falling asleep. What would you suggest for a church that is ‘sleepy’? What does the passage suggest that they do?

- The church is plagued with disagreements
- The preaching is ineffective
- Few can remember when a person was last saved
- God’s supernatural power is never seen
- God is not praised regularly
- No one is being called into God’s work

(Stevan Manley, “When does My Church Need Revival?”)

What does it mean to remember or to preach the gospel to yourself every day? Do you have any suggestions on how to help you to do this?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God for the joy of the message of the gospel and pray that it never becomes ‘old’ or ‘tarnished’ for those that receive it
- Pray that we as a church may remain awake

Sermon 8: Revelation 3:7-13

SUNDAY 27TH MARCH

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 19:1-10

Tuesday: Revelation 19:11-21

Wednesday: Revelation 20:1-6

Thursday: Revelation 20:7-15

Friday: Revelation 3: 14-22

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 3:12 The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.

Connect Group: Revelation 3:7-13

W/C 28TH MARCH

DISCUSSION (SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES)

What are some favourite stories of the underdog or success despite overwhelming odds? Why do we enjoy them so much?

NOTES:

INVESTIGATE (SUGGESTED TIME: 45 MINUTES)

Read Revelation 3:7-13

How is Jesus described in this passage?

How is the church in Philadelphia praised?

How is the church in Philadelphia rebuked?

What is the church in Philadelphia exhorted to do?

What is the church in Philadelphia promised by God?

NOTES:

What can our church learn about from this letter to Philadelphia? Anything that we are also doing well? Anything that we need to be rebuked by?

What would it look or feel like to be criticised by other Christians? How can we maintain our faith in those times?

When do you feel as though you have limited strength or influence? When has God overcome those to still use you for his kingdom?

What is the reward for perseverance (v12)? How can this promise keep us going?

NOTES:

PRAY (SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES)

- Praise God that he can use the weakest and the smallest of us to do his work
- Praise God that he vindicates those that are faithful to him
- Pray that we may be careful in our words to other faithful brothers and sisters in Christ

Sermon 9: Revelation 3:14-22

SUNDAY 3RD APRIL

BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: Revelation 21:1-8

Tuesday: Revelation 21:9-27

Wednesday: Revelation 22:1-5

Thursday: Revelation 22:6-11

Friday: Revelation 22:12-21

MEMORY VERSE:

Revelation 3:21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches

CENTRAL PRAYER

7:45pm Wed 6th April meeting will be held at Neutral Bay

Personal Reflection

FOLLOWING OUR REVELATION SERIES

- Re-read specific passages related to the seven churches
- Re-read any notes you may have made from the sermons or connect group studies (sermons are available online if you need to re-listen to any of them)
- Summarise one take away point for you from each church
- Pray

EPHESUS (REV 2:1-7)

SMYRNA (REV 2:8-11)

PERGAMUM (REV 2:12-17)

THYATIRA (REV 2:18-29)

SARDIS (REV 3:1-6)

PHILADELPHIA (REV 3:7-13)

LAODICEA (REV 3:14-22)

Additional Notes:

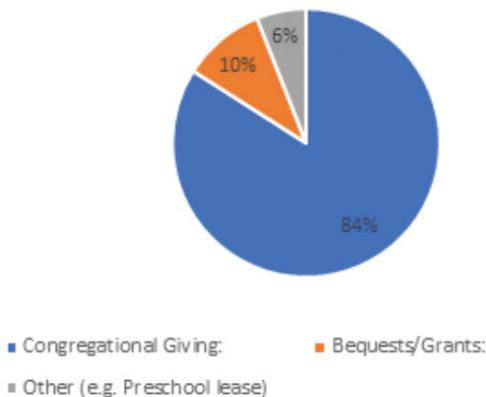
GIVING AT CHURCH

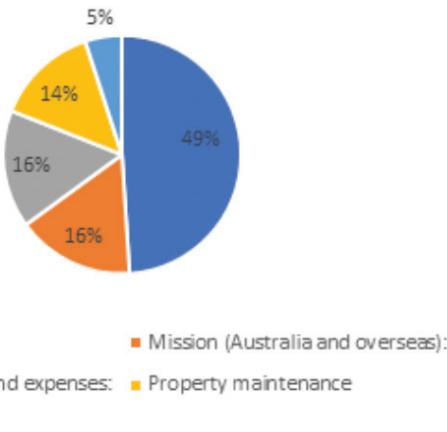
God has been gracious and generous to us, and we are called to give back. A majority of the income for The Bridge Church is funded by the generosity of our congregations, and what we give is used to further the work of the Gospel.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” James 1:17

The money we receive through giving is used to help spread the Good News through our ministries both locally and further afield, to maintain our buildings as places for us to meet and worship and on the administration and management of the work performed by our Ministry Teams.

Here's how God blessed us with income and how we've used the generous gifts in 2021:





Put another way, the generous, planned and intentional giving of our congregations supports 10 physical and online services on a Sunday across three locations - Kirribilli, Neutral Bay and Macquarie Park, ministering to over 1000 members, together with youth and kids ministries for around 250 children; 21 International and Australian mission partners, Services to Greenway Community Housing and Aged Care Facilities; Everyday English, Playtime, Outreach Events, Explore Courses, Wellbeing and Care Seminars and Scripture in Schools.

If you would like to partner with our church, you can give by using our bank account details below, or head to our website for more details, including the option to give by credit card thebridgechurch.org.au/give

Bank Account details
 The Bridge Church
 BSB: 032-099
 Account number: 637189



The Bridge Church