



GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – DEAR CHURCH,  
WEEK 1 – JANUARY 13, 2018 - REVELATION 1:9-20

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

1) Spend a little time talking about your Christmas break or vacation. Or...share a wild or bizarre dream that you can still remember.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

In Revelation 2-3 we read seven messages/ letters that John was commissioned to write to seven different churches in what is now considered modern day Turkey. (See the map to see where these churches were geographically located.) These letters help us to see what the early church was getting right, what they were missing or messing up, and where they needed some encouragement.



The word “revelation” would more accurately be translated “apocalypse”, but when the original Greek language was translated into English, apocalypse was not a well-known word, so the translators chose to use the word Revelation. Using bizarre images, supernatural creatures and cryptic language, John speaks of a future day when evil will be defeated and God’s peace will reign.

The number seven was understood to be a complete and perfect number. These seven letters are written not just for the seven churches mentioned, but for all churches in all times. The good news for those churches, as well as for us, is that Jesus stands in the midst of his congregations.

John is on Patmos about 35 miles off the coast of southwestern Turkey. He is in exile because of his teaching of the faith. Now he has time to pray and listen and then write this incredible vision of God’s power and love. He is a partner with the church in their suffering and writes to them to remind them to persevere and to hold onto the hope they have received in Jesus.



The vision of Jesus that John has is reminiscent of Daniel 7:9-14. The suffering of the people has reached its peak and one who was like a “son of man” approached the Ancient of Days and was given authority and power and glory. The person speaking to John is the one that is talked about in Daniel 7 – it is Jesus, the Messiah.

The curtain has been pulled back and John sees the glory of the Lord and hears Jesus speaking. We now get to listen in on this message and see what it is that the church of 2019 can learn from these words that Jesus spoke to the early church.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### Read Revelation 1:9-20

*<sup>9</sup> I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup> On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." <sup>12</sup> I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup> The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. <sup>15</sup> His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. <sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. <sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. <sup>19</sup> "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. <sup>20</sup> The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*

- 2) Though apocalyptic writing was not out of the ordinary during the first century it is sometimes difficult for us to understand. Have you ever spent much time reading through the book of Revelation? What were your thoughts? Did you find the images that are used difficult to understand?
- 3) Why do you think John was on the island of Patmos? How do his words in verse 9 connect with what might have been happening in those churches he is writing to?
- 4) What was happening on the day that John received this vision? (see verse 10) Have you ever had an experience like this, or some other experience you cannot quite explain when you have been worshipping or praying?
- 5) Read Daniel 7:9-14. How does the vision of Daniel 7 compare to the one you just read in Revelation 1? What are the similarities or differences?

- 6) Is there anything about the way Jesus is described in Revelation 1:9-20 that surprises you? Why do you think John uses this kind of language to describe Jesus? What words would you use to describe Jesus?
- 7) Why do you think that the churches are referred to as lampstands? Is that a helpful image for you as you think about the mission of the church? Why or why not?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) It is comforting to know that Jesus tells John that he is with him and does not need to be afraid. Share a place in your own life where you need to be reminded of Jesus' words in verses 17-18 and pray for each other.