

the Royal

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9

Week 30 Vision, Chapter 2

This week is the second chapter of "Vision", the final book in the Royal series. Just like last week, the next two studies will focus on apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic is from the Greek word apocalypso, which means to uncover and reveal what has been veiled or covered up.

What we will focus on this week are the following:

1. Examining the 5 vision observations as stated by Pastor Miles in the lesson plan this week.
2. Review the sermon from Sunday, in Revelation 1:1-18 as a group, discussing new insights that were discovered.
3. We will continue in our "Read, Reflect, and Respond" by using Revelation 2 as our text. This chapter begins Jesus' addressing of the seven churches in their current state. This chapter only covers four of these churches.
4. We want to focus on two different points. First, what was Jesus' view of the heretics infiltrating the four chapters in this chapter? Secondly, what was Jesus' view of the perseverance of those in the church that maintained sound doctrine?
5. Finally, if necessary get others involved how we can apply this for us today. Is there a call to action for us today? If so, what is it?

The passages we are examining this week are really very encouraging for us today. These passages highlight the hope for all of us that are believers in Christ. They are even more encouraging to those that were and are being persecuted for their faith. But they also challenge others that are in the church, who claim Christ, but practice and teach false doctrine. After this study we should be able to take away and discern the difference between truth and heresy.

We hope you have a great discussion and will continue to grow in your faith with the study of this genre.

Isn't it fun studying Scripture!!!!

In Him,

Rock Church Small Group Team

Part 1: Opening/Recap Weekly Challenge/Small Group Sermon Discussion

Opening

- Open in Prayer
- Worship (optional)
- Recap Week 29 Homework
- Small Group Sermon Discussion

Recap Week 29 Weekly Challenge

- 1. Recite Isaiah 65:17.**
2. Discuss experiences practicing them Study.

Small Group Sermon Discussion

1. Review the 5 Vision Observations

1. Apocalyptic language was written to give persecuted people **hope** and encourage them to persevere.
2. Apocalyptic language is a **symbolic** representation of what God is doing and will do in the spiritual realm and not a videotape of what will happen.
3. Old Testament Apocalyptic language provides background to the symbolic meaning of the images in Revelation (or New Testament) Apocalyptic language.
4. Apocalyptic language uses symbols to describe the final **battle** in the war of good and evil; between God and Satan.
5. Apocalyptic language illustrates God's final actions of judgment and restoration, and in the end God **wins**.

2. Review the message from Revelation 1:1-18 as a group. Did you learn anything new from the passage that you were not already aware of?

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Revelation 2

Read Revelation 2

As identified in the sermon series, Revelation was written to the 7 churches. Chapter 2 deals specifically with 4 of the 7 churches. The following will briefly point out the state of each of these churches. We will see what the Lord identified as the positives and negatives of each church. This will enable us to get a thorough context and understanding of the chapter, and the book as a whole:

Revelation 2 – 4/7 Churches Status

1. The Church in Ephesus

- They were patient and enduring, and not bearing the toil of the evil ones.
- They have tested all of those that call themselves apostles, but are not.
- Are continuously enduring, and not growing weary, for His name's sake.
- But they have abandoned their first love (Jesus).
- He commands them to repent and start serving and loving Him as they once did at the beginning.
- They hate the work of the Nicolaitans, whom Christ also hates. (The Nicolaitans were a heretical sect made up of followers of Nicolas, whom was possibly a deacon mentioned in Acts 6:5, at the selection of the seven chosen to serve the church. They were most noted as believing in the "doctrine of Balaam," who taught Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. They are believed to have later become a Gnostic heretical sect.)

2. The Church in Smyrna

- Were in poverty, and heavily persecuted by those that called themselves Jews. Christ attributed them to belong to Satan.
- Some will be thrown into prison, and some will endure until death. Jesus called for perseverance and they will receive the crown of life (eternal life).

3. The Church in Pergamum

- They hold fast to His name and did not deny the faith.
- However some amongst them are holding true to the doctrines of Balaam (see Nicolaitans above).
- They were commanded to remove the teaching, or those that hold that heretical teaching, from among them, or the Lord will destroy them.
- However, those that hold to the truth will receive "hidden manna," and a "white stone with a new name."

4. The Church in Thyatira

- They have endured in their works, faith, love and service.
- They are tolerating a Jezebel-type that is infiltrating the church with sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols (see Nicolaitans above).
- Those that follow this sect, and commit similar sins with them will suffer with great tribulation.
- Those that follow only Christ and His truth will not be burdened. But once he returns and conquers, will have authority with Him over all of the earth.

- ▶ Read Revelation 2 as a group.

Notice all the key attributes of every church as you read through the entire chapter.

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Revelation 2

(continued)

Reflect Revelation 2

- 1.** What are some of the common themes you found in the attributes of each church?
 - ▶ List some of the positive and negative attributes.

Respond Revelation 2

- 1.** Jesus seems quite disgusted with the heretics (Nicolaitans) and their infiltrating the church with their sexual immorality and false teachings. Discuss what Jesus stated should be the believers response to such people. How has this conflicted to your own belief and experience with such people?
 - ▶ Consider verses 6, 9, 15-16, 21-23.
- 2.** However, Jesus seems extremely pleased with the faith and perseverance of those remaining in the faith, and believing in sound teaching. Discuss the rewards for those that continue to endure.
 - ▶ Consider verses 7, 10-11, 17, 24-28.
- 3.** Is there an applicable call to action after listing and discussing both questions above? If so, what would it be?

Part 3: Weekly Challenge

- ▶ **Scripture Reading Guide:** Go through the devotions that correspond with each day. These are given to everyone in their lesson plan every week. (December 6 – December 12)
- ▶ **Scripture Memory:** “I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary.” **Revelation 2:3 (ESV)**
- ▶ **Bible Study Tool:** Navigate through www.blueletterbible.com and discover the great resources available for free for your personal gain.
- ▶ **Spiritual Formation Practice:** Each week we will introduce a “spiritual discipline” that each person can try to adapt to their personal devotion. This week is the **Discipline of Study.**

The discipline of study has been repeated week after week because in order to understand anything in its entirety, the discipline of pursuing it has to become an essential habit. Scripture is no different, and studying the various parables is even more crucial to study. Author’s intent of writing a historic document is always hard to grasp, but is possible to get to a clear understanding of.

So for “Vision”, the final part in the Royal series, we are going to really focus on study. We really want to challenge you to grow in the study and knowledge of the Word, so we can grow closer to Him.