

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Spring Series of Small Groups2gO. Each week, we will explore Pastor John's DVD messages from his current series entitled "Can You See Him?"

We encourage you to get the most out of this study by considering the following:

- ◆ Invite friends, family, neighbors to join with you in going through this study. Invitations are included in your packet.
- ◆ Pray! Ask God to bless your group and send the people to your group that He wants there.
- ◆ Plan on group time lasting about 60 minutes. Many of the groups share a meal or snack together.
- ◆ Encourage one another to help out in the group. An example might be someone volunteering to record the prayer and praise requests. You will be amazed at what God can accomplish in 6 weeks!

We are hoping that you will get familiar with the study of God's Word in what we call , a SOAP format. Following this 6-week study, we encourage you to continue growing in the study of God's Word with others.

Have fun and know that God is cheering you on! He is in the midst of your group. Even if that group is 2 people. We have included additional tips and resources in your booklet. WSFC Small Group Pastor is also available should you have ideas, concerns or need support.

Should you desire to host another 6-week group please e-mail joan@wsfc.org. Bless you for following the Lord's leading. I am in prayer for you and your group.

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SG2gO Tips & Resources

It is our goal at WSFC to respect your time. We have put together some helpful tips and resources to make the time you invest in this study worth it. You will get the most out of this study by considering the following:

- ◆ Put this study on your calendar and make it a priority.
- ◆ Pray for God to bless everyone in your group.
- ◆ Take active part in the group. Agree to share duties.
- ◆ Consider using the study as a tool to connect with others.
- ◆ Be considerate of others as you share. Each member needs time to share.
- ◆ Bring your Bible to each meeting. Scripture references in this study have been copied from various translations. For more information on any of the translations go to www.biblegateway.com. Select the version that is best for you.
- ◆ Save time for prayer and praise each week. Celebrate where the Lord has each person in his or her walk.
- ◆ If you are new in your walk with Jesus, you are encouraged to attend a New Believer's class on Thursday at WSFC. You can e-mail dan@wsfc.org for more information.
- ◆ Should you need pastoral care services pick up a brochure for Healing Ministries @ Connecting Point in the WSFC Lobby. Contact numbers are in the brochure.
- ◆ Other resources include: Blueletterbible.com, Crosswalk.com, WSFC website (wsfc.org), and John Courson's Application Commentary New Testament, International Varsity Press: Thomas Nelson, Publisher, 2003.

Week ① PORTRAITS OF JESUS

Scripture: Revelation 1:17-18

“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. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.’”

Observation:

There were none before Jesus, and there will be none after. Nothing was before him, and nothing will come after. He is the First and the Last. He is from everlasting TO everlasting. It is crazy wild to think about “the *eternal* one” while we are still in our *temporal* state. It is hard to comprehend. What is even more amazing is that Jesus is the one that was once dead but now is alive, and he holds the keys to both death and hell. He can raise us from the dead and he can deliver us from hell.

In Revelation there are Seven “I AM” statements that support that Jesus is everlasting.

1. I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” (Rev. 1:8)
2. I AM Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last” (Rev. 1:11)
3. I AM the First and the Last” (Rev. 1:17)
4. I AM He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18)
5. I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” (Rev. 21:6)
6. I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev. 22:13)
7. I AM the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16)

Do you think Jesus was trying to make a point?

The answer is YES. In Christ all things were made, in Him all things were reclaimed, and in Him all things will be fulfilled.

The Book of Revelation, often thought of as scary and foreboding, is truly a book of comfort. Jesus is the only one that has a firm grasp upon our past, present and future. When we fall at his feet, both out of worship or out of worry, he is there, placing his right hand upon us. He speaks words of comfort. Hear his voice today say: “Do not be afraid.”

Week ② WWJST

Scripture: Revelation 2:7,11,17, 29 & 3:6,13, 22

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Observation:

What **w**ould **J**esus **s**ay **t**oday? If Jesus were to walk through our churches today (and whose to say he isn't!) what would he say to us? Would it be good, bad or ugly? Would he silently endure our gatherings then sneak out before the last song? Would he kick over tables, pronounce a warning, or celebrate life in the Spirit right along with us?

In reading Revelation chapters two and three, one must ask these and other such questions. In these two chapters we find seven letters addressed to messengers in seven churches (also called lampstands) that Jesus walked amidst. This is kind of like reading other peoples mail. From it we can learn some important things. That is IF we are willing to listen.

A number of biblical historians believe each of these letters represent a prophetic view of Church history beginning at 30 AD and running into the Tribulation Period. We could simply read these letters as messages to people who lived two thousand years ago, however, it would be better if we read them as personal messages to us today. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit and they hold great value for us that are willing to hear what God's Spirit is saying.

It is no accident that Jesus keeps talking about hearing. It is of the up most importance. It does no good to spend your life in the church without hearing and giving careful consideration to what Jesus is saying.

The goal of hearing is three-fold:

1. Learn from the messages to the churches.
2. Don't repeat some of the things they are challenged regarding.
3. Be encouraged to overcome, hold fast and live holy lives.

Application:

- ◆ God promised a blessing to those who read, hear, and keep the Word of God (see Revelation 1:3). Perhaps it would be good for your small group to divide up Revelation 2 and 3 and read it out loud together.
- ◆ What message should Christians today get from these letters?

Pray - Share prayer needs and praises.

Week ③ GREAT HARVEST

Scripture: Revelation 14:16

“So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.”

Observation:

The day will come when Jesus will take a seat in the clouds. He will wear a golden crown on His head and be holding a sharp sickle in His hand. It will be harvest time and King Jesus will be the one doing the harvesting. The time of judgments will arrive and the harvest will be ready. As a matter of fact, it will be *more* than ready. It will be *ripe*.

The Greek word for *ripe* is *xeranino* and it means “totally ripe, rotten or withered.” God will withhold His judgment until the very last minute. I believe, and many biblical commentators agree, that the Church will have already been ruptured and that the world will be totally corrupt. No rational individual will rightfully claim that Jesus acted too soon. He will wait until the very last moment for some to respond and avoid suffering eternal damnation in hell.

2 Peter 3:9 affirms this: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” God’s heart is clear and compassionate. Yet, the day will come when Jesus’ sickle will swing over the earth and there will be no more time available.

Application:

- ◆ Do you ever wonder if we’ll be surprised by who gets into heaven, and who doesn’t?
- ◆ The Bible tells us that we can RECOGNIZE Christians by their fruit, not JUDGE them (see Matthew 7:20). Do you find it hard to draw the line between the two?
- ◆ Will you be ready for the Great Harvest?

Prayers

Share prayer needs and praises.

Week ④ THE MOST INTERESTING MAN IN THE WORLD

Scripture: Revelation 19:16

"On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Observation:

John the Revelator "saw heaven standing open and there was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True" (Revelation 19:11). This is quite an image. This verse is sometimes called the climax of the entire Bible. The Old Testament prophets prophesied this event. Jesus himself predicted it, and the New Testament writers wrote about it. This will be EPIC.

But wait... there's more. So much more. The following verses (12-16) are loaded with amazing imagery of The Most Interesting Man in the World: JESUS. Can you see Him?

Jesus will return as the KING and every earthly king will submit to him. The AntiChrist and his ten puppet kings will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome because He is indeed King of kings and Lord of lords. This title goes back to Moses declaration to Israel in Deuteronomy 10:16,17: *"Circumcise your hearts therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, might and awesome..."*

In 1 Timothy 6:15,16 the Apostle Paul challenges his young apprentice to *"keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light...to him be honor and might forever. Amen."* King Nebuchadnezzar's confession to Daniel echoes these words, *"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings..."* (Daniel 2:47). In each and every passage we are given the portrait of a powerful King that rules with authority - one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess: "YOU ARE LORD!"

Application:

- ◆ What does it mean for Jesus to be King and Lord of your life?
- ◆ What challenges do you face while living a righteous life in a world that does not recognize or accept Jesus as King.

Prayer

Week ⑤ PARDON ME

Share prayer needs and praises.

Scripture: Revelation 21:5

“He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Observation:

Following the Millennium, Jesus will not fix this old creation. He will re-create everything. Genesis 2:10-14 tells us that in the original creation a river watered the Garden of Eden and then divided into four other rivers. In contrast, the new creation will have a fountain that provides the water of life. All who thirst after God will be given the privilege of drinking freely!

David Breese says, *“We are going to stand in the presence of the one who occupies a throne, from which the heavens and the earth flee away, and we will see Jesus Christ, not now simply as the Person of Galilee in the old days, but as the God who presides over history.”* As well, Jesus will preside over the judgement of the dead. He will be seated upon the great white throne and read what is recorded in the Book of Life. This is going to be an awesome day (to say the least)! What is more impressive is that this Judge not only pronounces judgement but has the authority to wipe it out! Only He can pardon sinners. Only He can wipe away every tear. Only He can take away pain, death, and sorrow. Only Jesus can make ALL THINGS NEW.

Application:

- ♦ We have an accuser (the devil) that throws our past into our face. He keeps record of wrongs, much like bad credit scores or a criminal rap sheet. But Jesus, has another record - the Book of Life. What do you think that book will say about you?
- ♦ Imagine a new heaven and a new earth. How would you describe that? What are some characteristics that would describe it?

Prayer

Week ⑥ I'LL BE BACK...

Share prayer needs and praises.

Scripture: Revelation 22:7,12, 20

"Behold, I am coming soon!"

"Behold, I am coming soon!"

"Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

Observation:

"Behold, I am coming soon" can be interpreted in two ways: *shortly* or *suddenly*. *Shortly* means *before long*. *Suddenly* means *very fast*. This is important because some people have the wrong impression that Jesus should have come already (*shortly*) rather than the truth that when He comes, He will come very fast. Perhaps even in "the blink of an eye." The Greek word most commonly associated with this is *parousia* which means "presence" or "arrival." In the New Testament it is often used to refer to the second coming of Jesus (see Matt. 24:3, 27, 37; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; James 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28).

The Bible is FULL of promises from start to finish. Here in the last chapter of Revelation have Jesus' final promise: "I am coming back." To that promise, John the Revelator responds with a hearty "AMEN." *Amen* means "so be it, truly" as a declaration of affirmation. *Amen* is the final word not only in the Book of Revelation but also in the entire New Testament.

In Revelation 3:16, Jesus calls Himself "the Amen, the faithful and true witness." In other words, He is staking His claim of authenticity upon His very self. He is not a man that He should lie. He is the faithful, true and FINAL word. When Jesus makes a promise and supports it with his very nature, then you can be sure of one thing: it will happen.

J. Vernon McGee says, "These words are faithful and true" means that no man is to trifle with them by spiritualizing them or reducing them to meaningless symbols. Our Lord is talking about reality."

