



ONE PLUS GOD

**Get going: We don't have forever to get into forever**  
**A study on Revelation**

**Dr. Wynand de Wet (aka Pastor Wayne)**

**Week 2**

**What Jesus expects from His Church, part 1**

**One Plus God Ministries**

**Missions Minded, Every Day, Everywhere.**

**2890 Harding Hwy E. Unit G Marion, OH 43302**

**P 740.251.7184 W [www.oneplusgod.org](http://www.oneplusgod.org) E [info@oneplusgod.org](mailto:info@oneplusgod.org)**

## **Revelation: Lesson plan**

Lesson 1 — September 3 — Who is Jesus? (Rev 1)

Lesson 2 — September 10 — What Jesus expects from His Church, part 1 (Rev 2 & 3)

Lesson 3 — September 17 — What Jesus expects from His Church, part 2 (Rev 2 & 3)

Lesson 4 — September 24 — In the throne room with God: Father, Lamb, and Spirit (Rev 4 & 5)

Lesson 5 — October 1 — Judgement and Grace (Rev 6 & 7)

Lesson 6 — October 8 — The Church has a mission (Rev 8 to 11)

Lesson 7 — October 15 — The Christmas-story through the eyes of Revelation (Rev 12)

Lesson 8 — October 22 — Evil attempting to imitate God (Rev 13)

Lesson 9 — October 29 — Time for grace will run out... (Rev 14 to 16)

Lesson 10 — November 5 — The efforts of Darkness will intensify, yet come to an end (Rev 17-18)

Lesson 11 — November 12 — God's triumph over a one-sided war (Rev 19 to 20)

Lesson 12 — November 19 — God's complete reign is coming soon! (Rev 21 to 22)

### Revelation 2-3, The letters to the 7 Churches

A couple of things seem to be common to all, or at least most of the letters. Each of them refer to Jesus in a way that He has been described by in chapter 1. Next, Jesus reminds the Church that He knows their deeds, the good and the bad. This is both encouraging, and a little scary at the same time—not only does Jesus know about the Church’s struggles, and is therefore ready to support the Church, but He also knows about all the wrongs, and is therefore also ready to judge righteously! No wonder this is soon followed by a call to repentance and obedience, which will one day be rewarded. And then it is so amazing that these rewards are all tailor made to fit the character of each individual Church! Each letter ends with an encouraging warning to truly listen, and obey what the Spirit says to the Church.

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### Revelation 3:1, Sardis: Alive...or dead?!

Sardis has the reputation of being alive, although Jesus judges them to be dead (v. 1b)... Sardis seemed to be so “alive”: It had the reputation of being quite a wealthy city, because of some gold that was found in nearby streams, a flourishing textile trading, and fertile soil. Also, the goddess Artemis was worshiped here, who was supposed to be able to bring the dead back to life!

So, just like the city, the Church in Sardis seemed just as “alive”: They enjoyed prosperity, and a time of no affliction. Yet, Jesus sees them as “dead”... The message comes across even stronger with some word-play, as the Greek word for “dead” (*nekros*) actually reminds one of the *nekropolis*, the “city of the dead”, quite a big cemetery, just outside of the city gates of Sardis.

This warning to Sardis reminds one of a similar warning from Prov. 14:12 and 16:25.

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**Revelation 3:2a and 3d, Church of the Living God: “Wake up!”**

That the Church needs to “wake up” is a call that believers from Sardis would understand all too well. This city was built on a steep citadel hill, which basically turned it into a fortress, extremely hard to be conquered. Yet, it was captured twice by surprise attacks: First in 546 BC by the Persians, and then again in 214 BC by the Syrians!

This Church lacks vigilance, they have settled comfortably, like a household getting ready for bed, not realizing that a “thief” might come! Christ is not being served by people who are only half-awake! (See also Matt. 24:42-44, Mark 13:35-37, Luke 12:39, 1 Thess. 5:1-6, and 2 Pet. 3:10).

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**Revelation 3:1a, 2b-3c, 4a, Use the Light, be strengthened, remember, obey, and repent**

Jesus reminds the Church that He is over the Church leaders, and that He is also bringing the Light of the Holy Spirit. Rev. 3:1a is indeed a reminder of Zechariah 4:2 and 10, where the golden lamp stand has 7 small bowls, each with a place for 7 wicks—49 points of light, releasing an impressive, effective, sharp, inextinguishable light that motivated Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple. In the same way Christ and the Holy Spirit can wake the Church up, and bring it back to life. This is the starting point of it all!

This revival needs to start with the *remainder*, those who are still awake (v. 2b), and haven't "soiled their clothes" (v. 4a). However, it needs to happen quickly before they die too! *Urgency* is of the utmost importance! The world may think this Church is still on the go, but from God's perspective it is almost totally dead...

The next step is to walk back on their spiritual journey, and *remember* the positive, spiritual high points (v. 3a). This next generation of believers need to remember the power of the Gospel Message the first generation of Christians had once received, a Message that came to life in the parables, miracles, actions, words, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! This is the Message that the generations need to *continue to obey* (v. 3b), and because they hadn't done this, they need to humble themselves and *repent* (v. 3c)!

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**Revelation 3:4b-6, A reward to the faithful**

Given that Sardis had a thriving textile industry it must have been exciting for them to hear that they could one day walk with the Lord dressed in white clothes (vv. 4b-5a)! We find the color white no less than 19 times in Revelation, illustrating for instance purity, triumph, being holy, something festive, and salvation. White robes were not only worn on festive occasions, but also during sacred ceremonies, and even by Roman generals who celebrated their victories.

Jesus also promises citizenship of the Kingdom of God (v. 5b), promising that He will never blot out the names of persistent believers who had faithfully endured from the "book of life", as often happened with earthly citizenship rolls (see also Ex. 32:32-33). The peak of this beautiful passage is surely the promise from Jesus that He will one day speak up on our behalf, and thereby overturning the possible negative judgement of other people and/or human courts (v. 5c; see also Matt. 10:32, Luke 12:8)!

It is therefore always worthwhile to listen to, and obey the Spirit (v. 6)!

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**Revelation 3:17-18, Rich...yet poor, blind and naked!**

Laodicea thought they had it made: On the crossroads of prominent trade routes they got richer by the day. Their textile products became known worldwide, especially the clothes made from fine, black wool. The medical school became famous for its wonderful eye medicine, made from powdered Phrygian sandstone. They became so rich that they refused Rom help to rebuild the city, after its destruction by the earthquake of 60 AD!

Therefore, when Jesus looks at the heartbeat of the Church of Laodicea, and describes them as being “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (v. 17), they must have understood immediately that something must be terribly wrong! How should they fix this? Simple: Going back to the heart of God to buy their wealth from Him, get dressed by Him, and receive His salve for their eyes (v. 18)... There is no other way on how to stay a strong Church—you need to keep your eye on the ball, and the “ball” is the heart of God!

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**Revelation 3:19-22**

These letters are being written, because Jesus loves us (it is interesting that the Greek *fileō*, rather than *agapaō*, is used here as it is sometimes argued that *agapaō* is more reserved for Godly love, and *fileō* more for human, friendship type love—it seems that *fileō* cannot exist without *agapaō* anyhow...). It is because He loves us that He needs to rebuke / discipline us (v. 19a; see also Prov. 3:11-12, 13:24, and Hebrews 12:1-13)!

Being “earnest”, in other words, to be *deeply and passionately committed to Jesus*, to *repent wholeheartedly* is what is *urgently* required from the Laodicean Church (v. 19b), as Jesus is already at the door (v. 20a)! It is time to hear the knock, open the door, invite Jesus in, and have table communion with Him (v. 20b)! Endurance will lead to an eternal celebration in the victory, rule and glory of our King and Father (v. 21)!

Therefore, listen to and obey the Spirit—it is without a doubt worthwhile (v. 6)!

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**Resources**

In our previous lesson we learned about the 4/14 window. Today we learn about another window, called the 10/40 window. While the former was an age window, this refers to the geographical, roughly rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, mostly between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. This is also often referred to as the



“Resistant Belt”, with the majority of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists living here. Other countries, such as Indonesia, that are close to the 10/40 window, with similar concentrations of unreached people groups have lately been included in this “window”. The Joshua Project folks are doing an amazing job in keeping us updated on the unfinished task in this critically important area of the world—follow this link to learn more: [http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10\\_40\\_window](http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10_40_window).

### **Want to dig deeper, or just stay connected?**

- Email pastor Wayne/Wynand with your questions/remarks at [wynand@OnePlusGod.org](mailto:wynand@OnePlusGod.org).
- Call pastor Wayne/Wynand at 567-356 2007.
- Connect with us on Facebook:
  - Pastor Wayne/Wynand: <https://www.facebook.com/wynand.dewet.7>
  - One Plus God Ministries: <https://www.facebook.com/OneplusgodMinistries>

### **Want to grow in your faith?**

- Join us on a retreat - next up is our couples retreat (Men’s retreat is sold out)
- Join us on a short-term missions trip
- We love one-on-one meetings to learn and grow together
- How about we come and share with your youth or small group?

### **References**

Koester, C. R. (2001). *Revelation and the end of all things*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans

Witherington III, B. (2003). *Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wright, N. T. (2011). *Revelation for Everyone*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press