



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 3

What Jesus expects from His Church, part 2

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 E 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)

A heartless/loveless ministry, and assimilation will hurt God’s mission for the Church (Ephesus, Pergamum & Thyatira)

Revelation 2:1-7, Ephesus: Let your First Love always be *passionately first!*

The Church in Ephesus can celebrate some great accomplishments: hard working, perseverance, intolerance for the wicked, discernment (v. 2), perseverance, endurance (v. 3), and they hated what God hates (v. 6)! What an impressive list?! Could anything be missing...?

Yes, what is missing is this: It is not only about doing good, and it is not even only about doing the right thing—it is about *doing the right thing with the right heart*, with a heart filled with a passionate love for our Savior (v. 4)!

How do we make this right? We turn around, look back into the past, repent, and obediently follow like we did right after we committed our lives to Christ (v. 5a). This is how we will be able to follow God’s mission to the lost boldly and passionately!

Revelation 2:12-17, Pergamum: Warning—do not conform or assimilate to the ways of an unbelieving society!

Pergamum had a massive altar for Zeus up on a hill, a temple to emperor Augustus, one to the goddess Roma, and another to Asclepius, god of healing—henceforth the place “where Satan has his throne” (v. 13a). Although some stayed true, even to the point of death (v. 13b), others were misled through making all kinds of compromises (vv. 14-15; see also Numbers 22). Some of these compromises were made for the sake of *economic survival*, others for *commercial gain*, or simply *sociability*. This kind of blending in does not help God’s mission at all, because people can only see we are on a different mission than they if we stand out!

Jesus will not stand for compromises or assimilation in our faith, but will rather choose to fight it—of course with a sword from His mouth (v. 16b)! Repentance is therefor needed (v. 16a), and the reward will be amazing: A meal from the hidden manna with the coming Lord (v. 17b; see also Ex. 16:32-34, and Heb 9:4), and a white stone with a new name which victorious believers will receive as in Isaiah 62:2 (v. 16b). White stones had many meanings in the ancient culture, for instance: A judge would give a white stone to show you're free to go, and a black one to show you're guilty; it could also function as an amulet, with the name of one of the gods, used for protection; once initiated into the cult of Asclepius you would receive a white stone with your new name... There were even more uses, of which one possibility that seems to fit our context could be that a white stone sometimes functioned as an "entrance ticket" to festivities—in other words, in connection with the heavenly, festive meal, this could be a possible fit!

Revelation 2:18-29, Thyatira: Warning—do not tolerate those who misleads the children of God through their false teachings!

Thyatira was home to many trade guilds, including potters, tailors, leather workers, coppersmiths, etc. No wonder that Lydia, the merchant of purple cloth, was from here (Acts 16:12-15). They would have understood the way that Jesus introduced Himself to this Church so well, "...the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze" (v. 18), just as they would also understood His judgement clearly, "...He will rule them with an iron scepter; He will dash them to pieces like pottery" (v. 27)! How powerful—with the same shepherd's rod that He had been leading and protecting His children, He will also powerfully destroy their enemy once and for all, just as simple as it would be smashing a clay pot to pieces...!

Thyatira is battling a woman, just like the Old Testament's Jezebel (1 Kings 18-19)—she continues to mislead the Church into assimilation, thus causing them to fall away from following God faithfully (vv. 20-21). Note however that God even gave her time to repent (v.

21)—a theme that we will encounter multiple times in Revelation as we continue our journey through this awesome Book! Jezebel continued to mislead people, luring them into believing and practicing “Satan’s so-called deep secrets”—probably referring to the teaching that lifestyle doesn’t really matter, only a knowledge of God, which Jesus however identifies for what it really was, “secrets of the devil himself” (v. 24; see also 1 John 1:8-10 and 1 Cor. 10:19-21; note that the Greek meaning of “learned” here refers not only to some form of knowledge, but rather to an “intimate fellowship”, in other words an active participation in Jezebel’s teachings). There is no doubt that great punishment will follow such a lifestyle of assimilation with evil (vv. 22-23).

Assimilation cannot further God’s mission. Neither in our teaching, nor in our lifestyle. We need to find the truth, and then live the truth. This is how people see the Light clearly, and can follow it just as easily!

God’s mission grows when the Church can face persecution and endure (Smyrna & Philadelphia)

Revelation 2:8-11, Smyrna: Persecution is coming—don’t be afraid, endure faithfully to the end!

The Jews had labeled the Christians as heretics, and made it impossible for them to continue worshiping in their synagogues. Some of them even led raids on their property, and prevented them from receiving state protection. Christian struggled to own land, lost many of their rights and privileges, and could hardly find high level jobs. All of these resulted in many Christians becoming very poor, yet Jesus is reminding them that He is the One who had overcome all adversity (v. 8), and from His perspective they are rich (v. 9a)! They should see these Jews for what they actually are—a synagogue of Satan (v. 9b; see also John 8:44)...! Jesus then warns them that this suffering and persecution will even continue with a growing intensity (another major theme in Revelation as we will soon discover), but that this does not

mean that He is not in control of it all—it will only continue for a set period of time, “ten days” (v. 10a-b; see also Dan. 1:12-16)!

To be victorious in God’s mission requires from the Church to be fearless, bold, courageous, obedient, and faithful...it requires from the Church to follow with blind faith, passionately and urgently, not even stopping at the fear of death (v. 10c; see also Matthew 10:28).

Revelation 3:7-13, Philadelphia: Walk encouraged towards the open door!

This was a small, poor Church, also denounced by members of the local synagogue (vv. 8-9). Yet, they must have been incredibly encouraged by Jesus sharing with them that He has the key to a “another” building, a far greater one, one that only He can give access to, and He is placing this open door, that no one can shut, right in front of them—simply amazing (vv. 7-8; see also Isaiah 22:22)! While society might see them as *outsiders*, God sees them as *insiders*, and one day they will all have to confess to that (v. 9)!

This open door probably has another meaning as Philadelphia was also a great military and trade center, and functioned as a “port to the East”. This opened up numerous missions opportunities for this Church who doesn’t deny the Name of Jesus (v. 8). They should continue to endure patiently (v. 10a), and remember that God can even protect them from the “hour of trial” (v. 10b). It is important to acknowledge that persecution in Revelation is never just senseless fate, but always a God-aligned privilege: It is in persecution that Christ’s power and victory are witnessed!

As a Church who had often lived through terrible earthquakes, it must have once again been so encouraging to hear that they will be rewarded by becoming a “pillar in the temple of God” (v. 12a), with special Godly Names (v. 12b)! Forever in the presence of God they will

stand strong and powerful, now carrying His Name...enjoying a heavenly citizenship of the most High (see also Ezek. 48:35)!

Resources

In today's teaching we have been confronted by the truth that even the Church needs to be ready to endure persecution. This is still happening today, and Voice of the Martyrs does an amazing job of helping us to keep track of what we can pray for when it comes to our brothers and sisters who are still being persecuted all across the globe - visit them at <http://www.persecution.com>.

Want to dig deeper, or just stay connected?

- Email pastor Wayne/Wynand with your questions/remarks at 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>

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