



Park Community Church

GENESIS ————— //

# BOOKENDS

// ————— REVELATION

Part Four | Revelation 2:8 – 3:22 | A Call to Conquer

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# Curriculum Guide

## The Goal

Park Community Church's small groups are built upon three pillars: gather, transformation, and impact. Using these three fundamental pillars, we anticipate the Holy Spirit to mold everyone in our small groups into the likeness of Christ as we push back the darkness in our city. Much of this work comes from knowing God personally, correctly, and intimately. Our hope is that the small group curriculum will facilitate a deeper understanding of God through his revealed Word in a way that transforms our lives together and moves us into Christ-like action.

## Context Questions

Context is key when it comes to interpreting the Bible. Each week, we hope that you will take a few minutes to remind one another of where you are at in Revelation. Don't feel bound to the suggested questions, but feel free to let the conversation flow naturally.

## Textual Questions

As a group, you will observe the text and look for the details. What you are looking for in this section is simply what the *text* is saying. Do not feel the need to jump into application, that time will come. This section will help build a textual framework for the reflection questions that follow.

## Reflection Questions

This section is designed to help your group move from hearing and understanding the Word to letting it shape your life. Each week you'll reflect together on questions that invite vulnerability, personal sharing, and accountability. Use this time to consider how the lesson applies to your daily life, whether through a new way of thinking, a fresh heart posture, repentance, celebration, or a conviction to live differently. The goal is that faith would be stirred in both belief and practice, encouraging one another toward growth in Christ.

# Week Five

*Smyrna / Revelation 2:8-11*

## Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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## Textual Questions

1. Smyrna was a wealthy and loyal Roman city, known for emperor worship and civic pride. How does this cultural and political context intensify the suffering described in Jesus' message to the church?
2. What does Jesus mean in verse 9 when he says, "I know your... poverty (but you are rich)."?
3. What words or phrases does Jesus use to describe himself in verse 8 and how do these specific descriptions relate to the situation of the church in Smyrna?
4. Who are the opponents mentioned in the passage and how are they characterized? What language does Jesus use to describe their identity and actions?
5. What time-related language appears in the passage (e.g. references to duration, testing, or future events)? What does this suggest about the nature of their suffering?
6. How does the closing phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," function within this specific message?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verse 8, Jesus introduces Himself as “the First and the Last, who died and came to life.”
  - a. Why do you think Jesus chooses this particular description when speaking to a church facing suffering and persecution?
  - b. How does remembering that Jesus passed through death and emerged victorious over it shape the way you face fear, uncertainty, or suffering?

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2. Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only churches of these seven that Jesus does not rebuke. Instead, He acknowledges their incredible suffering and persecution. Without minimizing their pain or offering false reassurance, Jesus does not promise a quick escape or an easier path forward. Rather, He meets them in their affliction, affirms their true riches, and calls them to fearless faithfulness rooted in His victory over death.
  - a. What does this reveal about how Jesus evaluates faithfulness in His church?
  - b. How does this challenge our assumptions about what a “healthy” or “successful” Christian life or church looks like?

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3. Imagine you are a part of the Church of Smyrna and Jesus spoke these words to you.
  - a. What would it be like to hear these warnings of a coming tribulation (v. 10)?
  - b. What fears, trials, or tests are you currently facing that Jesus is calling you to be faithful (v. 11)?

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4. Revelation pictures Christ holding the keys to death and being triumphant over its power, yet here believers are warned of certain tribulation and possible death.
- a. What does it mean that believers have the crown of life (v. 3:11), yet still wait for it (v. 2:10)?
  - b. How have you experienced this tension in your own life?

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# Week Six

## *Pergamum / Revelation 2:12-17*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

1. How does Jesus identify himself in verse 12 and how does it set the tone for the message that follows?
2. What does Jesus say he *knows* about the church in Pergamum? List the specific realities named in the text.
3. The phrase "where Satan's throne is" appears twice in this passage. Where does it occur, and what descriptions or actions are associated with it?
4. What accusations does Jesus bring against the church?
5. The teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans are referenced. What behaviors or outcomes are explicitly connected to these teachings in the passage?
6. What does the imagery of the "hidden manna" and the "white stone" mean within the promise?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verse 12, Jesus introduces Himself as the One “who has the sharp two-edged sword.”
  - a. Why do you think Jesus reveals Himself this way to a church living “where Satan’s throne is” (v. 13)?
  - b. How does this image prepare the church not only for external opposition, but for Jesus’ warning in verse 16; that He will come and confront compromise *within* the church by the sword of His mouth?

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2. Jesus commends the church in Pergamum for holding fast to His name and not denying the faith, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom (v. 13).
  - a. What pressures do you imagine believers in Pergamum faced living in a city saturated with imperial worship and pagan religion?
  - b. Where do you feel the strongest cultural pressure to compromise your faith today?

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3. Despite their faithfulness under persecution, Jesus brings a serious warning: “I have a few things against you” (v. 14).
  - a. Have you ever been tempted, even subconsciously, to believe that faithfulness in one area of your life excuses disobedience in another?

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4. Jesus confronts the church for tolerating teachings that lead God's people into idolatry and sexual immorality, reiterating the story and sin of Balaam (vv. 14–15). It seems that the church has endured people with these teachings rather than confronted them.
- a. Why do you think Jesus addresses compromise within the church even while affirming their courage and endurance?
  - b. In what ways is compromise often more dangerous than outright opposition?
  - c. How do you recognize spiritual drift in your own life? How do you recognize it in others?

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# Week Seven

*Thyatira / Revelation 2:18-29*

## Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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## Textual Questions

1. How does Jesus describe himself in verse 18? What visual or symbolic language is used and how does it frame the message to the church?
2. What does Jesus say he *knows* about the church in Thyatira?
3. How is the individual referred to as "Jezebel" described? What specific sins or behaviors are named in connection with her teaching?
4. How does Jesus distinguish between different groups within the church (e.g. those who follow the teaching versus those who do not)? What language marks these distinctions?
5. What promises are given to "the one who conquers" and "keeps my works until the end"? What gifts are described and what Old Testament language or imagery is quoted?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verse 18, Jesus introduces Himself as “the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.”
  - a. What do fiery eyes and bronze feet communicate about Jesus’ ability to see clearly, judge rightly, and remain unshakably holy (see v. 23)?
  - b. Why do you think Jesus reveals Himself this way to a church struggling with moral and spiritual compromise?
  - c. How does this picture of Jesus both comfort and unsettle you?

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2. Despite their spiritual growth, Jesus confronts the church for *tolerating* “that woman Jezebel,” who leads God’s people into sexual immorality and idolatry (vv. 20–21).
  - a. Why is tolerance framed here not as compassion, but as unfaithfulness?
  - b. How can misplaced tolerance or fear of conflict allow destructive influence to take root in the church?
  - c. Have you ever tolerated someone’s destructive sin because you didn’t want the conflict of confronting it?

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3. Often, Christians believe that maturing in Christ is doing and learning *more* (listening to more sermons, learning more theology, taking more classes, etc.). To the church of Thyatira, Jesus instructs his church to *hold fast* [to] what you have until I come (v. 25).
  - a. Do you ever confuse spiritual maturity with gaining more information?
  - b. What simple aspects, practices, or truths might Jesus be calling you to *hold fast* to in this season?

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4. In verse 26, Jesus says the one who conquers is the one who “keeps my works until the end.” In other words, it doesn’t matter how you start in your life with God, but how you exhibit faithfulness to the end.
- a. Why do you think endurance, rather than initial enthusiasm, is so central to Jesus’ vision of faithfulness?
  - b. Is there someone you know who has quietly and faithfully followed Jesus over the long haul, maybe even through trials?
  - c. What about their life bears witness to the kind of perseverance Jesus commends here?

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# Week Eight

*Sardis / Revelation 3:1-6*

## Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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## Textual Questions

1. How does Jesus describe himself in verse 1? What titles or attributes are used and how do they frame the message to the church?
2. What does Jesus say he *knows* about the church in Sardis?
3. How is the contrast between Sardis' reputation and reality expressed in this passage?
4. What commands does Jesus give in verses 2–3? List them in order and note how they build upon one another.
  - a. What reasons does Jesus give for these commands? What past actions or failures are referenced?
5. What warning is given if the church does not respond?
6. What promises are made to those who "conquer"?

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## Reflection Questions

1. Jesus delivers one of the most sobering assessments in Revelation: "You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (v. 1).
  - a. What might it look like for a church, or for an individual believer, to appear spiritually healthy on the outside while quietly drifting toward spiritual death?
  - b. Why is having the reputation of being alive, but being dead in reality so dangerous?

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2. In what ways have you felt the temptation to protect an image or reputation of spiritual health even when internally you were spiritually distant from God?

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3. What does Jesus mean in verse 2 when he calls the Church of Sardis to "wake up and strengthen what remains?"
  - a. When you feel spiritual drift in your life, what does remembering what you have received, keeping it, and repenting *actually* look like (v. 3)?

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4. Even in Sardis, Jesus acknowledges a faithful remnant who has not “soiled their garments” (v. 4). In the midst of a congregation described as spiritually dead, Jesus sees, knows, and honors the faithful few, promising to confess their names before His Father and the angels (v. 5).
- a. Have there been seasons when your faithfulness felt unnoticed or overlooked?
  - b. How does it encourage you that if you remain faithful, Jesus sees and remembers you, and will one day confess *your name* before his father?

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# Week Nine

*Philadelphia / Revelation 3:7-13*

## Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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## Textual Questions

1. How does Jesus describe himself in verse 7? What titles or attributes are used and what authority do they emphasize?
2. What does Jesus say he *knows* about the church in Philadelphia?
3. How is this address different from the other churches in Revelation?
4. How does the passage describe the church's strength?
5. What promises of protection or preservation are given to the church? How are these promises worded, and what time-related language appears?
6. What names are promised to the one who conquers? How many are mentioned and how are they described?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verse 8, Jesus recognizes that Philadelphia has “but little power.”
  - a. How does Jesus self-disclosure in this passage contrast Philadelphia’s lack of power?
  - b. Why might acknowledging weakness, rather than strength, be central to the Christian life?
  - c. Where do you find powerlessness most difficult to accept or trust God with in your life?

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2. Jesus says, “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you” (v. 10).
  - a. What does patient endurance look like in your life right now?
  - b. How does it comfort you to know that your perseverance is met by Jesus’ gentle care?

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3. Jesus begins His words to the church in Philadelphia by saying, “I know your works” (v. 8).
  - a. What kinds of “works” does Jesus seem to have in mind in this passage?
  - b. How does this challenge the tendency to think of good works only in terms of legalism or earning God’s favor?
  - c. How might Jesus’ commendation of good works reshape the way you pursue them?

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4. What blessings does Jesus promise to the church in Philadelphia as they endure and hold fast to Him?

a. How does this vision of blessing compare with what you typically imagine when you think about the “blessed life”?

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# Week Ten

*Laodicea / Revelation 3:14-22*

## Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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## Textual Questions

1. How does Jesus describe himself in verse 14? What titles or attributes are used and what do they emphasize about his authority and reliability?
2. What does Jesus say he *knows* about the church in Laodicea?
3. What claims does the church make about itself in verse 17? How does Jesus contrast these claims with his own assessment?
4. What language does Jesus use to describe the church's true condition? List the terms and note how they function together in the passage.
5. What counsel or instruction does Jesus give in verse 18?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verses 15–16, Jesus gives a strong warning that Laodicea (an extremely wealthy trading city) will be “spit out of His mouth” because of their lukewarmness. Often, we think of being lukewarm as simply being indifferent, distant, going through the motions, or being half-hearted in our faith. However, in verse 17, Jesus describes lukewarmness in terms of relying on self-sufficiency, wealth, and material security instead of wholehearted dependence on Him.
  - a. How have you historically understood “lukewarmness”?
  - b. Does reading this passage in its context challenge views you’ve held?
  - c. In what areas of your life might you be lukewarm as Jesus defines it, trusting in your own resources, wealth, or false sense of security, rather than fully depending on Him?

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2. In verse 19, Jesus writes, “to those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”
  - a. How would your life, and your relationship with Jesus, be different if He never corrected, challenged, or disciplined you out of love?
  - b. Why is his discipline an act of love?

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3. Jesus promises, “To the one who conquers, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne” (v. 21).
  - a. Do you sometimes read promises like this in Scripture and pass over them without fully taking them in?

- b. How does it change your perspective to realize that this is a real, tangible *hope* for those who endure and remain faithful; that one day we will actually share in Christ's reign and be seated with Him on the throne?

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4. We have now looked at all seven of the churches Jesus addresses in Revelation.
- a. Of these churches, which one have you most resonated with? Why?
- b. What is the encouragement from Jesus you are taking with you into the rest of this series?

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