

The Gospel From Patmos



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, flipchart, photocopier, pencils, paper.

Surveying the Source

Rev. 1:3

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Consider the challenges in understanding the book of Revelation.

► Discuss how the Spirit of Prophecy is key to unlocking Revelation's secrets.

► Explore how we can nurture the Spirit of Prophecy in our own lives.

Preparing to Lead

A summons is a notice to appear in court, often with serious consequences for failure to respond. Yet it is common for people to ignore a summons because they don't recognize or understand its significance. Our study this quarter is the book of Revelation, which many Chris-

tians and some Christian denominations ignore because they find it too difficult to understand or they do not see its relevance. However, not only is it relevant today, but along with the book of Daniel it is at the heart of the Advent message to the world.

Getting Started

A. There is no denying that at first glance, Revelation is a difficult book to understand. The disciples expressed similar concerns about the teachings of Jesus, and even asked Him, "Why do you speak to us in parables?" (Matt. 13:10). As a class, read Matt. 13:10–13, 44.

Ask: "What are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? Is searching out the meanings of Revelation like uncovering hidden treasure? How? How do you become one to whom it is granted to know these mysteries? Does Jer. 29:13 help your answer? What new thing can you do to seek God this week?"

B. As a class, read Rev. 4:4–8. *Say:* "From four living creatures covered with eyes to 24 crown wearing elders sitting on thrones, and seven flaming torches (which are the seven Spirits of God) burning in front of the throne, the images of heaven from this passage are stranger than anything on earth."

Ask: "Do these images inspire in you a desire to see them in person? Why or why not? What do the images of strange creatures singing non-stop, 24 elders, and incredible colors and sounds tell you about God?"

Delving Into the Word

A. Read Rev. 19:10 with the class and point out the phrase “Spirit of Prophecy” defined as the testimony of Jesus. *Discuss*:

If you have the truth about Jesus being the Son of God and can share that truth with others, do you have the Spirit of Prophecy? Is it really that simple?

Does having the Spirit of Prophecy mean you can foretell the future?

What is a prophet? (cf. Exod. 7:1; Isa. 51:16; Jer. 1:9)

If a prophet is God’s spokesperson, do we have prophets among us today? Who might they be? Could you be one?

Based on the biblical definition, does the belief that Ellen White’s ministry means the Adventist church has the Spirit of Prophecy hold up? Why or why not?

What can you do to become God’s spokesperson?

B. Ask the class how they would describe the book of Revelation to a new believer (e.g. scary, mysterious, global, triumphant, etc.). Write their answers on the flip chart. *Discuss*:

Martin Luther downgraded Revelation to an appendix in his German translation. Is there a danger if we exclude Revelation like this? If so, what is it?

Can you have confidence in your own salvation and still fear last day events?

The modern use of the word “apocalypse” often has dark overtones but it actually means “the revealing of divine mysteries” (*Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd Ed., 2014). Does this definition of apocalypse help with your understanding of the purpose for Revelation?

Is there a way for Revelation to make you feel inspired and hopeful? How might that be? Does the fact that Jesus Himself is the “Faithful Witness” (Rev. 1:5) encourage you? If so, how?

Discussing the Ideas

1. Can Revelation be understood without an understanding of Old Testament teachings? (Nearly 3/4 of Revelation contains allusions to the Old Testament.)

2. The message in the book of Revelation can be summed up in just five words: God wins in the end. Is this too simplistic a view of Revelation? Why or why not?

3. Is God by nature mysterious? If so, why would He want to reveal the secrets of Revelation to us?

4. Jesus has over 30 different names in

Revelation (e.g. Rev. 1:1, 5, 8–13; 2:18; 3:7, 14; 4:11; 5:5–9; 17:14; 19:11, 13–16; 20:4; 22:6, 13, 16.). How does this speak to His different roles? Which name is your favorite, and why?

5. The descriptions of the beings in Revelation seem weird or unbelievable. Could the book have been written without these images?

6. Many Christian hymns and songs are rooted in Revelation 4 and 5. Why might this be?

Closing the Activity

Say: “Police investigators slowly piece together facts they uncover until a clear picture emerges of the crime. In a similar way, the book of Revelation unfolds its message to earnest and diligent seekers of truth. And just as investigators use facts to solve the case, it is our daily and sin-

cere walk with God which allows us to grow in our knowledge of Him, and through that knowledge we come to understand the mysteries of Scripture. Will you commit to getting to know Him better this quarter as we study Revelation together?”

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The Spirit of Prophecy

The book of Revelation contains mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 13:10-13, 44.) These mysteries are available to anyone who has the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 19:10.)

List two spiritual activities you can do this week to get to know Jesus more intimately, so that you are blessed with the spirit of prophecy and can be a walking testimony for him.



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