

GLORY!

ZERO WEEK

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST IN REVELATION

PICTURE IN PICTURE

Scan the QR code for a picture of the GOAT. This picture of Jordan was created from many smaller portraits carefully placed as “tiles.”



In *Revelation*, Jesus revealed himself through hundreds of mini-portraits. This picture can, at times, be quite different from the Jesus we think we know from the Gospels.

The four Gospels—*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*—portray Christ from slightly different perspectives. However, *all* of them record his words and works while on Earth in a physical body before his ascension. Other than a brief appearance to Paul (Acts 9:3-6) and possibly Peter (Acts 10:13-16), only *Revelation* portrays Christ’s words and works *after* his time on Earth. This alter the picture we have of Christ can and should elevate our worship of him.

REVELATION 1:1–2, 4–11

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Each week, this section will provide additional resources (as the name suggests). Sometimes the content here will enhance what we’re examining in the study. Mostly, we will use this section for extra background information on each city that we will be studying. In the final four weeks, this section will encourage us to respond in worship.

It is our prayer that as you see Christ as you’ve never seen him before, you will be changed and your worship will increase.

DISCUSSION

What do you know about the book of *Revelation*?

ICEBREAKER

1. Who is revealed in the revelation? (1)

2. Who received the revelation and what did he do? (1b-2, 11)

3. What has Jesus accomplished? (5b-6)

4. How does John identify with those who will receive his letter? (9)

OBSERVATION

5. Why do you think Christ was described 2 times as “who is and who was and who is to come”? (4, 8b)

INTERPRETATION

6. In what ways does Jesus’ soon return encourage you to know him more completely?

APPLICATION

Everyone walking into this study has a different spiritual starting point. Maybe you know Jesus or maybe you don’t. If you have questions, talk to your coach today.

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STUDY NOTES

GLORY!

In 1368, the Vatican began constructing the Sistine Chapel. In 1506, Pope Julius II commissioned Michelangelo to redecorate the chapel which he completed in 1512. Just one glance at this treasured artwork reveals his strokes of genius. Tragically, as candles burned in the chapel intending to *display* Michelangelo's work, they incrementally *dulled* his original vibrancy. Of course, no one fully recognized the 500-year distortion...until the work of Gianluigi Colalucci.

In 1979, Colalucci experimented with, and successfully cleaned, a postage-stamp-sized section of Michelangelo's work. Twenty years later, on December 11, 1999, he completed the \$3 million restoration project. Colalucci's expertise unveiled the original glory, gradually lost over time.

Like with Michelangelo's work, many people have tried to put Christ on display. Tragically, over many centuries, they have also incrementally dulled the original portrait. Thankfully, we can always look to Scripture to solve this problem.

The very idea behind "glorious" means to "reveal" or "display." As we walk through our study, *Glory! A Portrait of Christ in Revelation*, Jesus will be on full display. For many of us, the Jesus of Revelation will challenge and expand our view of the God we worship. *Revelation* isn't just about future events, it's about the One who holds the future in his hands.

WHAT IS GLORY! ALL ABOUT?

Glory! answers this question in the very first verse, "***The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.***" It may strike you as odd that the word "soon" appears in a book that's approximately 2,000 years old. "Soon" as we will see, isn't just that these events will be tomorrow. The Greek word also describes the *suddenness* with which the events will happen. It is both near, but when it happens, it will happen quickly.

Glory! will *not* cover all of *Revelation*. Instead, we will spend most of our weeks (2–8) focusing on the seven letters to ***the seven churches***. These churches ***are in Asia***, but interestingly, they form a path by which a delivery man may drop off each letter to its location. Scan the QR code to see the map of the cities. As you will see, the order of the churches in *Revelation* form an ancient mail route.



As we move from week to week, you'll see a pattern develop in each letter. *First*, the letter introduces Christ uniquely to that church. *Second*, if applicable, the church celebrates the victories they've had in faithful obedience. *Third*, if applicable, the church receives warning for the areas of weakness in which they fall short. *Finally*, Christ makes each church a promise if they conquer in faithful obedience.

The final four weeks will challenge us to respond to the overwhelming picture of Christ in *Revelation*. We will see and worship Christ's majesty and might.

WHO WROTE REVELATION?

Like a witness in a courtroom, the Apostle John opens and closes the book of *Revelation* declaring that these events are a first-hand account. "***I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.'***"

WHY STUDY GLORY!

The simple answer is that as we walk through this study, in each step, in every letter to a church, we see ourselves. In seeing Christ as he is, we see our great need. Christ ***loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father.***

Sin entered the world in Genesis 3. Ever since then, humanity has lived in rebellion against the Lord, choosing *our* way over *his* way. The story of Jesus' first coming in the Gospels is that of a Savior who died to save us from our sin. In *Revelation*, sin had been defeated, but the time has come for it to be judged. Toward the end of our study, we will see Jesus as we have never seen him—the Warrior King judging sin.

Salvation is a gift, but like a present, it must be received to be effective. One of the messages we need to receive from this study is that it's not good enough to just call ourselves "Christian"—we are not Christians because we go to church or do good things. "The one who endures" is a phrase we will see often. Each time that phrase teaches us about faithful obedience.

Not only do we study because we see ourselves, but time is running out. We must act urgently. ***Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.***

Just like any sport, when the clock runs out, there are winners and losers. The only question is which team you'll be on.

