

## Village Guide

**Current Series:** The Dragon and the Sea

**Texts:** Revelation 1.1-9 CEB

**Core Value Focus:** Peacemaking, Transformation

### Big Ideas from the Message:

- Intro Question was asked: Does Revelation give Jesus a bad name?
  - Short Answer: Only when it is read without regard to its context and literary genre.
- The book's main emphasis: "The revelation of Jesus Christ..." (Rev. 1.1)
- The last book of the Bible is...
  - A Revelation
  - of* Jesus
  - to* John
  - for* the church
  - against* the Empire
  - during* the 1<sup>st</sup> Century
- Passage was read.
- Who is John?
  - Short Answer: Likely not the Apostle John (the one Jesus loved). We can try to reconstruct John the "seer's" story with historical clues. All history is a reconstruction. We do the best we can with the info we have.
- The message of in Revelation looks like: God → Jesus → Angel → John
- John the refugee in exile
  - The best evidence we have is that John is to be counted among the marginalized. He was quite possibly a Palestinian Jewish follower of Jesus, who, fled Jerusalem during the war with Rome that ended in 70 CE (common era).
  - Coins were minted mocking the Jewish people after this event. They, including Jewish Christians, were a marginalized and shamed people group.
- "He is originally a Palestinian, a representative of pre-70 Palestinian Jewish Christianity." (Eugene Boring, *An Intro to the New Test.*, 629)
- John's vision is poetic
  - He uses a specific Jewish literary genre, apocalyptic literature, to speak into a challenging context of marginalization. He is in exile when he receives this vision, one that he partners with Jesus in crafting and writing down.
- "Exile has given him time to pray, to reflect, and now to receive the most explosive vision of God's power and love." (N.T. Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, 10)
- In exile, we are invited to see Jesus more vividly.

### CONNECT (5 min)

- Question chosen for group discussion or someone pre-invited to share their story. (Optional)

### HEAR (5 min)

- Spend some time in your group sharing what you recall from Sunday's message. Give a loose theme or subject of the sermon to jumpstart everyone's thoughts and recollections. (Example: *On Sunday, Kurt (or another speaker) started/continued our series. Who was there on Sunday? Can you recap the content for us? What struck you, and what questions did it leave you with?*)

**TALK (20 min)**

*Note: This format is intentionally less linear in an effort to generate discussion. It is not meant to be followed left-to-right, nor do all the questions need to be asked. As a facilitator, stewarding good discussion means modeling **true listening**, which also means a conversation without an agenda. Use your discernment to see what your group needs to talk about.*

<i>Conceptual</i>	<i>Practical Implications</i>	<i>Spiritual Formation</i>
<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Regular Life</b>	<b>Transformation</b>
<p>What has been your relationship to the Book of Revelation? How was it approached—if you grew up in a church setting—in your youth? What is your biggest interest in it now?</p> <p>Take time to read Revelation 1.1-9 out loud. If it helps to center yourself, close your eyes as it is read and imagine that you are a first century follower of Jesus, hearing it for the first time. What do you immediately notice from the text? (Optional: read it a second time and reflect on what else might be making an impression.)</p> <p>What do we know about John so far? How does attempting to know his backstory help us understand the thrust of this text? Why is this important (or, perhaps you disagree, and do not see it as important, process that too)?</p>	<p>One of the temptations in rereading a book like Revelation—with eyes to deconstruct theology that we were handed, while reconstructing a new vision—is to get excited merely by the hype of cool scholarly ideas. How do you think that Revelation itself (and other passages of Scripture) pushes us to see the theoretical/theological as a catalyst toward the experiential (life with God and others)?</p> <p>It is quite possible that you have not experienced life as a refugee. However, perhaps you have experienced marginalization in other ways. And others might be able to relate to the idea of being in exile (having parts of your life that feel ‘lost’). Can you think of an experience in your own journey that helps you to relate to John, either as an refugee (marginalized) or as a person in exile (‘lost’ or uncertain parts of your life)?</p> <p>Have you ever found yourself in a creative zone and it was like God was joining you in that space? Have you ever gone a step further and acknowledged the presence of Jesus (conversing with him in your own way) as you worked? Share about what these moments have been like for you. Or, share about how you see the potential for these moments in the future.</p>	<p><i>Take a few minutes of silence to think of what your current experience of life these past couple weeks have been like. (Give a few minutes for reflection before asking the question).</i></p> <p>In what spaces in your life, do you sense you might feel stuck in a metaphorical exile?</p> <p>In the greatest moments of pain, God often shows us that in Jesus, through God’s Spirit, love is strangely close. This seems to be John’s experience. Where in your life do you sense God’s closeness? Where do you long for God’s closeness? Where do you fear God’s closeness? (feel free respond to any or all of these questions as they fit your experience)</p> <p>What do you sense Jesus is beginning, even in this conversation, to reveal afresh to you? How might we as a community sit with you in this?</p>

(Space for your own questions or notes)

**LIVE (20 min)**

- How might this conversation impact you this next week? What are you taking with you?
- How might we pray for each other based on this conversation and other highs/lows in life?