

The background of the cover is a vibrant stained glass pattern. A dark diagonal line runs from the top left towards the bottom right, dividing the image. The upper right section is dominated by warm, glowing colors like orange, red, and yellow, while the lower left section features cooler tones of blue and green. The overall effect is one of light and color filtering through a complex, organic design.

Based on the teaching of

NANCY DEMOSS
WOLGEMUTH

Overcomers

Lessons from
the Churches of
Revelation

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Edited by Erin Davis, Ashley Gibson, Mindy Kroesche, and Mindi Stearns.

Cover design and Typography by Austin Collins.

This resource was originally developed by Kimberly Wagner, based on a teaching series by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. To get the most out of this tool, listen to the whole series “Letters to the Churches in Revelation” at ReviveOurHearts.com.

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Introduction

Do You Have Ears to Hear?

Each of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation includes this exhortation from Jesus, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

These letters were not intended to only speak to ancient believers in faraway places. They have a message for all churches in all times and places. **They have a message for us.** This study is intended to help you consider how Jesus’ words to the churches in Asia Minor in the first century apply to you today. Our hope is that God will use this resource to give you:

- A fresh vision of Himself
- A sense of personal urgency
- An eternal perspective

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And that you will respond by:

- Developing a biblical perspective on enduring persecution
- Heeding what the Spirit says to the churches
- Living as an overcomer!

Don't be in a hurry. Take whatever time you need to let God speak to you through the letters to each of the seven churches and to respond as His Spirit works in your heart. Pause for a moment and ask the Lord to give you ears to hear what His Spirit wants to say to you as you meditate on these letters and to help you understand and to apply the truth of His Word to your life. Write out your prayer in the space below.

Different Century, Same Church

The Roman Empire in the first century had some similarities to Western culture in the twenty-first century. The backdrop for the early church included: political corruption, paganism, syncretism, every kind of sensuality and immorality, greed, materialism, oppression of the poor, social injustice, wanton disregard for the unborn and children in general, and abandonment of the infirm and elderly. Sound familiar?

These messages were written to Christians who were suffering hardship and being persecuted for their faith. Not only did believers experience rejection and ridicule from making godly choices in an ungodly environment, but they suffered physical torture as Emperor Domitian (AD 81–96) initiated systematic persecution of Christians throughout the empire.

You may not be facing arrest for your Christian faith (yet), but if you're a living example of righteousness in this spiritually dark world, you are likely to be marginalized or rejected.

As you work through this study guide, be mindful of the needs of the Church today. Ask God to be at work in your local church. Pray for protection from false teaching and doctrinal error. Ask God to establish your church in the truth of His Word. Pray for the Church at large. Ask God to mercifully grant revival to the Church, that He might be magnified and His glorious gospel and grace might be displayed through us to our world.

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Make It Personal

Read Revelation 1. What promise is recorded in verse 3?

What are the requirements to receive that promise?

What reason is given for applying these to your life?

Genesis and Revelation form bookends for the entire Bible. In Genesis 3, we see the entrance of sin and the curse that resulted. In Revelation we see the ultimate elimination of sin and the blessing that is restored to the whole world.

INTRODUCTION: DO YOU HAVE EARS TO HEAR?

In addition to the blessing promised in Revelation 1:3, list five other blessings found in this book (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In Revelation 1:5, we see three titles for Jesus. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How does this description encourage you?

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The apostle John was approximately ninety years old, exiled, and isolated on Patmos—a barren island used as a Roman penal colony. Yet there is no evidence of his wallowing in self-pity, as we might have been tempted to do. How does verse 10 describe John's condition?

How do you typically respond to rejection for your faith?

Why was John able to experience victory during persecution?

Walk among the Seven Churches

The seven letters in Revelation were written to specific local assemblies in the Roman province of Asia and are listed in the order that a messenger would have traveled if he had sailed from the island of Patmos and followed the normal postal route—arriving at Ephesus first, traveling in a circle north, then southeast, finally reaching Laodicea to complete the route. (A map is provided in Appendix A for your reference.)

The entire book of Revelation is actually one letter that was distributed to the seven churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). The opening chapters describe Jesus as being “in the midst” of the churches (Rev. 1:13) and walking among them (2:1). **He is actively engaged with His churches here on earth and knows them intimately.**

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Chapters two and three describe a message Jesus sent to each church, in which He addressed their condition. For most He gave a commendation, a word of rebuke, and personal counsel. In all but two cases He called for repentance.

Scholars differ as to whether these messages should be limited in application to the seven literal historic churches located in Asia Minor or whether these churches also represent “church ages”—periods of time in church history. In her teaching on the letters to the seven churches, Nancy says, “Regardless of which position you take, I believe in any given time in history all these various types of churches and issues are represented.”

You can undoubtedly find glimpses of your local church in one or more of the seven churches in Revelation.

Make It Personal

If you’ve never experienced disappointment or heartache related to church involvement, you are rare. Many believers are discouraged with the condition of the Church in general, and/or the condition of their own local church body. Read Ephesians 5:25–32. Ask God to inspire you with a fresh vision for the Church and to fill you with Christ’s love for His Body.

WALK AMONG THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Read Revelation 1:12–20. Reflect on the details of what John experienced and consider what he saw and heard. This was not a dream but a supernatural revelation. Why do you think God chose to bring this message to John in such a dramatic way?

What explanation is given for the seven stars and the seven lampstands in verse 20?

Do You Have Ears to Hear God's Message?

The letters to the seven churches in Revelation were not only intended to speak to ancient believers in faraway places. They have a message for all churches in all times and places. *They have a message for you.*

As you open up your Bible, you'll develop a biblical perspective on enduring persecution, be encouraged to heed what the Spirit says to the churches, and discover what it truly looks like to live as an overcomer.

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth has touched the lives of millions of women through two nationally syndicated radio programs heard each day—*Revive Our Hearts* and *Seeking Him*. Her books have sold more than five million copies.



Through her writing, podcasts, and events, Nancy is reaching the hearts of women around the world, calling them to freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness in Christ.

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P.O. Box 2000 | Niles, MI 49120

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