

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 3/14/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 15-16 (NIV)*

15 Then I saw in heaven another marvelous event of great significance. Seven angels were holding the seven last plagues, which would bring God's wrath to completion. ²I saw before me what seemed to be a glass sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them. ³And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. ⁴Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." ⁵Then I looked and saw that the Temple in heaven, God's Tabernacle, was thrown wide open. ⁶The seven angels who were holding the seven plagues came out of the Temple. They were clothed in spotless white linen with gold sashes across their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living beings handed each of the seven angels a gold bowl filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸The Temple was filled with smoke from God's glory and power. No one could enter the Temple until the seven angels had completed pouring out the seven plagues.

16 Then I heard a mighty voice from the Temple say to the seven angels, "Go your ways and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God's wrath." ²So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. ³Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died. ⁴Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. ⁵And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying, "You are just, O Holy One, who is and who always was, because you have sent these judgments. ⁶Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward." ⁷And I heard a voice from the altar, saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just." ⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. ⁹Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory. ¹⁰Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. His subjects ground their teeth in anguish, ¹¹and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. ¹²Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies toward the west without hindrance. ¹³And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. ¹⁴They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵"Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed." ¹⁶And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon. ¹⁷Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. And a mighty shout came from the throne in the Temple, saying, "It is finished!" ¹⁸Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth. ¹⁹The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of Babylon's sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. ²⁰And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. ²¹There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.

General Question Bank

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)
Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)
Together (What is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?)

Discussion/Topic Starter (Ice Breaker)

- Reflect on this statement from Dr. Tim Chester: "The Empire of the Lamb is a kingdom of peace and justice because God is a God of justice." Do you believe this to be true? What do God's peace and justice look like?

Revelation 15-16

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

****Another way to ask: "Choose one verse or phrase from the passage that stands out to you. This could be something you're intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further." Now share it with the group*

O: In Revelation 15:3-4 we see the song of "Moses and of the Lamb." Given this stated connection, what parallels can you name between the work of Moses in the Exodus and the work of the Lamb in Revelation?

O: Read Revelation 16:1-9. What are each of the four bowls of wrath poured out on and what do they have in common? What, then, are the implications and significance of these four bowls?

I: Why is the beatitude of v. 15 so relevant to the context of 16:13-16?

- I: Keith mentioned Sunday that some aspects of Revelation are cyclical—compare the seventh bowl in 16:17–21 with what we’ve already seen in Revelation in the sixth seal (6:12–17); the vision of final destruction in 11:13 and the seventh trumpet in 11:19. What are the similarities? The differences?
- A: How might we speak of God’s judgments in a way that will draw ourselves and others to the Lamb?
- A: *Notice In 16:7, the altar speaks: “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!” We see God’s merciful care for his people when we recall that the heavenly altar is the very place where the souls of the martyrs are gathered, crying out to God for justice (6:9–10). This connection demonstrates that God has remembered the suffering of his people.*
- A: As you close, consider praying aloud together the song of Moses and the Lamb found in 15: 3-4.

-How WILL you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?

Recommended Follow-up:

- Pray: Pray together, and really focus in on that we are meeting with God, He’s in the room, and He wants us to KNOW Him. Pray together, spend some time being silent (so we can listen, aka, “*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” Then pray in response to the content from this letter in Revelation as well as to what the H.S. reveals to us.
- Respond: Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s devotional guide.
- Read: Next week’s sermon (3/21/2021) will focus on Revelation 17-18. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through it, and meditate on it.

An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides*:

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides. We believe the process for this transformation happens in community, hence the **“Together”** part of the Riverside mission as well.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”
- **“Together**, what is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on [Colossians 1:9-10](#), see below)

Know – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God.”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

Be – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

Do – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)*

To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week**.

Colossians 1:9-10, NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...

* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon the following resources: *Thomas, Mack. The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: Old Testament and New Testament, Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study, Zondervan, along with the following group studies on Revelation: Wright (978-0830821990), MacArthur (978-0718035198), Navigators (978-0891092735), Lucado (978-0310086666), Witmer (978-1433543203), Stott (978-0830821792), Wiersbe (978-1434702319), Hathcoat (978-1511401296), Smith (978-1645070726), Hewitt (978-1501855443), Stevens (978-0830830213), Arthur (978-0736908061).*