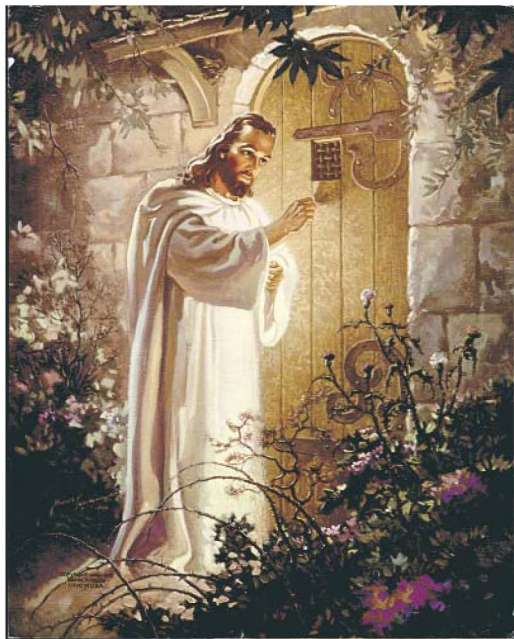


JOY

A Bible Study on **REVELATION**



“Behold, I stand at the door and knock....”
—Revelation 3:20

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, ²who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

—Revelation 1:1-3

Revelation, the last book of the Bible, has often been contrasted with Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In Genesis we learn of the creation of heaven and earth. Satan appeared; sin, sorrow, and death entered the human race; and the tree of life was removed. But in Revelation we see what finally happens to heaven and earth. Satan and his works are doomed; sin, sorrow, and death are vanquished; the tree of life is restored to a new earth.

The title of the book is *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word “revelation” or the Greek “*apocalypse*” means an uncovering, an unveiling, a revealing. Here we see Jesus in all His glory as He truly is, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth. Rather than focus on interpretations of man, we can turn our eyes to Jesus, the central Person of the book. He is worthy to be worshiped and served with all our being.

We may not know exactly when the events of Revelation take place. But we can be sure that everything written is true and certain. **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”** (Matthew 24:35).

May this Bible study turn our hearts to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. May our response to this study be to worship the Lord Jesus and serve Him with joy. —V. R. Benson

© 1996 by V. R. Benson

The Bible text used is from the New King James Version ©1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. Used by permission. Cover art by Warner Sallman. Used by permission of Warner Press.

LESSON 1. JESUS BRINGS US A MESSAGE

Revelation 1:4-11

⁴John, to the seven churches which 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, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and

the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

⁹I, John, both your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

The Life of Jesus Christ

1. Jesus had come to earth from the Father as *the faithful witness*. Isaiah had prophesied: "Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander for the people" (Isaiah 55:4). Jesus Himself said, "For this cause I was born, . . . that I should bear witness to the truth. . ." (John 18:37b).

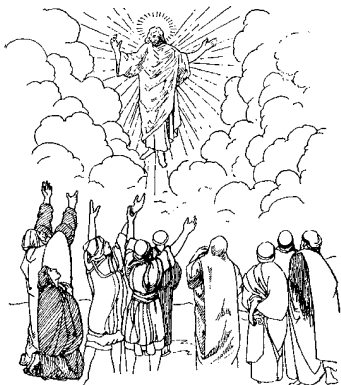


2. Jesus was *the firstborn from the dead*. He was the first person who rose from the dead never to die again. **“Death no longer has dominion over Him”** (Romans 6:9b).

3. Jesus is *the ruler over the kings of the earth*. He is **“the King of kings and Lord of lords”** (1 Timothy 6:15b).

4. Jesus *loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood*. **“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Jesus died for us so that His blood could wash our sins away. **“For it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul”** (Leviticus 17:11b). Do you want *your* sins to be washed away? Jesus can hear you right now. Confess your sins to Him, repent of them (turn away from them). Ask Him to come into your heart and live in you. Thank Him for forgiving your sins. His Spirit will live in you and help you to overcome sin.

5. Jesus is *coming back to earth with clouds*—the same way He ascended into heaven after His resurrection from the dead. **“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven?’**



This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:9-11). When He returns, will you be ready to meet Him? **“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming”** (1 John 2:28). Those who are not ready to meet Him will mourn. Those who know Him will be glad.

Jesus Christ Is God

Jesus calls Himself “the Alpha and the Omega.” The first letter of the Greek alphabet is “alpha.” The last letter is “omega.” Thus, Jesus is the first and last: He is eternal. **“But to the Son He [God] says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever’ ”** (Hebrews 1:8a).

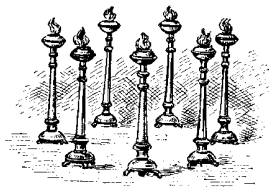
John Shared in Persecution



The apostle John had been banished to a small island called Patmos because of his testimony for Jesus Christ. **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”** (2 Timothy 3:12). The closer we come to the end of the age, the more persecution will come to true followers of Jesus.

Earlier John had written Jesus’ words: **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you”** (John 15:18). **“Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service”** (John 16:2b). **“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33b).

LESSON 2. JOHN SEES THE GLORIFIED CHRIST



Revelation 1:12-20

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶He had in His

right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

Something to Do

Write or print your answer to each question. Look for the answers in the Bible passage above. The number after each question refers to the verse number in the Bible lesson where the answer is found. *Check your answers by referring to the list of answers inside the back cover.*

1. One like the Son of Man was in the middle of the

_____ golden lampstands (verse 13). These golden lampstands were the seven _____ (verse 20).

[Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation contain letters Jesus dictated to these seven churches.]

2. The One like the Son of Man was clothed with a garment down to the _____, and girded about the chest with a _____ band (verse 13).

[This clothing shows the divine royalty and the priesthood of Jesus.]

3. His head and hair were _____ like wool, as white as _____ (14).

[When Daniel saw a vision of God (described in Daniel 7:9), he said “**the hair of His head was like pure wool.**” He called this awesome Being “**the Ancient of Days,**” indicating that God is eternal. Here in Revelation, John's vision of Jesus, the Son of Man, shows that Jesus is the Eternal One. In Micah 5:2, the prophet described the One coming out of Bethlehem to be ruler in Israel as One “**whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.**” Jesus was God appearing as man.]

4. His eyes were like a _____ of _____ (14).

[The eyes of the Lord see and search out everything. “**The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good**” (Proverbs 15:3). “**The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry**” (Psalm 34:15).]

5. His feet were like fine _____, as if refined in a furnace (15).

[The brass feet speak of judgment. In Old Testament times the bronze altar, where animals were sacrificed, was the place where sin was judged.]



6. His voice was as the sound of many _____ (15).

[“**The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful**” (Psalm 29:3, 4a).]

7. He had in His right hand seven _____ (16). The seven stars are the _____ of the seven churches (20).

["Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). Jesus holds His servants as stars in His hand. They are witnesses in this dark world.]

8. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged _____ (16).

[God's Word comes from the mouth of Jesus. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God judges us.]

9. His countenance was like the _____ shining in its strength (16).

[One of the names for Jesus is "Sun of righteousness." "But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2a).



Once while Jesus lived on earth, He was transfigured before three of His disciples, and His face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2).]

10. When John saw the Son of Man, he fell at His feet as _____ (17).

[Of Jesus' twelve disciples, the apostle John had been closest to Jesus when He was on earth. But the sight of the glorified Christ was too much for him. The Lord Jesus is worthy of deep reverence. But Jesus told him not to be afraid.]

11. Jesus said that He had the keys of _____ (hell) and of _____ (18).

[Once Jesus had said to Peter that not even the gates of hell would stop Him from building His Church (Matthew 16:18).]

12. John was told to write three things (19):

(a) "the things which you have _____" (in the past).

(b) "the things which _____" (in the present).

(c) "the things which will take place _____"
(in the future).

Jesus Is Alive Forever

Jesus had been killed by crucifixion for our sins according to God's plan. **"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He [Jesus] might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"** (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

But three days later Jesus rose from the grave, victorious over death. Jesus said, **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"** (John 11:25b, 26a).



"Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19b). Praise God!

LESSON 3. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS

Revelation 2:1-7

¹“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ²“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴Nevertheless I have

this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’ ”

Jesus Examines Each Church

Jesus walks in the middle of seven churches of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), examining their spiritual condition with eyes of fire. **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God”** (1 Peter 4:17a). Jesus judges the Church before He judges the world.

A church may be praised by men or despised by men. That does not matter. What matters is: What does Christ think of each church? To each church, Jesus says, **“I know your works.”**

What would Christ say about your church today? These letters to the churches give us much food for thought.

Jesus' message to each church is addressed to the “angel” of the church. The word for “angel” also means “messenger.”

It could refer to the leader of the church. In each message Jesus chooses a description of Himself that has special meaning for that church. Most of the letters commend virtues of the church. All but two letters also contain rebukes.

Each letter contains a special promise to “overcomers” or true believers in the church. May each of us be overcomers by God's grace. **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”** (Romans 12:21). **“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith”** (1 John 5:4). **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death”** (Revelation 12:11).

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct missing word.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says He who holds the seven _____ in His right hand” (verse 1).

[How wonderful to be held in God's right hand! **“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand”** (John 10:28).]

2. *Commendation:* “I know your works, your _____, your _____, and that you cannot bear those who are _____” (2). “You _____ the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (6).

[The word “Nicolaitans” means “conquer the people.” Perhaps too great a separation was being made between the clergy and the laity (common believers). **“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not . . . as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”** (1 Peter 5:2, 3).]

3. *Rebuke:* “I have this against you, that you have left your _____” (4).

[Zealous activity, good works, and keeping sound doctrine can never take the place of our love relationship with Jesus Himself.]

4. *Promise to overcomers*: “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the _____ of _____, which is in the midst of the _____ of God” (7).

[How wonderful to spend eternity in the presence of God!]

Ephesus: The Church Which Left Its First Love

Ephesus was a major city of Greek culture and pagan idolatry. It contained one of the seven wonders of the ancient world: the temple of the goddess Diana (Acts 19:35). Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos had worked in this city, and Paul had once taught there for three years. The book of Ephesians is Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. Later the apostle John ministered in Ephesus for thirty years.

When Love Grows Cold

The church at Ephesus seemed to be on fire for the Lord. They were busy about their service to God. They stood strong in defending the truths of God's Word. But Jesus saw that something was missing. They had left their first love for Him. *Serving* God can never take the place of *loving* God.

Do you remember Martha? She was distracted with much serving, while her sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet, listening to His words. Jesus said to her, “**Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her**” (Luke 10:41b, 42).

What is *your* first love? What can you do if you discover your love for Christ has grown cold? Jesus tells us what to do:

1. *Remember from where you have fallen*. Jesus once told a parable about a son who wasted his inheritance in wrong living.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!’ ” (Luke 15:17).

2. *Repent.* The prodigal son in Jesus’ parable decided to *forsake* his wrong ways and *return* to his father. **“I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you’ ” (Luke 15:18).**



3. *Do the first works.*
“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him” (Luke 15:20).

Maintaining a close relationship with Christ should be our first priority in life. If you leave your first love for Christ, Jesus says He will **“remove your lampstand from its place.”** A church or an individual can lose the ability to be a light or a witness. **“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered” (John 15:6a).**

Jesus Wants Us to Listen

Jesus repeats these words to each church: *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* When we really *hear* God's Word, we are like good ground receiving seed. **“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:23).**

LESSON 4. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11

⁸“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: ⁹“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not fear any of those things which you

are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’ ”

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from the Scripture above.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says the _____ and the _____, who was _____ and came to _____” (verse 8).

[For a church suffering great persecution and martyrdom, what a comfort it must have been to have a message from the resurrected Christ, who had conquered death!]

2. *Commendation:* “I know your works, _____, and _____ (but you are _____)” (9).

[The one who lays up treasure for himself is not rich toward God (Luke 12:21). “Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2:5).]

3. *Rebuke:* None.

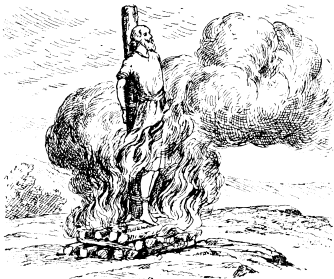
[Persecution often purifies a church. Jesus found no fault with this persecuted church.]

4. *Promise to overcomers:* “He who overcomes shall not be _____ by the second _____” (11).

[The second death is the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the unsaved are thrown (Revelation 20:14).]

Smyrna: The Persecuted Church

The word “Smyrna” refers to “myrrh,” a plant which must be crushed to give out its fragrance. The Roman laws against Christianity were strongly enforced. The persecution of believers in Asia seemed to center in Smyrna. Polycarp, friend of the apostle John, was burned to death there.



The early Church went through ten periods of persecution under various Roman emperors. It is thought that about five million believers were killed. The last period under Diocletian lasted ten years. Believers were hunted down in caves and forests. They were burned, thrown to wild beasts, and put to death by all kinds of torture. But Diocletian's own wife and daughter accepted Christ. The persecuted Church spread forth a sweet fragrance to God. **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place”** (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Do Not Fear Persecution

While He lived on earth, Jesus said to His disciples, **“If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also”** (John 15:20b).

Persecution comes in many forms: slander, ridicule, false accusations, discrimination, imprisonment, beatings, death.

Persecution comes from Satan or man's sinful nature. Satan may use those who call themselves brothers but really are children of the devil. **"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother"** (1 John 3:10).

We need not fear persecution, because God is with us. **"So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"** (Hebrews 13:6). What a wonderful promise Jesus gives to those who are faithful even to the point of death! He will give them the crown of life—eternal life with Him. Jesus also was faithful to the point of death. **"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"** (Hebrews 12:2).

Others around you may fall away because of persecution. Jesus once explained, **"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles"** (Matthew 13:20, 21). We need to be deeply rooted in the Word of God and learn to trust Him in every circumstance. His grace is sufficient for every time of need.

LESSON 5. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS

Revelation 2:12-17

¹²**"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:**

¹³**"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which**

Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the

Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. ¹⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” ’ ”

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. *Description of Christ*: “These things says He who has the _____ two-edged _____” (verse 12).

[The Word of God was especially needed because of the false doctrine that had crept into the church.]

2. *Commendation*: “You hold fast to My _____, and did not _____ My faith” (13).

[Though Antipas was martyred there, the church was faithful.]

3. *Rebuke*: “You have there those who hold the doctrine of _____” (14). “You also have those who hold the doctrine of the _____, which thing I hate” (15).

[Balaam was a prophet who was hired by an enemy-king to curse Israel. Although God did not allow him to do so, he subtly incited the people of Israel to commit sexual immorality and worship idols (Numbers chapters 22-25). “**They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness**” (2 Peter 2:14b, 15). This church, like Balaam, taught doctrines that led Christians into idolatry

and adultery. In Lesson 3 the church in Ephesus *hated* the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The church at Pergamos *accepted* their doctrine.]

4. *Promise to overcomers*: “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden _____ to eat. And I will give him a _____ stone, and on the stone a new _____ written” (17).

[In Old Testament times God sent manna (a wafer-like food) from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. Jesus likened Himself to that miraculous bread. “**I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst**” (John 6:35b).

A white stone was used in ancient days to cast a vote of approval or acquittal (“not guilty”). Receiving a white stone and a new name from Christ signifies acceptance and approval by God. “**There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death**” (Romans 8:1, 2).]

Pergamos: The Worldly Church

The word “Pergamos” means “married.” The church in Pergamos was in close alliance with the world. The city was called “Satan's throne” because of the Babylonian mystery cults that had their headquarters there. Jesus told this church to repent, or He would come quickly and fight them with the sword of His mouth, the Word of God. Only the Word of God can combat false doctrine. “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Paul commended the church at Berea because they “**searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so**” (Acts 17:11b). Are *you* searching the Scripture daily so that you will not be deceived by false teaching?

LESSON 6. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

Revelation 2:18-29

¹⁸“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: ¹⁹“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. ²⁰Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²²Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³And I will kill

her children with death. And all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. ²⁴But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they call them, I will put on you no other burden. ²⁵But hold fast what you have till I come. ²⁶And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—²⁷‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter’s vessels shall be broken to pieces’—as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸and I will give him the morning star. ²⁹He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says the Son of _____, who has _____ like a flame of fire, and His _____ like fine brass” (verse 18).

[The Savior’s searching eyes discern evil. His feet stamp out evil with judgment.]

2. *Commendation*: "I know your works, _____, _____, _____, and your _____; and as for your works, the last are more than the _____" (19).

3. *Rebuke*: "You allow that woman _____, who calls herself a _____, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual _____ and eat things sacrificed to _____" (20).

[Idolatry and immorality usually go together. Both picture unfaithfulness to God.]

4. *Promise to overcomers*: "He who overcomes, and _____ My works until the end, to him I will give _____ over the _____" (26). "I will give him the morning _____" (28).

[The saints will reign in Christ's kingdom. "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12a). In Revelation 22:16 Jesus describes Himself as the "Bright and Morning Star." "We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).]

Thyatira: The Church of the False Prophetess

Thyatira was the hometown of the apostle Paul's first convert in Europe. "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). Thyatira was famous for its female-dominated dye and cloth industry. The church there seemed to be tolerating a false prophetess whom Jesus referred to as Jezebel. She was leading the church into false doctrine and evil acts just as wicked Queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab, had led Israel astray to worship Baal and had persecuted the servants of God (1 Kings 16:29-33 and 1 Kings 18:13).

The teachings of Jezebel are described as “the depths of Satan.” Jesus had given this prophetess time to repent, but she had not. Now she was to be judged. The faithful who did not follow her teachings are told to hold fast till Jesus comes.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-7). Jesus says He will give to each one according to his works. For this church it meant great tribulation and the death of their children. We need to take the warnings of God's Word very seriously.

Jesus Knows Those Who Are His

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own” (John 10:14). **“But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him”** (1 Corinthians 8:3). **“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity’ ”** (2 Timothy 2:19).



LESSON 7. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS

Revelation 3:1-6

¹“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ²Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come

upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. ⁶He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says He who has the _____ Spirits of God and the _____ stars” (verse 1).

[Isaiah spoke of the seven-fold Spirit of God which would rest on Jesus. “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2).]

2. *Commendation:* “You have a few _____ even in Sardis who have not _____ their garments” (4).

[Only a few in this church were living holy lives.]

3. *Rebuke:* “I know your works, that you have a name that you are _____, but you are _____” (1). “I have not found your works _____ before God” (2).

[The church in Sardis had a reputation that it was alive, but in God's sight it was dead. Jesus calls us to be perfect—to be mature in Christ-like attitudes because God's Spirit lives in us. **“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect”** (Matthew 5:48). **“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing”** (James 1:4).]

4. *Promise to overcomers:* “He who overcomes shall be clothed in _____ garments, and I will not _____ out his name from the _____ of _____; but I will _____ his name before My Father and before His angels” (5).

[“Fine linen” is the righteous acts of saints (Revelation 19:8)— **“the righteousness which is from God by faith”** (Philippians 3:9b). **“Whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God”** (Luke 12:8b).]

Sardis: The Dead Church

The patron deity of Sardis was supposed to have power to restore the dead. How sad that the church in this city was dead! Life comes only through Jesus Christ.

The church in Sardis was challenged to remember what they had received and heard, to hold it fast, and repent. **“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”** (2 Timothy 3:13-15). We need to study the Scriptures daily and memorize them. **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You”** (Psalm 119:11). **“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night”** (Psalm 1:2). God's Word can keep us from sin. **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth”** (John 17:17).

“Sardis” means “remnant.” Praise God that even here there were a few who in God's sight were not defiled. **“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD!”** (Psalm 119:1). What defiles a person? **“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man”** (Mark 7:21-23). **“Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled”** (Hebrews 12:14, 15).

Jesus Will Come as a Thief to Some

Jesus urges us to watch, so we will be alert to the time of His return. For those who are not watching, He will come as a thief in the night—very unexpectedly. But Christians will not be taken unaware. **“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. . . . And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober”** (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3b-6).

LESSON 8. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

Revelation 3:7-13

7“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who

has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”: **8**I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door,

and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on

the earth. ¹¹Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says He who is _____, He who is _____, He who has the _____ of David, He who _____ and no one _____, and _____ and no one _____” (verse 7).

[Jesus was holy. “And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). Jesus was true. “We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20b). The treasurer of David's house bore the key of David. “The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open” (Isaiah 22:22). Jesus, the son of David, has kingly authority.]

2. *Commendation:* “You have a little _____, have kept My _____, and have not _____ My name” (8). “You have kept My command to _____” (10).

[Those who keep Christ's words have a special relationship with

Him. "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23b). How important it is not to deny Jesus! "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:33).]

3. *Rebuke*: None.

[Jesus did not rebuke their weakness.]

4. *Promise to overcomers*: "He who overcomes, I will make him a _____ in the temple of My God, and he shall _____ no more. I will write on him the _____ of My God and the name of the _____ of My God. . . . And I will write on him My _____ name" (12).

[Two special pillars were in the Old Testament temple. "Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Jachin [literally, *He Shall Establish*], and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz" [literally, *In It Is Strength*]" (1 Kings 7:21). The faithful Christian, having stability and strength, will be given a place of service and honor. God seals the believer with His Spirit as a sign of His ownership. "Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit" (2 Corinthians 1:22).]

Philadelphia: The Church of the Open Door

"Philadelphia" means "brotherly love." Jesus had a special love for the people of this faithful church (verse 9). The church of Philadelphia had doors of opportunity for Christian witness and missionary outreach. Paul, in prison, once asked for prayer for a door of opportunity, knowing God can open them. "Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains" (Colossians 4:3).

Doors of opportunity and faithful service can bring opposition. "For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Satan will

not stand idly by while the work of God prospers. “The synagogue of Satan” included sincere, misled, religious people used by Satan to oppose God’s work. But Jesus says He will cause them to know how loved these faithful Christians are. **“He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday”** (Psalm 37:6).

God always keeps His loved ones through trials. He will spare believers from the judgment of wrath which will come upon unbelievers, just as He delivered Noah and Lot before judgment fell. “. . . **The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment**” (2 Peter 2:9).

What God Can Do Through Weakness

When you are weak, you can look to God as your strength. **“We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You”** (2 Chronicles 20:12b). Jesus wants us to abide in Him, because He knows that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). **“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God”** (2 Corinthians 3:5). **“God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty”** (1 Corinthians 1:27b). **“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong”** (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10). This “weak” church was the strongest and most loved church! **“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint”** (Isaiah 40:31).

Even though we may have only a little strength, we know

that God will not give us more testing than we can bear. **“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it”** (1 Corinthians 10:13). He gives us ALL that we need to be spiritually strong. **“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him”** (2 Peter 1:3a).

Only weak people know their utter dependence on God for strength. God's people through faith **“. . . out of weakness were made strong”** (Hebrews 11:34a). God Himself is the strength of His people. **“My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever”** (Psalm 73:26).

LESSON 9. JESUS' LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS

Revelation 3:14-22



¹⁴“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the

creation of God: ¹⁵“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that

the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to

him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²²“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

Something to Do

A. Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. *Description of Christ:* “These things says the _____, the _____ and _____ Witness, the Beginning of the _____ of God” (verse 14).

[“Amen” refers to something that is “firm” and “trustworthy.” As “the Amen,” Jesus establishes all God’s promises. “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Jesus is the origin and source of all creation. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created . . . And He is before all things” (Colossians 1:15-17a). Jesus is also head of the new creation (believers). “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17a).]

2. *Commendation:* None.

3. *Rebuke:* “I know your works, that you are neither _____ nor _____” (15). “Because you are _____, I will _____ you out of My mouth” (16). “You say, ‘I am _____, have become _____, and have need of _____’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, _____, _____, and _____” (17).

[These people were self-righteous and self-sufficient compared to believers in Smyrna, who lived in poverty but were spiritually rich.]

4. *Promise to overcomers*: "To him who overcomes I will grant to _____ with Me on My _____, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (21).

["Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name" (Psalm 91:14). "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12a). "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).]

B. Write out and memorize: Revelation 3:20.

Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church

"Laodicea" means "rights of the people" or "people ruling." It implies an extremely democratic church that no longer follows the authority of spiritual leaders or the Word of God.

Laodicea was located in a valley near Colosse and Hierapolis. The apostle Paul told how Epaphras had a great zeal for the churches in these cities (Colossians 4:12, 13). Hierapolis boasted hot waters known for their medicinal qualities. Colosse was known for its cold, pure water. But Laodicea received water by aqueduct. By the time water arrived at Laodicea, it was lukewarm and provoked nausea. Jesus describes the church at Laodicea as lukewarm. The works of the Laodicean church were as sickening to Jesus as the city's lukewarm water. Though this church commended itself highly, Jesus has no words of commendation for it.

The Dangers of Wealth

Apparently the church was caught up in the wealthy spirit of Laodicea and did not know its desperate spiritual need.

Scripture gives very serious warnings about the perils of wealth. **"And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare,**



and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness” (1 Timothy 6:8-10a).

If you have wealth in this world, remember that it is God who gives power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). Do not set your heart on it. Let God guide you in how to use it to help people in need and to build God's kingdom. You will find joy and blessing. **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”** (Matthew 6:21).

How to Get Out of Spiritual Poverty

The church in Laodicea was spiritually poor, blind, and naked. But Jesus counsels them on what to do:

1. *Buy from Me gold refined in the fire*, that you may be rich. (See a section below explaining each of these points.)

2. *Buy from Me white garments*, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

3. *Anoint your eyes with eye salve*, that you may see. How appropriate these word-pictures are for a church in a city famous for banking, cloth production, and eye medicine!

Through the prophet Isaiah, God once invited Israel to “buy” spiritual food and drink, but not for money. When we come to God and listen diligently to Him, we will have spiritual plenty. **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance”** (Isaiah 55:1a, 2b).

(1) “Gold” Refined in the Fire

In God's sight, what is more precious than gold? **“That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found**

to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love” (1 Peter 1:7, 8a). Fiery trials of life test how genuine our faith is and enrich us spiritually. This brings us joy and honors Christ.

(2) “White Garments” to Hide Our Shame

What spiritual garments do we need? **“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me”** (Job 29:14a). Jesus gives us salvation and the robes of His righteousness.

When Joshua, a high priest in Old Testament times, was opposed by Satan, God rebuked Satan and called Joshua a “brand plucked from the fire.” **“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes’”** (Zechariah 3:3-4). God removes our filthy garments of sin and gives us the rich, beautiful robes of His righteousness. What a wonderful gift of His grace! We cannot think that our own righteousness is a fit covering. Only Christ can fulfill in us the righteousness God demands. **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”** (Titus 3:5).

How can we receive His righteousness? **“. . . If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation”** (Romans 10:9, 10). We receive Christ's righteousness by believing on Him, by receiving Him into our hearts. He died for us and was raised to new life, so that we also might be dead to sin and alive to righteousness (Romans 6:10, 11).

(3) “Eyesalve” that Brings Sight

When Jesus was on earth, He restored sight to blind men. Jesus came also to restore spiritual sight to those who are spiritually blind. **“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them”** (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4). As sinners, we walk in darkness. **“But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness”** (1 John 2:11a). But when Christ comes into our hearts, darkness is turned to light, and we can see clearly. **“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”** (John 8:12b).

Jesus Chastens Those He Loves

Has Jesus ever rebuked you or chastened you? He does this because He loves you. **“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights”** (Proverbs 3:11, 12). **“But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world”** (1 Corinthians 11:32). Our heavenly Father disciplines us in love **“for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness”** (Hebrews 12:10b). Thank God for His tender correction and chastening in love!

Listen to What the Spirit Says

When Jesus was on earth, He left a promise with His disciples: **“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”** (John 14:26). Jesus promised that His followers would know the Holy Spirit, because not only would the Spirit be *with* them, He would also live *in* them (John 14:17). When the Holy Spirit lives in

you, He will convict you of sin and He will comfort you in trials. **“Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”** (Romans 8:9b).

Perhaps you are like some of the Laodiceans, and this lesson has made you realize that you are spiritually poor, blind, and naked. You realize that the Holy Spirit of God does NOT live in you. But you long for spiritual riches of faith, for spiritual sight, for the clothing of Christ's righteousness. You long to be a new creation, with Christ living in you. Is this the desire of your heart? Then this letter from Jesus has good news for you. Jesus says, **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me”** (Revelation 3:20). He stands at the door of your heart, knocking. He wants to experience fellowship and friendship with you. Will you open the door of your heart right now? Just ask Him to come in. If you need help to pray, this prayer can guide you. What joy and peace will be yours!



Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank You for dying on the cross to take away my sins. I confess I am a sinner. I am sorry for the wrong things I have done. I ask Your forgiveness. Create in me a clean heart and grant me, Lord, Your righteousness. I receive You, Jesus, into my heart to be my Savior and Lord.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

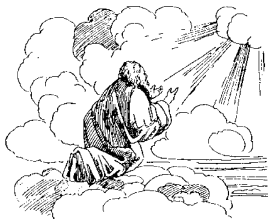
I have received
life through Jesus!

name

date

LESSON 10. JOHN IS CAUGHT UP TO THE THRONE OF GOD

Revelation 4:1-11



¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

²Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. And

there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸And the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory

and honor and power; for
You created all things, and

by Your will they exist and
were created.”

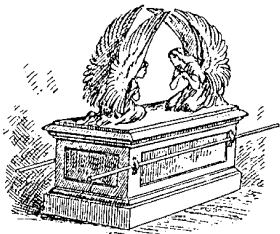
The Throne of God

“The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all” (Psalm 103:19). What a comfort! How wonderful to see that a rainbow encircles the throne! After God sent the flood of judgment upon the wicked earth in Noah's time, He set a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of mercy. **“It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh”** (Genesis 9:14, 15). God remembers! Even in wrath God remembers mercy (Habakkuk 3:2).

The 24 elders sit on thrones, representatives of the redeemed, having white robes and crowns (rewards)—made kings and priests to reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9, 10).

The four living creatures who declare God's holiness day and night were seen also by the prophet Ezekiel. He identified them as cherubim—angelic beings (Ezekiel 10:20).

The scene here is similar to the Old Testament temple (which was but a copy of the true heavenly temple). The seven lamps before the throne of God correspond to the seven-branched lampstand. The sea of glass corresponds to the laver (basin for washing). The throne corresponds to the ark of the covenant where God's presence was. The 24 elders correspond to the 24 priests who took turns



servicing in the temple. Even the living creatures correspond to the cherubim arching over the mercy seat.

These heavenly worshippers cast their crowns before God, who is worthy of all praise because He is the Creator of all things. God is worthy of our service to Him. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service”** (Romans 12:1).

LESSON 11. THE SEALED SCROLL

Revelation 5:1-14

¹And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

⁴So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

⁶And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and

of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

⁸Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to

God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength

and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Who Is Worthy to Open the Scroll?

The scroll was rolled up and firmly sealed with seven seals. According to Roman law, all legal documents pertaining to life and death were sealed seven times.

What is so important about this scroll? Many Bible scholars believe that it is the legal title deed to the earth. Since Adam sinned, all creation was under bondage to sin, Satan, and death. No one in Adam's race could now claim their inheritance. No man was found who was worthy to loose the seals. John wept. Who could remove the curse placed on this earth? Thanks be to God! All weeping ends when the rightful ruler of this universe, the Lord Jesus Christ, appears to loose the seals and to claim the inheritance.

In the Hebrew system of owning land, only a near relative could redeem (buy back) land lost by the original owner. The story of Ruth is based on this law. Jesus—our Kinsman-Redeemer—by His own blood redeemed us back to God. God's Son was “**appointed heir of all things . . .**” (Hebrews 1:2b). *He* was the only One who could set creation free!

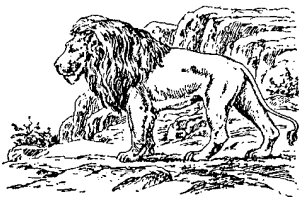
Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, described as a lion and associated with the kingly line. **“Judah is a lion's whelp**

The scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Genesis 49:9a, 10a). As the Lion of Judah, Jesus has prevailed (conquered) and reigns.

Before Jesus was born, the virgin Mary (of the house of David) was told by the angel Gabriel: **“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and**

bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And . . . of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).



Jesus, the Slain Lamb

When John looked for the Lion, there stood a Lamb as though it had been slain. The Lion was the Lamb! The word “slain” used here specifically means “slaughtered, as an animal for sacrifice.” The Lamb had died for the sins of the world. John the Baptist had introduced Jesus at the River Jordan by saying, **“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** (John 1:29b).

Jesus' death and resurrection prove that He is worthy to reign over all creation, to open the book, to judge the world. The prophets had foretold both Christ's sufferings and the glories which would follow (1 Peter 1:11). Jesus was to be both the suffering Lamb and the kingly Lion. **“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a**

sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). Now the triumphant Lamb is all-powerful (possessing seven horns, referring to power and authority) and all-knowing (having seven eyes, referring to perfect wisdom).

As followers of Jesus we, too, can expect suffering before glory. **“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy”** (1 Peter 4:12, 13).

All Creation Sings Praise to God

The theme song is **“Worthy Is the Lamb!”** On earth the Lamb was despised and rejected. But now He receives His rightful praise. **“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God”** (2 Corinthians 13:4a). As a Lamb He was obedient even to death on a cross. **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”** (Philippians 2:9-11). All creation will one day bow before Him. May we bow to Him as Lord of our lives *now!*

When Jesus reigns in our hearts, we have new joy and grateful praise for our Savior and Redeemer. **“Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth”** (Psalm 96:1). **“Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things”** (Psalm 98:1). Do you sing praise to the Lord? **“I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies”** (2 Samuel 22:4).

LESSON 12. THE LAMB OPENS THE FIRST SIX SEALS

Revelation 6:1-17

¹Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." ²And I looked, and behold, a white horse. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

³When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁴And another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

⁵When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of

barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

¹¹And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and

their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and

island was moved out of its place.

¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Something to Do

Fill in the blank spaces with words from Scripture.

1. **The first seal** was opened and the horse which John saw was a _____ horse (verse 2). He who sat on it had a _____. A _____ was given to him. He went out conquering and to conquer.

2. **The second seal** revealed a horse that was fiery _____ (4). Power was given to the rider of the horse to take _____ from the earth. A great _____ was given to him.

3. **The third seal** was opened and John saw a _____ horse (5). He who sat on it had a pair of _____ in his hand.

4. **The fourth seal** revealed a _____ horse (8). The name of the one who sat on it was _____ followed by _____. Power was given them to kill with _____, with _____, with _____, and by the _____ of the earth (8).

5. **The fifth seal** was opened and John saw under the _____ the _____ of those who had been martyred (9). They had been slain (killed) for what reasons?

(a) _____

(b) _____

6. **The sixth seal** signaled the coming of the great day of the wrath of the Lamb. What seven things happened?

(a) There was a great _____ (verse 12).

(b) The sun became _____ as sackcloth of hair (12).

(c) The moon became like _____ (12).

(d) The stars of heaven _____ to the earth (13).

(e) The sky _____ as a scroll rolled up (14).

(f) Every _____ and _____ moved out of place (14).

(g) All the men of the earth, both small and great, _____ themselves and cried to the mountains and rocks to fall on them to _____ them from the _____ of Him who sits on the _____ and from the _____ of the Lamb (15 and 16).

The First Seal: Rider on a White Horse

Some interpret this as a picture of Christ and His Church spreading the gospel throughout the earth in a great missionary thrust. Certainly Christ is seen wearing a crown as He reaps the harvest in Revelation 14:14. He returns to earth in final judgment with His saints, riding on a white horse (Revelation 19:11). He goes forth conquering and to conquer strongholds of Satan. **“I will build My church, and the gates of Hades [hell] shall not prevail against it”** (Matthew 16:18b). **“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”** (Romans 8:37).

Others interpret this rider as a *counterfeit* Christ, the spirit of Antichrist, conquering the world through diplomatic, peaceful means (he has a bow but no arrows), bringing false peace. **“For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them”** (1 Thessalonians 5:3a).



Jesus warned of such a time: **“Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many”** (Matthew 24:4b, 5). **“For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect”** (Matthew 24:24).

The Second Seal: Rider on a Red Horse

A time of wars and threats of war takes peace from the earth. **“ ‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’ ”** (Isaiah 57:21). **“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet”** (Matthew 24:6).

The Third Seal: Rider on a Black Horse

War often leads to famine. This rider holds a set of scales, indicating economic control. Food is so scarce that it takes a day's wages to buy one quart of wheat. Yet the oil and wine, products for the rich, are not touched.

Jesus prophesied this: **“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines”** (Matthew 24:7a). Already millions have died from famine through civil wars in black Africa.

The Fourth Seal: Rider on a Pale Horse

Death (claiming bodies in physical death) and Hell (claiming souls in spiritual death) have power to kill one fourth of the earth with: (1) sword (violence and war); (2) hunger (famine and poverty); (3) death (pestilence, incurable diseases, and natural disasters); and (4) beasts of the earth. This could refer to nature taking over because of world chaos. Or it could be through germ warfare or animals carrying disease. Rats have caused more people to die than all the wars in history. In the 14th century, the fleas from rats killed a third of Europe's population with bubonic plague.

Jesus warned of this: **“And there will be . . . pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows”** (Matthew 24:7b, 8).

The Fifth Seal: Martyred Saints Revealed

We hear a cry from martyred saints as to how long it would be before God would judge the world. It would be only a little longer, after the martyrdom was complete. Jesus foretold this as well: **“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come”** (Matthew 24:9-14). At a time when the gospel is being preached throughout all the world, Christians will be dying for their faith in unprecedented numbers.

Christians must expect to face tribulation and death. In the 20th century more Christians were killed for their faith in

Christ than in all preceding centuries combined. Some of you reading this Bible study are facing persecution and perhaps will face death. Jesus promises to be with you always. He tells us what our attitude should be to those who persecute us. **“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”** (Matthew 5:44). However, He will come to judge those enemies and to answer prayers for deliverance. **“Rise up, O Judge of the earth; render punishment to the proud. LORD, . . . how long will the wicked triumph? . . . They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, and afflict Your heritage”** (Psalm 94:2-5).

Promises to the Persecuted

Jesus' disciples had a wonderful attitude toward persecution. **“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”** (Acts 5:41).

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. ‘And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled’ ” (1 Peter 3:14). **“If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”** (1 Peter 4:14a).

These words of Jesus are for you: **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”** (Matthew 5:10-12).

The Sixth Seal: The Wrath of the Lamb Has Come

The opening of the sixth seal brings frightening disturbances on earth and in the heavens. Jesus spoke of these things beforehand: **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days**

the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31). “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD” (Joel 2:30, 31).

Apparently the people of earth know the day of wrath has come. They want to be hidden from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! Jesus' first coming had been to proclaim **“the acceptable year of the LORD,”** but now we see **“the day of vengeance of our God”** has come (Isaiah 61:2). Could they actually see this “sign of the Son of Man” in the clouds, causing the tribes of the earth to mourn because they had rejected Him? Will this be the time when Israel will recognize her Messiah? **“Then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).**

Scripture describes this fearful time when the wrath of God is poured out on the earth as **“The Day of the Lord.” “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap” (Malachi 3:2).**

We can avoid God's wrath by repenting of our sins now and by believing in Jesus. **“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).**

Only the *blood* of the righteous Lamb can protect from the *wrath* of the Lamb.

What About the Rapture of the Church?

Praise God that true children of God—the redeemed—are saved from wrath! **“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him”** (Romans 5:8, 9). God has designed a wonderful plan for believers. They will be “caught up” to meet Christ in the air! This being “caught up in the clouds” is called the “Rapture” (from the Latin translation of this phrase).

When will this happen? Some believe it happens at this time, just before the wrath of God is poured out on the world. Others believe it happens earlier; a few believe it is later and that Christians will be specially protected during this time. This question should not divide Christians who believe the Bible. We can agree on one thing: *It will happen!*

God has given us some wonderful details about the Rapture (or “catching up”) of the Church. **“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord”** (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

As we wait to be “caught up” to meet the Lord in the clouds, let us build up one another in faith and love, praising our Lord that we are saved from His wrath. Let us spread the good news of His salvation far and wide!



LESSON 13. THE 144,000 SERVANTS OF GOD ARE SEALED

Revelation 7:1-8

¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel

were sealed: ⁵of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; ⁶of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; ⁷of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; ⁸of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

The Sealed Remnant of Israel

Twelve thousand from each of twelve Jewish tribes are sealed to show God's ownership and protection. They are on earth, possibly to be powerful witnesses for God.

Today true believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit. "In whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13b, 14).

LESSON 14. A GREAT MULTITUDE STANDS BEFORE THE THRONE

Revelation 7:9-17

⁹After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

¹³Then one of the elders

answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Something to Do

As you fill in the blanks, think about the truth of Romans 8:18: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

1. This multitude, which no one could number, was of all _____, _____, peoples, and _____ (9).

[Some from every nation and language will receive salvation.]

2. These that came out of great tribulation had _____ their robes and made them white in the _____ of the Lamb (14). [They were righteous before God.]

3. The One on the throne will _____ among them (15).
[“I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people” (Leviticus 26:12).]

4. They shall not _____ anymore or _____ (16).
[“They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them” (Isaiah 49:10).]

5. The _____ shall not strike them, nor any _____ (16).
[“The LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day” (Psalm 121:5b, 6a).]

6. The Lamb in the midst of the throne will _____ them and lead them to living _____ of water (17).
[“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters” (Psalm 23:1, 2).]

7. God will wipe away every _____ from their eyes (17).
[“He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 25:8).]

LESSON 15. THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVENTH SEAL

Revelation 8:1-5

¹When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar.

And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers



of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire

from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

The Seventh Seal: Silence Before Judgments

When the Lamb opens the seventh seal, there is awesome silence in heaven. We feel the impending awfulness of the seven trumpet judgments to come. **“Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”** (Zechariah 2:13). The entire scroll is now open. The fire thrown down to earth tells us of the wrath of God to be poured out. **“For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come”** (Isaiah 63:4).

God Answers the Prayers of His People

In Old Testament times, God commanded Moses to make an altar of incense for the tabernacle, symbolizing the prayers of God's people rising to Him. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest was permitted to go into the inner sanctuary to meet with God where the mercy seat was. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He opened the way to God. **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all”** (1 Timothy 2:5, 6a). Now we each have direct communication with God through Christ, our High Priest. **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”** (Hebrews 4:16).

Jesus invites us to pray. **“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son”** (John 14:13). **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you”** (John 15:7).

LESSON 16. FOUR ANGELS SOUND THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

Revelation 8:6-13

⁶So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

⁸Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood; ⁹and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of

the rivers and on the springs of water; ¹¹and the name of the star is Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

¹²Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened; and a third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

¹³And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

The Trumpet Judgments

Seven angels prepare to sound the seven trumpets, one by one. God had given people a choice. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19b). The inhabitants of the earth rejected Jesus, who said, "I am . . . the Life" (John 14:6b). "But you denied the Holy One and the Just . . . and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3:14, 15a). Now those who live on the

earth receive the results of their choice. Will YOU choose life while you have opportunity? **“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”** (Joshua 24:15b).

The First Four Trumpets

These judgments remind us of the plagues sent on the land of Egypt when God delivered the Israelites from slavery. Years later, the nation of Israel was promised *bitter* water to drink because they had worshipped idols and followed the imaginations of their hearts. **“Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink”** (Jeremiah 9:15b).

During the time of Israel's captivity, the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of a river of water which would in God's future kingdom flow to the sea and be *healed* (Ezekiel 47:8).

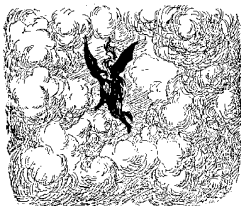
The Announcement of the Three Woes

An angel gives a message that the next three trumpet judgments will be worse. This message is given to the “inhabitants of the earth.” The word “inhabitants” indicates “to reside, to be housed permanently.” These people had settled down on earth as their permanent home, rejecting Christ. The people of God, on the other hand, consider themselves strangers and pilgrims on this earth (Hebrews 11:13). **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body”** (Philippians 3:20, 21a).

Is your citizenship in heaven? **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul”** (1 Peter 2:11). **“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth”** (Colossians 3:2).

LESSON 17. THE FIFTH TRUMPET IS SOUNDED (The First Woe)

Revelation 9:1-12



¹Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. And to him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment

was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

⁷And the shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. And their power was to hurt men five months. ¹¹And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

¹²One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

Demonic Forces From the Bottomless Pit

Jesus once delivered a man who was possessed by many demons. These demons begged not to be sent to the abyss where they belonged (Luke 8:31). Later Jesus explained who this being was who had fallen from heaven and now was given the key to the abyss, or bottomless pit. **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you”** (Luke 10:18b, 19). If you are a true believer, Jesus has given you authority (in His name) over demons. They cannot harm you.

When demonic forces are unleashed in the world as a judgment on an unbelieving world, there will be no protection from the terrible torment they bring (except to those with the seal of God on their foreheads). People will prefer death, but no one will be able to die.

The leader of this evil horde is called Abaddon (Destruction) or Apollyon (Destroyer). Never forget that Satan's real goal is to destroy you. Jesus comes to give life. **“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”** (John 10:10). **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith”** (1 Peter 5:8, 9a). On your own you are no match for Satan and his demons, but remember, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”** (1 John 4:4).

Remember, if you are a child of God, none of these judgments will come on you. **“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him”** (Romans 5:9). Praise God!

LESSON 18. THE SIXTH TRUMPET IS SOUNDED (The Second Woe)

Revelation 9:13-21

¹³Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million, and I heard the number of them. ¹⁷And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and

out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

²⁰But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; ²¹and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

"They Did Not Repent"

The River Euphrates flowed from the garden of Eden, where evil entered the world (Genesis 2:10, 14). Now a deadly army of 200,000,000 is released to kill one-third of mankind through the plagues of their warfare. Those who were not killed did not repent of their sinful deeds. **"Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek Your statutes"** (Psalm 119:155).

Idol worship is total rejection of the true, living God. In God's sight things sacrificed to idols are really being sacrificed to demons (1 Corinthians 10:20). **"With abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God"** (Deuteronomy 32:16b, 17a).

"Sorceries" in the original Greek language of the New Testament means "having to do with drugs." It is also associated with witchcraft. It is not surprising that these sins are becoming more widespread in our day. They are sins of the man who has not been filled with the Spirit of God. **"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"** (Galatians 5:19-21).

What a contrast is the fruit produced by a child of God! **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"** (Galatians 5:22, 23).

It is only by God's grace that men repent of their sins. **"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death"** (2 Corinthians 7:10). True sorrow for sin leads to repentance, a changed life, and eternal salvation. The world's sorrow is merely regret for being caught in sin or regret for suffering the consequences of sin. Because this kind of sorrow does not produce a changed life, it leads to eternal death.

If God's Spirit convicts you of sin, repent now while your heart is still tender. **"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts"** (Hebrews 3:7b, 8a). A time is coming when men's hearts will be too hard to repent of their sins.

LESSON 19. THE SEVEN MYSTERIOUS THUNDERS

Revelation 10:1-11

¹And I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ²And he had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And when he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

⁴Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

⁵And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven ⁶and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things

that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

⁸Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

⁹And I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

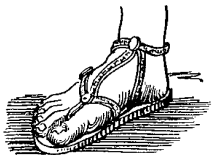
¹⁰And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

The Angel and the Little Book

This mighty angel may be the "Angel of the LORD," Jesus Christ, who at times appeared as an Angel in Old Testament

times and now has a glorified body. He is ready to claim His inheritance. God once said to His Son, **“Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession”** (Psalm 2:8).

He sets His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the land. This is the Biblical way of claiming territory. To Joshua, God said, **“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you”** (Joshua 1:3a).



The Lion of the Tribe of Judah roars as a lion does when it is about to conquer its prey. Seven thunders utter their voices. John is not permitted to write what he hears. This is the only message in the book of Revelation which is sealed from our knowledge. But, praise God, enough is revealed to us in Scripture for our salvation and victorious living. **“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law”** (Deuteronomy 29:29). **“He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things”** (Daniel 2:21b, 22a).

The seventh angel is about to sound the seventh trumpet judgment, and when he does, the mystery of God, as declared to the prophets, will be finished. Many scoff, thinking the Lord will never return. But He is giving men today a chance to repent. **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9). One day there will be no more delay, no more time to repent. **“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (2 Corinthians 6:2b). **“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”** (Hebrews 2:3a).

Part of the mystery of God was that Gentiles (pagans) would be invited to become fellow-heirs with Jews to inherit the promises of God (Ephesians 3:4-6). **“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”** (Colossians 1:27). This “mystery” has been openly revealed through God's Word.

Why was the little book sweet to John's taste and yet bitter to his stomach? Perhaps it indicates that God's Word is often a joy to receive but painful to deliver. Perhaps it is because God's Word reveals the sweetness of God's grace but also the bitterness of His judgment.

John needed to eat the little book to make it part of his inner person. We need to do that with God's Word. **“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts”** (Jeremiah 15:16). The Word of God is our food. Jesus said, **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’ ”** (Matthew 4:4b). Digesting the little book prepared John for the messages he still needed to deliver to the world. We, too, need God's Word to prepare us to be a witness to our world today.

The prophet Ezekiel had a similar experience. **“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.’ So I ate it, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness”** (Ezekiel 3:3).

The prophet Jeremiah was to deliver God's message to rebellious people. **“. . . Speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces”** (Jeremiah 1:17a). He was to deliver the message whether they heard it or whether they refused to hear it. Let us be faithful witnesses to our generation as well, giving out the message of God no matter what the response may be.

LESSON 20. THE TWO WITNESSES ARE KILLED AND RESURRECTED

Revelation 11:1-14

¹Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ²But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. ³And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. ⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. ⁶These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. ⁷Now when they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends

out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three and a half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

¹¹Now after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹²And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand men were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave

glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe is past.

Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

The Temple Is Measured

The city of Jerusalem is overrun by the Gentiles for 3 1/2 years under Antichrist rule. John is told to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshippers. Measuring is a symbolic act that shows possession. John is NOT to measure the outer court, which was the court of the Gentiles.

Two Prophets Are God's Witnesses

The two witnesses wear sackcloth as a sign of great distress over the spiritual condition of Israel. They are described as the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before God. This same description was given for Zerubbabel and Joshua, the governor and high priest who rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity in Babylon. At that time an angel said, **“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts”** (Zechariah 4:6b).

Who are these witnesses? Some say they are Elijah and Enoch—Old Testament men who never died because God took them directly to heaven. Others think they are Moses and Elijah because:

1. *Like Moses* in the Old Testament, these witnesses have power to turn water into blood. Moses appeared with Jesus and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3). Also, Michael the archangel disputed with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9). Did Satan want to prevent Moses from being this powerful witness at the end of time?

2. *Like the prophet Elijah*, these witnesses have power to prevent rain for 3 1/2 years and also to bring down fire from

heaven to destroy their enemies. The prophet Malachi predicted, **“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD”** (Malachi 4:5).

If the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, they would symbolize the witness of the Law (given through Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah was a great prophet). **“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe”** (Romans 3:21, 22a).

These two witnesses are killed only when they *finish* their testimonies. When the apostle Paul was about to be martyred, he said, **“I have fought the good fight, I have *finished* the race, I have kept the faith”** (2 Timothy 4:7). Jesus also prayed to the Father shortly before His death, **“I have glorified You on the earth. I have *finished* the work which You have given Me to do”** (John 17:4). Let us also be faithful to *complete* the work that God gives us to do in being witnesses for Him. **“Endure afflictions, . . . fulfill your ministry”** (2 Timothy 4:5b).

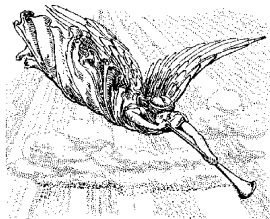
The beast (Revelation 13:1 and 17:8) makes war on these two witnesses and kills them. Their bodies lie in the streets of Jerusalem, known symbolically as Egypt (for its worldliness) and Sodom (for its immorality). At their death, the whole world celebrates. They want no more reminders of God. But this rejoicing doesn't last long.

Though the survivors of the awesome earthquake in Jerusalem glorify God when they see the two witnesses raised from the dead and ascend into heaven, they have no lasting change of heart.

Jesus once said, **“If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead”** (Luke 16:31b).

LESSON 21. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET IS SOUNDED (The Third Woe)

Revelation 11:15-19



¹⁵Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God

Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Christ's Reign Is Announced

The kingdoms of this world have been angry and have plotted against God. Now it is time for God's wrath to bring their deeds to an end.

"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens

shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: 'Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion' " (Psalm 2:1-6). Jesus will reign forever! "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end" (Isaiah 9:7a).

The time for the unbelieving dead to be judged has come as well. "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27b). Lesson 34 tells more about the judgment for those who die as *unbelievers*.

But praise God, *believers* who die in Christ will not come under this judgment. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). Though believers will be accountable for their actions, Jesus will reward the saints and all who fear His name. "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). "Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. 'They shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him' " (Malachi 3:16, 17).

LESSON 22. THE GREAT DRAGON IS CAST TO THE EARTH

Revelation 12:1-17

¹Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve

stars. ²Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery

red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne. ⁶Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have

come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

¹²Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

¹³Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. ¹⁴But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

¹⁵So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

¹⁶But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out

of his mouth. ¹⁷And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her off-

spring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Something to Do

A. Fill in the blanks with words from Scripture.

1. A great sign appeared in heaven: a _____ clothed with the _____, with the _____ under her feet, and on her head a garland of _____ stars (verse 1).

[This woman is a picture of the nation of Israel with its 12 tribes, from whom Christ was born. Israel is often described as a woman or wife. The sons of Israel were seen as stars in Genesis 37:9.]

2. Another sign in heaven was a great, fiery red _____ (3). He stood before the woman to devour her _____ as soon as it was _____ (4).

[The dragon is Satan—the devil (verse 12). When Jesus was born, Satan made a great effort to kill Him. An angel instructed Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, to flee to Egypt for a time. King Herod ordered all male children under two years old in and around Bethlehem (where Jesus was born) to be killed (Matthew 2:16).]

3. The woman bore a male Child who was to rule all _____ with a rod of _____. Her Child was caught up to God and to His _____ (5).

[We know this is Jesus. (See Revelation 19:15). "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).]

4. The woman fled into the _____, where she has a place prepared by _____, and will be fed there for _____ days (6).

[Evidently Israel (or a believing "remnant") will be protected from the great wrath of Satan for 3 1/2 years. "I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested" (Zechariah 13:9a).]

5. When war broke out in heaven, _____ and his

angels fought with the _____ and his angels (7). The dragon was cast out to the _____ with his angels (9).

[Michael is an archangel who seems to fight especially for the nation of Israel (Daniel 12:1). Hatred against Israel throughout history is the result of Satan's hatred for whoever God loves.]

B. Memorize Revelation 12:11.

Satan Opposes God and His People

The “great red dragon” is another name for Satan— **“the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan . . .”** (Revelation 20:2b).

When God made the first man, Adam, He put him in the garden of Eden to take care of it. **“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’ ”**

(Genesis 2:16, 17). The serpent, Satan, deceived Eve by questioning God’s command. She ate the forbidden fruit, then Adam ate in disobedience to God. His sin brought death into the world just as God had said.



God said to the serpent, **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”** (Genesis 3:15). Throughout history, Satan—the Destroyer—has tried to destroy God’s people and the promised Savior. When Jesus died on the cross, Satan bruised Christ’s heel. But when

Christ arose from the dead, the power of Satan was crushed. **“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”** (1 John 3:8b).

The Accuser of the Brethren

Satan is called “the accuser of the brethren.” We see him doing this in the story of faithful Job. One day Satan appeared before God in heaven and suggested that Job was righteous only because God had blessed him so much. God gave Satan permission to take away these blessings. Satan did his worst.

Job's ten children were killed. His possessions were destroyed or stolen. His body was covered with painful boils. His wife suggested, “Curse God and die!” Yet in all this Job did not sin in speaking against God. He even said, **“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him”** (Job 13:15a). Job did not know that he was being an example of loyalty to God.

But He trusted God. God blessed him later with more children and more abundance than he previously had.

Remember: God works good out of every circumstance if you belong to Him. **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He fore-knew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”** (Romans 8:28, 29). Trials in life can make you become more like Christ, and that is *good!*



Remember also: God never accuses you. He leads you to

repentance, removes sin from you, and defends you. We see this in a vision which the prophet Zechariah had of Joshua, the high priest. **“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! . . . Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’ ”** (Zechariah 3:1, 2).

Joshua’s filthy garments (picturing his iniquity) were replaced with clean clothes. After your sins are removed, if you walk in God’s ways, God has a plan for you as He had for Joshua. You have a place to serve Him. Do not let the “accuser of the brethren” or well-meaning people make you feel unworthy because of past sins. **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”** (2 Corinthians 5:21). He has given you His own righteousness.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:31, 33, 34).

God is FOR you. He sent His Son to die for YOU. He does not condemn you. Jesus is even praying for you right now! Don’t let ANYONE defeat you by bringing up past sins which have been confessed and forgiven. **“An ungodly man digs up evil”** (Proverbs 16:27a).

As you live your new life in Christ, remember that God does not want you to sin. But if you do, the Spirit of Christ will tenderly and clearly bring it to your attention. Humble yourself to confess it to Him. **“And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”** (1 John 2:1b). **“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? . . . He delights in mercy”** (Micah 7:18).

Satan will try to accuse you. People who know little of the grace of God will also accuse you. But when we confess our sins and turn from them, God forgives us—not because we are righteous, but because the blood of Jesus cleanses from ALL unrighteousness (1 John 1:7, 9)!

The Blood of the Lamb

Revelation 12:11 tells you how to live in VICTORY. We overcome Satan's attacks because of the blood of Jesus Christ and because of our testimony of faith in His blood, which we will not give up even if threatened with death.

The blood of Jesus is VERY IMPORTANT.

Why is blood important to God? **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls”** (Leviticus 17:11a). All the sacrifices of animals on the altar pointed to the day

when Jesus Himself, the sinless Lamb of God, would shed His divine blood to atone for sins and to remove sins. **“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption”** (Hebrews 9:12).



Are you trusting *only* in the blood of Jesus to cleanse you from sin? Jesus has *freed* us from the bondage of sin and death. Praise God! **“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins”** (Colossians 1:13, 14).

War with the Saints

Satan is filled with great wrath, because he knows he has only a short time left before his eternal doom. He will tempt you with anything to keep you from eternal life. Paul told Timothy, **“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righ-**

teousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called” (1 Timothy 6:11, 12a).

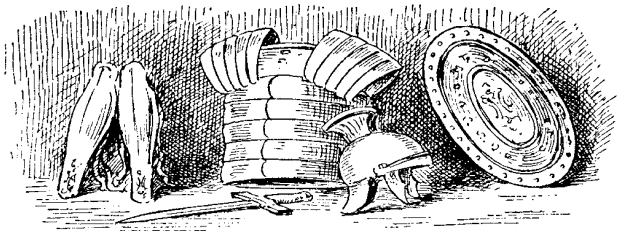
Satan will attack your emotions and try to get you embroiled in arguments and misunderstandings with *people*. But make no mistake. We must not get into fights with *people*. Our warfare is a spiritual warfare against *Satan*. **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).**

Because our warfare is really spiritual, we should not use methods of the world to fight against people. We need spiritual weapons. Do you remember the story of young David who fought against the giant Goliath? He said, **“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts . . .” (1 Samuel 17:45b).** **“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5).**

Satan will try to defeat us in our thought life. Anything that comes into our mind that is not in accordance with God’s Word must be rejected. We must fill our minds with the truth of God’s Word, which is a powerful weapon.

The Armor of God

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be



able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:13-18a).

Only by putting on the whole armor of God by *prayer* can we stand against the wiles of the devil. *Truth* will combat Satan’s lies and deception. Wearing Christ’s *righteousness* and being right with God will overcome any guilt the enemy would lay on us. We should be prepared to share the *gospel of peace* and live by *faith*, which will quench all the fears and doubts hurled at us. Being assured of our *salvation*, based on the blood of Jesus and God’s promises, makes us strong in our faith. And knowing and using the *Word of God* will help us to overcome temptation of all kinds.

When Jesus was on earth, He was severely tempted by the devil. The devil used Scripture to tempt Christ to sin or to go beyond the bounds God had set. He was “**in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15b).

Every time He was tempted, Jesus responded with Scripture. He told Satan to leave and said, “**It is written . . .**,” then quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

Because Jesus was victorious over temptation, He can help you, too, to be victorious. “**For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted**” (Hebrews 2:18).

LESSON 23. A BEAST RISES UP OUT OF THE SEA

Revelation 13:1-10

¹Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵And he was given a mouth

speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The Coming Antichrist

In the end times, Satan will use two wicked personalities in his attack against God: Antichrist (pictured as a beast rising up out of the sea) and the False Prophet (pictured as a beast rising up out of the earth; see Lesson 24).

The apostle John described the spirit of antichrist which is already in the world: "**He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son**" (1 John 2:22b). "**And every spirit that does not**

confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1 John 4:3). You do not have to be afraid of this spirit of opposition against Christ **“because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”** (1 John 4:4b).

There is coming a day when a man, called the man of sin, the son of perdition, will become a world dictator. He will be given power by Satan over the whole world. He will appear to die and will seem to be raised back to life. He will be very arrogant, finally even claiming to be God.

It will become more difficult to be a Christian, so those who merely profess to be Christians and do not really have the life of Christ in them will fall away. True believers will live by faith in the power of God. **“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, . . . Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”** (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4). You may study more about Antichrist and his final destruction in Daniel chapters 7, 8, and 11.

In many ways Antichrist will imitate the life of Jesus. At first Israel will see him as a messiah. Jesus prophesied this: **“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive”** (John 5:43).

Everyone on earth will worship the beast except true believers whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Christians must have patience and faith. **“Do not fret because of evildoers. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass”** (Psalm 37:1a, 2a).

LESSON 24. A BEAST RISES UP OUT OF THE EARTH

Revelation 13:11-18

¹¹Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹²And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was

wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

The False Prophet

The beast rising up out of the earth is symbolic of a being who causes people to worship Antichrist.

When God sent prophets to His people, He confirmed them through miracles. Now Satan empowers his *false* prophet to do wonderful miracles. The ability to do signs and wonders does not always prove that a person is of God. Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from

Me, you who practice lawlessness [iniquity] !' ” (Matthew 7:22, 23).

Jesus warned that Satan and his followers would deceive people. **“He is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44b). “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand” (Matthew 24:23-25).**

This “beast” has horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. He appears to be gentle and peaceful, but his speech reveals that he serves Satan. **“For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:14b, 15).**

He orders an image of the Beast (Antichrist) to be made. This may be the “abomination of desolation” Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:15, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Daniel 9:27). It would stand in the holy place of the temple and bring down the wrath of God.

How can people be so deceived? Jesus once told some religious people that they were mistaken, **“not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29b).** It is easy to be deceived if we do not know the truth of God’s Word, the Bible, and if we do not have Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, living in us.

People will be deceived because of widespread demonic worship. **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12).**

The Unholy Trinity

Many have seen this threesome—the Dragon (Satan), Antichrist, and the False Prophet—as an unholy “trinity,” imitating the relationship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was called the son of God. Antichrist is called “son of perdition [destruction],” which also means “son of Satan.” The False Prophet seduces people into the error of worshiping Antichrist, just as the Holy Spirit leads believers into all truth and motivates them to worship Jesus. The Holy Spirit seals those who belong to God, while the False Prophet marks those who worship Satan.

The Mark of the Beast

The mark of the beast, which all unbelievers will take in order to buy and sell, identifies those who worship Antichrist. Whatever this mark is, it is described as being placed in the right hand or in the forehead. **NEVER** take such a mark, even if it means starving to death. (In heaven you will never hunger again.) This mark is a mark of ownership. You cannot choose to be owned by Satan and also belong to God. You will have to choose whom you will serve. Jesus said, **“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [wealth]”** (Luke 16:13).

The Number of the Beast: 666

There has been much speculation as to the meaning of this number. In Scripture the number 6 is man’s number, falling short of 7, which is the perfect, divine number. The number 6 was used in the secret mystery religions of the East. Apparently Antichrist’s number, 666 (three 6’s), is the ultimate that man becomes in evil against Christ. Seven is the number of divine perfection, and Satan cannot reach it.

LESSON 25. THE 144,000 LEARN A NEW SONG

Revelation 14:1-5

¹Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living crea-

tures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The Redeemed Follow the Lamb

If this group of 144,000 is the same group we saw in Revelation chapter 7, they are Jewish believers who serve God in the end times. They have the mark of the heavenly Father on their foreheads, not the mark of the beast. They are totally dedicated to serving Jesus Christ. From these believers we can learn many lessons for our lives today:

1. *They were not defiled with women. They were virgins.* The scriptures say, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled**" (Hebrews 13:4a). However, there is a blessing for those who for the sake of the gospel receive a calling of God to be single (Matthew 19:12). Paul did this. "**But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am**" (1 Corinthians 7:8). These followers of Christ were also spiritual virgins, keeping themselves pure from serving idols and especially from worshiping the image of the beast. They were faithful to Jesus.

2. *They follow the Lamb wherever He goes.* Jesus said, "If

anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also” (John 12:26a).

3. *They have no guile in their mouth.* “A righteous man hates lying” (Proverbs 13:5a).

4. *They are without fault before the throne of God.* How is this possible? God our Savior is “able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude verse 24b).

There Is Joyful Song in Heaven

“In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11b). Our deep gratitude to God can express itself in a new song. “He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3). Why not take time right now to sing to the Lord from a grateful heart!

LESSON 26. THREE ANGELS BRING SERIOUS MESSAGES

Revelation 14:6-13

6Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— **7**saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

8And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is

fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

9Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, **10**he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.

And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

¹²Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

The Ministry of Angels

The Bible is full of examples of angels being used to help God's people or to bring death to God's enemies. **“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”** (Hebrews 1:14).

Here is the last call to worship God the Creator rather than the beast, a mere creature. The third angel carries a severe warning. All those who worship the beast and take his mark will suffer torment forever. Knowing this will help saints to bear persecution patiently. **“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”** (2 Corinthians 4:17).

For the Christian, Death Is a Blessing

For the Christian, death is an escort into eternal bliss! The believer has already passed from death to life and will not actually see death (John 5:24; 11:26). God is with us in every experience. **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me”** (Psalm 23:4a). Paul said, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain”** (Philippians 1:21). **“The righteous is taken away from evil”** (Isaiah 57:1b). To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

LESSON 27. THE EARTH YIELDS TWO HARVESTS

Revelation 14:14-20

¹⁴And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

¹⁶So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a

sharp sickle.

¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." ¹⁹So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

²⁰And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Reaping a Harvest of Grain

The Lord Jesus comes with a sickle to harvest true believers from the earth. While He was on earth, Jesus described Himself as a *sower* of seed, which is the Word of God. The seed was sown in four types of soil (Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23):

(1) *By the wayside*. When a person hears the Word but does not understand it, the wicked one snatches it away, like birds which come and devour seeds on hard ground.

(2) *On stony places*. When a person hears the Word with joy but has no root system, he stumbles when persecution arises because of the Word. He is like seed that falls in shallow earth. When the sun comes up, it withers.

(3) *Among thorns*. When a person hears the Word but

allows the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the Word, he becomes unfruitful.

(4) *On good ground.* When a person hears the Word and understands it, the life of Christ in him bears fruit, producing up to 100 times as much as the seed that was sown.



Jesus said, **“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”** (John 12:24b, 25). *Death to sinful self allows new life in Christ to spring up and bear a rich and righteous harvest.*

In another parable, Jesus spoke of two kinds of harvest: wheat and tares (weeds). An enemy sowed weeds among the wheat. Jesus said, **“Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn’ ”** (Matthew 13:30).

Reaping a Harvest of Grapes

How different *this* harvest is! The crushing of grapes in a winepress is a picture of the wrath of God on the wicked when the wickedness of man is fully ripe for judgment. God’s wrath does not fall until man’s iniquity is full. **“And sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death”** (James 1:15b). In this case the blood is splashed up to the horses’ bridles. This river of blood will stretch for 200 miles and culminate in the battle of Armageddon. (See Lesson 32.)



LESSON 28. SONGS OF VICTORY

Revelation 15:1-8

¹Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

²And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

³And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations

shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested."

⁵After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Songs of Deliverance

The people of Israel first sang the "song of Moses" after their deliverance from Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb and God's power. "The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him" (Exodus 15:2a). Now the people of God have overcome by "the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11) and are singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

LESSON 29. SEVEN ANGELS POUR OUT SEVEN BOWLS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

Revelation 16:1-21

¹Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

²So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

³Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.

⁴Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. ⁶For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."

⁷And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

⁹And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

¹⁰Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

¹¹And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

¹²Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴For they are spirits of demons, performing signs,

which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

¹⁶And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

¹⁷Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸And there were noises and thunderings and light-

nings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And great hail from heaven fell upon men, every hailstone about the weight of a talent. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

The seven bowl judgments are similar to the seven trumpet judgments, but they are more intense and severe. In each case the first judgment is on the earth, the second on the sea, the third on the rivers, the fourth on the heavens, and the fifth on mankind; the sixth judgment concerns the Euphrates River and a gathered army, and the seventh shows nations gathered in wrath against God.

God's Judgment Is Just

“It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, . . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished

with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:6b-9).

God would not be righteous if He did not punish the wicked. The angel of the waters noticed that it was fitting that those who shed the blood of saints and prophets should have to drink blood (Revelation 16:6). The judgment fits the sin. God often did this throughout the Bible. When Pharaoh caused newborn Hebrew boys to be drowned, God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians and caused their army to be drowned in the Red Sea. When Haman built a gallows to hang Mordecai, Haman was hanged on it instead. **“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him”** (Proverbs 26:27).

God is answering the prayers of the martyrs for justice. **“The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed”** (Psalm 103:6). These judgments are a foretaste of hell. The scorching sun burns men who have tormenting sores. They endure their torment in darkness.

Gathered at Armageddon

Instead of repenting, the nations gather together to war against God. They are brought together by demonic spirits to a place called Armageddon (“Mount Megiddo”). The word “Megiddo” comes from a verb meaning “to slaughter, to cut off.” Mount Megiddo overlooks the Valley of Jezreel (Esdraelon)—the greatest battleground of the Old Testament. This huge plain in northern Palestine is well-suited for the biggest battle in the history of the world.

The seventh and final bowl judgment brings terrible natural disasters: hailstones that weigh about 100 pounds each and a great earthquake that topples the cities of the nations and causes islands and mountains to disappear. Christians never need to fear God’s wrath. **“For God did not appoint us to wrath,**

but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ”
(1 Thessalonians 5:9).



Why People Don't Repent

Again and again Revelation says that the people of earth blasphemed God and did not repent. Why?

1. *People have wicked hearts.* “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

2. *People love their sins.* “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

3. *People refuse to listen to God.* “Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit . . . Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 7:12).

4. *People do not give glory to God.* “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful,

but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21).

5. *People do not receive correction.* “. . . You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; . . . they have refused to receive correction” (Jeremiah 5:3a). “He who is often reproved, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1).

God’s Warning to the Unrepentant

Wisdom says, “Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies” (Proverbs 1:24-31).

Jesus Receives All Who Come to Him

When we consider that the heart of man is so wicked and stubborn, how wonderful it is that God’s Holy Spirit tenderly convicts us of sin! If we listen to Him and repent of our sins and come to Him, He will receive us with open arms of love. What amazing grace! Don’t ever resist the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Don’t put off repentance. Who knows if your heart will be any more tender tomorrow? Resisting truth hardens a heart. “**Now is the day of salvation**” (2 Corinthians 6:2b). If you feel drawn by the Spirit, come. Remember, Jesus will receive you when you come to Him. “**All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out**” (John 6:37).

LESSON 30. RELIGIOUS BABYLON IS DESTROYED

Revelation 17:1-18

¹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

³So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And

when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

⁷But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

⁹Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

¹²And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as

yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

¹⁵And he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples,

multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

The Origin of Babylon—False Religion

God is preparing a Bride for His Son, Jesus: the true Church. But there is also a false church, which is described as a harlot or prostitute. It was the custom for prostitutes to wear their name in jewelry on their foreheads.

Religious Babylon began at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Noah's great-grandson, Nimrod, began his kingdom there (Genesis 10:8-10). It was the first organized rebellion against God. According to tradition and secular history, Nimrod married an evil woman named Semerimus. She claimed that her son, Tammuz, fulfilled God's promise of a Savior. A demonic religious system, based on the worship of mother and child, spread all over the world. They were known by different names: Ashteroth and Tammuz (Phoenicia); Aphrodite and Eros (Greece); Venus and Cupid (Rome).

This mother and child cult taught that Semerimus herself was the way to God. She called herself “Queen of Heaven.” Her son, Tammuz, was killed by a wild boar on a hunting trip and said to be resurrected from the dead 40 days later. Thereafter

the temple virgins of this religion would fast for forty days to celebrate the death and resurrection of Tammuz. After this fast, a joyful feast called Ishtar took place. Colored eggs were exchanged and eaten. Hot cakes marked with “T” were baked and eaten to remind people of Tammuz.

God called Abraham away from the worship of false gods and led him to the promised land. God wanted to establish a nation which would be faithful to Him. But eventually, through the influence of wicked Jezebel, wife of Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings 16:29-33), the nation of Israel returned to demonic worship—the worship of Baal.

Years later God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision of some of the abominations going on in the temple at Jerusalem. **“So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD’S house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz”** (Ezekiel 8:14). God reprovved Israel for involvement in this false religion through the prophet Jeremiah: **“The women knead their dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven . . . that they may provoke Me to anger”** (Jeremiah 7:18b). They had even vowed **“to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her”** (Jeremiah 44:25b).

True believers need to be alert to corrupted beliefs that do not conform to the Word of God. Paul described to Timothy how things would be: **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but . . . they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables”** (2 Timothy 4:3a, 4).

The prostitute church of the end times will probably include every world religion. According to Revelation 17 the false church elevates Antichrist. At first this false church flourishes, but then Antichrist and ten kings will turn on this apostate church and destroy her.

LESSON 31. COMMERCIAL BABYLON IS MOURNED

Revelation 18:1-24

¹After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

²And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

³For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

⁴And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix for her double. ⁷In the measure

that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' ⁸Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

⁹"And the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

¹¹"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ¹²merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze,

iron, and marble; ¹³and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. ¹⁴And the fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

¹⁵The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ¹⁶and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' And every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'

¹⁹"And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on

the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'

²⁰"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

²¹Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

²²The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. And no craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore. And the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

²³And the light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore. And the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

²⁴And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."



The Earth Mourns for Babylon

The commercial side to “MYSTERY, BABYLON” is mourned because the whole world had become rich because of her. But while the earth mourns, heaven rejoices. The blood of the martyrs is avenged. **“It is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord”** (Romans 12:19b).

Christians Are to Be Separated from the World

Christians must not take part in the ways of a sinful world, or they will suffer when God’s judgment comes against it.

What are some attitudes of the Babylon world system that we should avoid? She glorified herself, lived luxuriously, was self-sufficient without God, made money from sinful activities, and exploited people.

“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters” (2 Corinthians 6:17b, 18a).

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:3-10). **“Do not . . . share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure”** (1 Timothy 5:22).

LESSON 32. THE LORD GOD REIGNS

Revelation 19:1-21

¹After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." ³Again they said, "Alleluia! And her smoke rises up forever and ever!" ⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" ⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

⁶And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife

has made herself ready." ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

⁹Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." ¹⁰And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of His mouth goes a

sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all peo-

ple, free and slave, both small and great."

¹⁹And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Heaven Praises God

Have you noticed how much praise to God there is in heaven? "Alleluia" is a Hebrew word which means "Praise Jehovah!" (Praise the LORD!) How much more "heavenly" our lives would be if we praised God more! "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise" (Psalm 51:15).

Something to Do

Fill in the blanks to find out why heaven was rejoicing:

1. " _____ and _____ and honor and _____ [belong] to the Lord our God!" (verse 1).
2. " _____ and _____ are His judgments" (2).

3. "He has _____ the great _____ who corrupted the earth with her fornication" (2).
4. "He has _____ on her the blood of His _____ shed by her" (2).
5. "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent _____!" (6).
["Omnipotent" means "all-powerful."]
6. "The _____ of the Lamb has come" (7).
7. "His wife has made herself _____" (7).

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

What a joyous occasion a marriage is! The Lamb is Jesus Christ. All true believers are His bride. Paul says: **"I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ"** (2 Corinthians 11:2b).

The bride is ready! How can we, as the bride of Christ, be sure we are ready? We see that the Bride wears fine linen which is *the righteousness of the saints*. We know that our own righteousness is not good enough attire. By Christ's death on the cross, He cleanses us and gives us His righteousness. **"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish"** (Ephesians 5:25b-27).

The garment the Bride wears is the gift of salvation. Have you received Christ's salvation? Jesus illustrated how each of us need to receive the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. We cannot wear our own clothes. **". . . All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags"** (Isaiah 64:6a). Jesus said, **"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.**

So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' " (Matthew 22:2, 11-13).

After we are saved, the righteous acts which we do are by the power of His Spirit living through us. It is not possible in our own flesh to do righteous things. **"And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith"** (Philippians 3:9).

Sometimes the Lord Jesus needs to chasten us (discipline us) and prune us so that we can be more like Him. **"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it"** (Hebrews 12:11).

Christ Comes to Make War

Scripture refers to the Lord as a "man of war." **"The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies"** (Isaiah 42:13).

What an awesome sight we see here! The glorious, powerful Christ on a white horse, leading the armies of heaven to make war! **"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth"** (Psalm 96:11a, 13).

The glorious Christ comes with His saints. **"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds . . . and of all the harsh things which ungodly**

sinner have spoken against Him” (Jude, verses 14b, 15).

As the nations gather against God at Armageddon, Christ will destroy His enemies instantly. **“It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zechariah 12:9). “But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4). “Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes” (Isaiah 63:2, 3b).**

The Great Supper of God

The corpses of all those who refused to be transformed by being born of the Spirit of God are eaten by birds (Revelation 19:17, 18, 21b). In the flesh no one can please God.

Antichrist and the False Prophet Captured

The Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet are thrown alive into a lake of fire. Later Satan, too, will be thrown into this lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). After the dead are judged, Death and Hades (hell) will be thrown into this lake of fire also (Revelation 20:14).

Anyone not found written in the Book of Life (those who have not received spiritual life by repenting of their sins and receiving Jesus into their heart) will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

Do not delay receiving God's gift of salvation! If you have become a child of God by receiving Jesus, be glad! **“Rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20b).**

LESSON 33. THE SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST

Revelation 20:1-10

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead did not live again

until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The First Resurrection

Jesus spoke of two resurrections: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear

His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation [damnation]” (John 5:28, 29). Daniel the prophet also wrote of two resurrections: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).



The first resurrection includes the raising up of all believers. **“For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52b).**

Christ’s Reign with the Saints

The redeemed will reign with Christ. The 1,000-year reign of Christ described in Revelation 20 is often called the “millennium” from the Latin word, “mille,” meaning “thousand.”

Christians interpret this passage differently. Those who believe there is no literal 1,000-year reign are called *amillennialists* (“a” means “no”). They believe Satan was bound by Christ’s victory on the cross, and that this 1,000 years is symbolic of the saints ruling spiritually with Christ now.

Others believe that the preaching of the gospel results in a spiritual millennial reign of Christ, after which Christ will come for the final defeat of Satan. These Christians are called *postmillennialists* (“post” means “after”).

Christians who take the passage literally believe that when Christ returns, He—along with resurrected saints—will rule on the earth for 1,000 years while Satan is bound. Then

Satan will be released to deceive the nations in one final rebellion, which Christ will quickly squelch. After this the rest of the dead (those who died in their sins) will be resurrected and judged. Those who believe Christ comes before the millenium are called *premillennialists* (“pre” means “before”).

It is very important not to get into arguments over the interpretation of prophecy. Every Christian can learn aspects of truth from other Christians in a spirit of humility and respect. What is important is to be ready for the return of Christ and to warn others of the need to be ready. All Bible-believing Christians agree that Jesus is coming again and will reign over a new heaven and a new earth. Praise God!

Satan's Doom Is Certain

Satan began in heaven as a magnificent being. His pride brought his downfall. **“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit”** (Isaiah 14:12-15).

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Pride leads to rebellion. Both pride and rebellion are associated with Satan. **“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry”** (1 Samuel 15:23a).

God will judge the proud just as He will judge Satan. **“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble”** (Malachi 4:1a). How much better to humble ourselves to obey the Lord and receive His grace! **“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up”** (James 4:6b, 10).

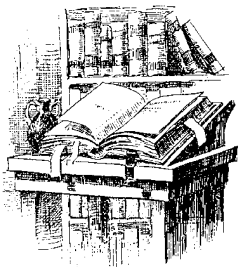
LESSON 34. THE BOOKS ARE OPENED AND THE WICKED DEAD ARE JUDGED

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before

God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.



The Second Resurrection

Those who take part in the *first* resurrection are blessed, but the rest of the dead are unbelievers who will have their part in the lake of fire. What a terrible fate! They are judged out of the Book of Life and by the books in which their works are recorded. Only the redeemed have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Has *your* name been written in the Book of Life? This happens when you receive life through Jesus Christ. How important it is to have one's sins forgiven and to tell others the good news of the free gift of eternal life for all who turn from their sins and receive it!

The Second Death

Think of all the pain and sorrow in the world that comes as a result of physical death. Death indicates separation. Physical death brings separation of the spirit from the body. Spiritual death, on the other hand, is when the spirit or soul is separated from God. The second death is separation from God in a place of fire and torment forever and ever.

Only the wicked who did not have their sins forgiven and cleansed will **“have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”** (Revelation 21:8b). **“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God”** (Romans 10:3).

The second death has no power over believers who are part of the first resurrection. **“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death”** (Revelation 2:11b).

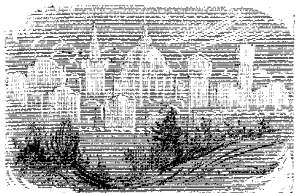
The Book of Life

The Book of Life contains the name of every person who receives eternal life through faith. The Bible was written **“that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”** (John 20:31b). **“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”** (1 John 5:11b, 12). **“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire”** (Revelation 20:15).

If you have received new life through Christ, praise God for your great salvation from the lake of fire! If you have not yet received new life through Christ, invite Him into your heart now. (See the prayer on page 32.) When He gives you new life, He will give you the power of His Holy Spirit to live a godly life as you allow Him to control you.

LESSON 35. THE NEW JERUSALEM COMES DOWN TO A NEW EARTH

Revelation 21:1-27



¹And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make

all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

⁶And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

⁹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the

glory of God. And her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹²Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

¹⁴Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

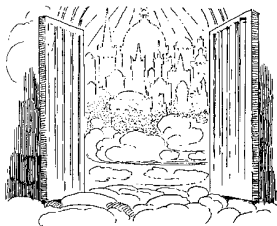
¹⁶And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.

¹⁷Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸And the construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the

first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chryso-prase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²²But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³And the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and the Lamb is its light. ²⁴And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.



²⁵Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 22:1-5

¹And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of

the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

A New Heaven and a New Earth

God has promised to create new heavens and a new earth. "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create" (Isaiah 65:17, 18a).

"The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:10b, 13b, 14).



The New Jerusalem

God chose Jerusalem to be the capital city of His chosen people, Israel—the people through whom the Savior of the world would come. He chose to set His name there forever (2 Chronicles 33:7b). Now a vast, new heavenly Jerusalem descends from heaven to be the capital city of the new earth, where God Himself will dwell among His redeemed people. This city is as high as it is wide (12,000 furlongs is about 1,400 miles). It has unsurpassing beauty and glory. The street of the city is of such pure gold it is like transparent glass.

Something to Do

Fill in the blanks to find out what things will be missing from the new heaven and the new earth.

1. "There was no more _____" (Revelation 21:1).
2. "God will wipe away every _____ from their eyes; there shall be no more _____, nor _____, nor _____; and there shall be no more _____, for the former things have passed away" (4).
3. "The _____ [those who feared man, not God], _____, abominable, _____, _____ [those involved in the occult and drugs], idolaters [idol-worshippers], and all _____" will not be there (8).
4. "I saw no _____ in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (22).
5. "The city had no need of the _____ or of the _____ to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it" (23).
6. "Its gates shall not be _____ at all by day (there shall be no _____ there)" (25).
7. There shall not enter it "anything that _____, or causes an _____ or a _____, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (27).

8. "And there shall be no more _____" (22:3).

9. "They need no _____ nor _____ of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light" (22:5).

The Tree of Life



When God created the world, He created the tree of life. Satan enticed Eve to eat of another tree, a forbidden tree. When Eve gave the fruit of it to Adam to eat, sin and death entered the world. **"So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and**

a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). It was God's original intent that Adam and Eve have eternal life, but when they sinned, He did not allow them to eat of the tree of life. He did not want them to live eternally in their *sinful* condition. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for the sins of mankind, so that we can have eternal life with Him in *holiness*. Praise God! **"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God"** (Revelation 2:7b).

In the *new earth*, the tree of life is back. **"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city"** (Revelation 22:14). You can be like a tree of life to others when you help someone receive Jesus as their Savior. **"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise"** (Proverbs 11:30).

LESSON 36. JESUS WILL COME QUICKLY

Revelation 22:6-21

⁶Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

⁷"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

⁸Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

⁹Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

¹²"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³I am

the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." ¹⁴Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. ¹⁵But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

¹⁸For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this book of this prophecy, God

shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am com-

ing quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

²¹The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Worship God Only

When John tried to worship the angel, he was told not to do it. When Jesus was tempted to worship Satan in order to receive all the kingdoms of the world, He said, "**Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'**" (Luke 4:8b). God wants you to truly worship Him, and **ONLY** Him. It is amazing, then, that God said of Jesus: "**Let all the angels of God worship Him**" (Hebrews 1:6b). We can worship Jesus because He is God in the flesh, who came to live among men as the Man, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Is Bringing His Reward With Him

Jesus promises to reward believers for their loving service to



Him. "**Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor**" (1 Corinthians 3:8b). Only what is done by the power of God's Spirit within us will endure in times of testing. "**Each one's work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will**

receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:13, 14).

God's Word promises various types of crowns. **"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away"** (1 Peter 5:4). **"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him"** (James 1:12). **"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"** (Revelation 2:10b). **"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing"** (2 Timothy 4:8).

Water of Life for the Thirsty

Jesus first offered the "water of life" freely when He was speaking to the woman of Samaria who had come to draw water from a well. **"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"** (John 4:13b, 14). He explained this later. **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water"** (John 7:37b, 38). He was speaking about the Holy Spirit, who would live in believers.

Now again Jesus offers the water of life. A pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The invitation comes again, to *you*: **"And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"** (Revelation 22:17b). This is the last invitation in the written Word of God. Have you accepted the invitation to come to Him? You are blessed if you do. Jesus says He is coming quickly. If you are His, then you can join with Christians all over the world by responding with the apostle John, **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"**

Answers to Questions

Answers to the questions in this Bible study are found below so that you can check your work and know the correct answers.

Lesson 2: pages 4-7

1. seven, churches
2. feet, golden
3. white, snow
4. flame, fire
5. brass
6. waters
7. stars, angels
8. sword
9. sun
10. dead
11. Hades, Death
12. (a) seen
(b) are
(c) after this

Lesson 3: pages 9, 10

1. stars
2. labor, patience, evil, hate
3. first love
4. tree, life, Paradise

Lesson 4: pages 12, 13

1. First, Last, dead, life
2. tribulation, poverty, rich
4. hurt, death

Lesson 5: pages 15, 16

1. sharp, sword
2. name, deny
3. Balaam, Nicolaitans
4. manna, white, name

Lesson 6: pages 17, 18

1. God, eyes, feet
2. love, service, faith, patience, first
3. Jezebel, prophetic, immorality, idols
4. keeps, power, nations, star

Lesson 7: pages 20, 21

1. seven, seven
2. names, defiled
3. alive, dead, perfect
4. white, blot, Book, Life, confess

Lesson 8: pages 23, 24

1. holy, true, key, opens, shuts, opens
2. strength, word, denied, persevere
4. pillar, go out, name, city, new

Lesson 9: pages 27, 28

1. Amen, Faithful, True, creation
3. cold, hot, lukewarm, spew, rich, wealthy, nothing, poor, blind, naked
4. sit, throne

Lesson 12: pages 40, 41

1. white, bow, crown
2. red, peace, sword
3. black, scales
4. pale, Death, Hades, sword, hunger, death, beasts
5. altar, souls
(a) the word of God
(b) the testimony which they held
6. (a) earthquake
(b) black
(c) blood
(d) fell
(e) receded
(f) mountain, island

- (g) hid, hide, face, throne, wrath

Lesson 14: pages 48, 49

1. nations, tribes, tongues
2. washed, blood
3. dwell
4. hunger, thirst
5. sun, heat
6. shepherd, fountains
7. tear

Lesson 22: pages 66, 67

1. woman, sun, moon, twelve
2. dragon, Child, born
3. nations, iron, throne
4. wilderness, God, 1,260
5. Michael, dragon, earth

Lesson 32: pages 96, 97

1. Salvation, glory, power
2. True, righteous
3. judged, harlot
4. avenged, servants
5. reigns
6. marriage
7. ready

Lesson 35: pages 108, 109

1. sea
2. tear, death, sorrow, crying, pain
3. cowardly, unbelieving, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, liars
4. temple
5. sun, moon
6. shut, night
7. defiles, abomination, lie
8. curse
9. lamp, light

Seven “Blessed”s in Revelation

(Verses to Memorize)

“Blessed” means to be spiritually benefited. Draw a circle around the word “blessed” in each of the verses below. Underline the words that show what kind of people are blessed.

1. **“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near”** (Revelation 1:3).

2. **“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them’ ”** (Revelation 14:13).

3. **“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame”** (Revelation 16:15).

4. **“...Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”** (Revelation 19:9a).

5. **“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”** (Revelation 20:6).

6. **“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book”** (Revelation 22:7).

7. **“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city”** (Revelation 22:14).

This booklet is for individual or group study. Additional free copies are available as the Lord provides financially:

WORLD MISSIONARY PRESS, INC.
P.O. Box 120
New Paris, Indiana 46553-0120 U.S.A.