

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year Seven
Lessons 27-39

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THE GREAT ELECTION

“Make Your Calling and Election Sure” (2 Pet. 1:10)

SHORT BALLOT

SHALL I BE SAVED? YES NO

God has voted: YES!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Satan has voted: NO!

“Your adversary the devil,” walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Pet. 6:8.

Your vote decides

“Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.” Acts 3:19.

DATE OF ELECTION

“Behold, NOW is THE ACCEPTABLE TIME; Behold NOW is THE DAY of salvation.” or. 6:3.

“Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Heb. 3:15.

What Is the Meaning?

“Election” means SELECTION, and all are “ELECTED” who choose to – OBEY and ABIDE (read Hebrews 5:9; John 15:6). It is not a case of God having arbitrarily settled the destiny of men BEFORE THEY WERE BORN. Of the pagans at Thessalonica who “TURNED to God FROM IDOLS to SERVE the living and true God,” it was said: “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (I Thessalonians 1:9-10; II Thessalonians 2:13). Those who crucified Christ were “CALLED,” and 3000 men responded to the first invitation; soon the number of men “was about 5000” (Acts 2:37-41; 3:19; 4:4). Jesus “tasted death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). “God... now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). “WHOSOEVER will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

Instructions for Voting

“BELIEVE...” (Acts 16:31, John 8:24).

“Repent...” (Acts 3:19, Luke 13:3-5).

“Confess with thy mouth and be saved.” (Romans 10:9, II Timothy 2:12).

“ARISE, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16, John 3:3-7)

God is calling YOU, WILL YOU RESPOND in these words “I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER” (Luke 15:18)?

FOREWORD

The Seven “Catholic” or General Epistles -- by Peter, James, John and Jude

They are called “catholic” because of their universal or general appeal. Peter, James, John and Jude wrote them. With the exception of III John, which is addressed to an individual, the general epistles were circular letters written to various communities of the Church,

The Apocalypse

The word “Apocalypse” is derived from the Greek and means “revelation.” It is an account of a revelation that John the Beloved Apostle received, and was addressed to the churches of Asia Minor.

The Apocalypse treats of the great conflict between the Church of Christ and the forces of evil, assuring Christians of the final victory of Christ. It contains a revelation of many things that must happen before the final victory of the Lord. The book is full of Oriental imagery and symbolism, consequently many find it difficult to understand.

“The Relevance of the Book of Revelation” by Merrill C. Tenney and published by THE CINCINNATI BIBLE SEMINARY would be a blessing to you.

“Blessed is he that READETH, and they that HEAR the words of this prophecy, and KEEP those things which are written there: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3).

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 27

Page 1

II Peter 1

Memory Verse: II Peter 1:16

Memory Verse:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty” (II Peter 1:16).

THE CHRIST AND THE BIBLE

II Peter specifically claims to be the work of “Simon Peter” (II Peter 1: 1). Jerome, Latin father of the early church was born about 340?-420 A.D. He wrote: “Peter wrote two epistles called catholic (universal); the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of differences of style from the former.”

Origin, Christian writer and teacher of Alexandria (185?-254? A.D.) said, “Peter has left one acknowledged epistle; let it be granted that he left a second, for this is disputed.”

Observe that Jerome and Origen did not themselves express doubts regarding the genuineness of II PETER. They merely noted that SOME in their time had questioned it. These doubts gradually disappeared following its acceptance by Jerome who included it in his Latin Version of the Bible.

The DIFFERENCES in style are doubtless due to the difference in the nature of the subjects treated.

To Whom Addressed?

First and Second Peter were addressed to the same persons. “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance” (II Peter 3:1). Read I Peter 1:1-2.

Purpose of II Peter?

The keynote of I Peter was HOPE; that of II Peter is KNOWLEDGE. The first epistle was written to sustain the SUFFERING CHRISTIANS. The Second epistle WARNS them of apostasy and FALSE TEACHERS who for money would permit licentiousness and wrongdoing. The writer fully describes and refutes their false doctrines.

Date Written?

“We may assume that II Peter was written soon after I Peter, shortly before the apostle’s death about 67 A.D., or within a year or two, one way or the other” (Halley).

Since the apostle was in Babylon when he wrote the first letter, may we not properly assume that he was still in the same city when he wrote II Peter? No reference is made to the place from which it was written.

An Outline

- I. The Assurance of Doctrine (II Peter 1).
- II. The Admonition Against Denial (II Peter 2).
- III. The Attitude Toward Destiny (II Peter 3).

The last words of a man before he dies are usually serious. Persecution from WITHOUT had now changed to pernicious “false teachers” WITHIN THE CHURCH. II Peter 1 is a study of the “KNOWLEDGE of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (verse 2f).

I. THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE: The SALUTATION (II Peter 1:1-4)

“Simon Peter...” (II Peter 1:1): “Peter” is the name prefixed to I Peter 1:1. In here he calls himself by both names, as found in Luke 5:8; John 13:6: 20:2; Acts 10:5.

“As servant.” Literally a “slave,” one who gives himself wholly to another's will.

“And an apostle.” “Of Jesus Christ,” of Jesus the Messiah, He placed himself on an equality with his readers, but was still an apostle by the authority of Christ. Peter never calls himself “POPE,” or “the vicegerent of God on earth.”

“To them that have obtained like precious faith with us.” “With us” embraces the Jewish Christians. “To them,” the Gentile Christians. “Like precious” or “equally precious” indicates that the “faith” made available to the Gentiles admitted them to the same privileges as the Jews. Every Christian is an “heir of God.”

“The righteousness of God” shows he is “no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34), and provides equal blessings for both Jews and Gentiles in Christ (Acts 1.5:9).

“Grace and peace... through the knowledge of God.” (II Peter 1:2) The usual apostolic benediction of “grace and peace” comes through the “KNOWLEDGE of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” “And this is LIFE ETERNAL, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This “KNOWLEDGE” comes from fellowship WITH CHRIST “the AUTHOR of ETERNAL SALVATION OF ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM” (Hebrews 5:9).

“According as his divine power hath given... us... the KNOWLEDGE.” (II Peter 1:3) This “knowledge” is the channel of “grace.” It is the ground of “peace,” and the means of SALVATION. It is the instrument of all blessings. Everything we need to NURTURE the SPIRITUAL LIFE OF GODLINESS has been given us in our “knowledge” of Christ. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME” (John 14:6; 10:10b). We are “COMPLETE IN ALL THE WILL OF GOD” in Christ (Colossians 2:10; 4:12; II Timothy 3:16-17).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.” (II Peter 1:4): These precious promises” include not only the external glories of the ETERNAL KINGDOM (verse 11), but a CHANGED, DIVINE NATURE WITHIN OURSELVES. God will graciously bestow this divine nature upon us if we OBEY THE WORD (James 1:18; I Peter 1:23). “More like the Master” must be the AIM of every Christian! In “partaking” or “sharing” of “the divine nature” we “escaped from the corruption in the world that arises from passion” (John 14:23). “Man becomes either REGENERATE or DEGENERATE!” What man “lost” in the FALL (Genesis 1:26), he has RESTORED in the transforming of CONVERSION TO CHRIST (II Corinthians; Colossians 3:10).

II. THE GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE: THE EXHORTATION (II Peter 1:5-11)

“And giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue.” (II Peter 1:5) This exhortation is based on premises drawn from verse 4. We are “NEW CREATURES” (II Corinthians 5:17, John 3:3-5). We have the “precious promises,” the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32), a new name, a new master, a new hope, a new home in heaven at the end of this life. In view of these things, the readers are URGED to GROW IN CHRISTIAN GRACES. The condition of receiving more Light is a faithful use of the light one has. “USE IT, or LOSE IT” is a spiritual as well as a natural law.

“Add to your faith.” “Faith” is the spiritual soil in which all Christian graces are rooted (Romans 10:17). These beautiful graces are not spontaneous. We are to make every effort to supplement our faith with “virtue!” There are eight graces, the first being “FAITH,” and the last “LOVE,” an octave higher. When these are harmonized and played on by the Holy Spirit, disharmony disappears and life’s discords vanish.

“Virtue.” “Faith” or strong conviction will give us moral power, moral energy, vigor of soul to DO WHAT WE KNOW IS RIGHT (Hebrews 11:6, Ephesians 2:8).

“Knowledge” is insight, understanding, practical skill in the details of Christian duty.

“And temperance.” (II Peter 1:6) This is self-control, by means of which a man resists temptation. “One who holds himself in.”

“Patience.” “Self-control” enables one to curb his desires, “PATIENCE” gives him power steadfastly to endure evils which press upon him without.

“And to patience GODLINESS.” Right feeling and behavior toward God.

“And to godliness brotherly kindness...” (II Peter 1:7) An active good will toward the saints. This is right behavior toward the brethren, and all men (Galatians 6:10). Study I Peter 1:22; Matthew 5:44-48; I Corinthians 13:13 to show the meaning of “charity” or LOVE.

“For if these things be in you, and ABOUND...” (II Peter 1:8) If Christians HAVE THESE Qualities IN THEIR FULLNESS, it proves we have the true “KNOWLEDGE” of Christ, and are “bearing fruit... more fruit... much fruit” (John 15:2, 5).

“But he that lacketh these things is blind...” (II Peter 1:9) “Faith” and the seven divine qualities in verses 5-7 make a perfect octave of harmony spiritually. To “LACK” them is to prove one “has defective moral vision.” He “sees only what is near”; he constantly blinks his eyes and keeps them partially closed. He is SHORTSIGHTED!

“Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” If he could remember how he was cleansed from his old sinful state, he would show greater diligence lest he should fall again into sin!

“Wherefore... make your calling and election sure.” (II Peter 1:10) The “call” of the gospel is “first” in order; the “election” comes when we accept God’s “call” through Christ. God’s grace is NOT IRRESISTIBLE; man may make it void (Galatians 2:21), and receive it in “vain” (II Corinthians 6:1). We must “be faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10c).

“Never fail.” This does not mean we shall never sin, but that such patient effort to GROW IN KNOWLEDGE” (II Peter 3:18) will guard us against faults and failings. To abound in these graces will he “steps from earth to heaven, starting in faith, culminating in LOVE in the eternal home of God” (verse 11).

III. THE GROUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: THE PROMISE (II Peter 1:12-21)

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance. “ (II Peter 1:12): The faithful minister must (1) preach the gospel to the untaught, and (2) EXHORT those who have been taught to greater faithfulness and zeal in “all things” (Matthew 28:18-20). Peter knows his death is not far away. He promises to help his readers to “keep these truths in mind.” The gospel must be preached “in season, out of season” (II Timothy 4:2). To become “tired of such preaching” is full proof that one is not trying to again a single soul to Christ- the gospel is the most thrilling message in the world. It SAVES those who HEAR and OBEY it (I Corinthians 15:1-2).

“Yea... as long as I am in this tabernacle... stir you up.” (II Peter 1:13) He means the body in which his spirit now dwells. Peter expected Christ’s prediction of his martyrdom soon to occur (John 21:18-19). He will “put off this my tabernacle,” or body (verse 14).” I will make every effort to enable each one of you to keep these things in mind after I am gone” (verse 15).

“For we have not followed... fables.” (II Peter 1:16) Peter was not preaching a gospel of “fictitious stories”! “On the contrary, we were eye-witnesses of His majesty,” or the TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD (Matthew 17:1-6). This experience “banished forever from his mind any doubt as to the reality of a LIVING and COMING CHRIST, specially added evidence of prophecy” (verses 17-19).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy.” (II Peter 1:19) The Transfiguration scene confirmed the testimony of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and other Old Testament prophets concerning the deity of Jesus, and established clearly the relationship that obtains between God and His Son. The testimony of these prophets was made “more sure” by that which Peter, James and John had witnessed in the holy mount, and which Peter was then reciting. Such a blessed hope made Peter ready for martyrdom, and would make a forceful appeal to the Jews (see Acts 2:25-36).

“As unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” “Dark place” denotes a squalid, filthy and dark dungeon, a fitting description of the condition that characterizes MEN WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF THE TRUTH. Into such a world a lamp of prophecy sheds its light bringing hope and cheer.

To such a lamp Peter’s readers were to look “until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” Prophecy was “a lamp shining in the darkness of the past and giving some light before the Day Star arose.” Jesus said, “I am... the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR” (Revelation 22:16). In your heart has there “dawned” that “blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)?

“Knowing this first... no prophecy of the scripture is of any private instruction” (II Peter 1:20): Or, “private origination.” “No prophecy of Scripture comes out of PRIVATE DISCLOSURE.” Prophecy CAME BY THE WILL OF GOD. This passage teaches nothing about men interpreting or explaining the scriptures, but deals exclusively with the manner in WHICH TELE PROPHETS RECEIVED and DELIVERED THE MESSAGE for which they were instruments in the hands of God. Often they themselves did not understand the significance of the things which they spake (I Peter 1:10-12).

“For... holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:21) “Moved” means to be borne along as a sailing vessel before the wind. The prophets were passive instruments in the hands of God, being directed in what they wrote by the Holy Spirit.

Our SAVING “KNOWLEDGE” of Christ and our hope of His glorious hope of His return is SURE and SATISFYING!

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What two terms does Peter apply to himself (II Peter 1:1)?
2. How do we conic to possess the things that “pertain unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3)?
3. Through what medium do we become “partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4; compare Romans 1:16; 10:17; Acts 16:31f; 2:38; 8:37; 22: 16)?
4. How did Peter “know” he “must put off” his tabernacle shortly (II Peter 1:14; John 21:18-19)?

Fill in Blanks with Right Words

5. “His divine _____ hath given (granted) unto us all things that pertain unto _____ and _____.”(II Peter 1:3).
6. “And... giving all diligence, add to your faith _____ ... _____..._____..._____ brotherly kindness _____” (II Peter 1:5-7).
7. “If these things be in you, _____ they make you that _____ (II Peter 1:8).
8. Peter had not “followed _____ when we made known unto you the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, but _____.” (II Peter 1:16).
9. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of _____, but _____ of God spake as they were _____ “ (II Peter 1:21).
10. “He that lacketh” the octave of “faith” to “charity” or “love” _____, and cannot _____ and hath forgotten _____ (II Peter 1:9).

True or False?

11. Peter put “Simon” in his name in the salutation of both his letters (II Peter 1:1, I Peter 1:1)?
12. The apostle desired that his teaching beheld “always in remembrance,” or, after his death (II Peter 1:15).
13. Peter heard God say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” on the Mount of Transfiguration (II Peter 1:17; Matthew 17: 1-6).
14. “No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Peter 1:20).
15. “Holy men of God” were not guided by the Holy Spirit as they received the gospel (II Peter 1:21).

YES or NO?

16. Two “precious” things are mentioned in this chapter (II Peter 1:1, 4). Name them.
17. Christians may “be partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4).
18. Did Peter mention being with Christ “in the holy mount” (II Peter 1:18).”
19. The apostle had no great “dawn” in mind (II Peter 1:19; 3:3,4; Titus 2:13).
20. Were the prophets of the Bible at any time anything more than instruments of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21; compare I Corinthians 2:13)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 28
II Peter 2

Page 1
Memory Verse: II Peter 2:19

Memory Verse:

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (II Peter 2:19).

WARNING CONCERNING FALSE TEACHERS

The Gospel is described by the apostle John’s “THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL” (Revelation 14:6). Professor R. C. Foster chose this title for his superb series of sermons and studies in one of his many books.

Men, in their own wisdom, did not originate this Gospel. “No prophecy ever resulted from HUMAN DESIGN; instead, holy men from God SPOKE AS THEY WERE CARRIED ALONG BY THE HOLY SPIRIT” (II Peter 1:21). So the Bible is not by “private interpretation” or “private origination” (II Peter 1:20).

God's Word is based upon the testimony of apostles who were “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (II Peter 1:16), and upon the word of prophets who were DIVINELY INSPIRED (II Peter 1:19-21). We ought to use the Bible as A “LAMP unto our feet, and a light unto our path” (Psalm 119:105) in this dark world until the Lord fulfills His “I WILL COME AGAIN” (John 14:3).

Change of Tone

The Tone of the epistle now changes from GRAVE EXHORTATION TO STERN WARNING CONCERNING ERROR. Having set forth the TRUE LIGHT of the Gospel, Peter now puts His readers on guard against DANGEROUS FALSE TEACHERS. Woe to all who demoralize the Christian church through FALSE TEACHING! Chapter two deals with the TEACHERS OF ERRORS.

I. THEIR CERTAIN PUNISHMENT (II Peter 2:1-9)

A. The Doom of False Leaders (II Peter 2:1-3).

“But... there shall be FALSE TEACHERS among you...” (II Peter 2:1) “But” with which this verse begins puts it in contrast with the matters dealt with at the close of II Peter I. There the prophetic WORD is a PRODUCT OF DIVINE INSPIRATION. “Holy men of God SPAKE as they were MOVED by the Holy Spirit!”

In times past FALSE PROPHETS had risen to LEAD THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ASTRAY. “The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail” (Isaiah 9:15). “The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I SENT THEM NOT, neither have I commanded them... they prophesy unto you a FALSE VISION” (Jeremiah 14:14; see Ezekiel 13:3; Zechariah 13:4).

The coming of “false prophets” and teachers is spoken of repeatedly in the new Testament. Jesus repeatedly warned of them: “BEWARE of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15, 24:11, 24).

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“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly,” affirmed Paul, “that in the latter time some shall depart FROM THE FAITH, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy...” (I Timothy 4:1-2; II Timothy 3:1-9; 4:1-3). Ponder I John 4:1, Jude 4-19.

“There shall be...” These “false prophets” are spoken of as future, “shall be,” yet it is IMPLIED in the chapter that they are already present. They were LEADERS WITHIN THE CHURCH. The church is “in” the world, not “OF” of the world (John 17:14-17). Paul warned the Ephesian elders to “watch” against “grievous wolves” who shall “enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:27-30). Today we must “watch” at all times to KEEP MEN WHO ARE FALSE LEADERS OUT of POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP. We must pray for their genuine conversion, but we must not allow them to continue their evil teaching and influence (see Jeremiah 6:13).

“Privily shall bring in damnable heresies...” Such leaders introduce “destructive sects,” or “ruinous heresies.” They cause party division by false teaching. They slip in “privily,” or slip in by the side of the truth to “deceive” their hearers.

“Wherever God erects a house of prayer, The devil always builds a chapel there.” All good things are counterfeited.

“Even denying the Lord that bought them...” These heretical teachers led people to deny the “Master who bought them” (I Corinthians 6:20). They “counted the blood of the covenant... an unholy thing” (Hebrews 10:29). To reject the DIVINITY of Jesus Christ and the POWER of HIS BLOOD to ATONE for sin is the END of REJECTING HIS AUTHORITY (Matthew 28:18-20). “Swift” or sudden “destruction” shall come upon such false teachers and leaders. Some questioned the Lord’s deity (I John 4:15), solve His humanity (I John 4:2).

“And many shall follow their pernicious ways...” (II Peter 2:2): How people can follow such “pernicious” or “shameless” or immoral “ways” is a mystery to me.

Such false teachers say, “Baptism is not essential to salvation” in the light of Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27!

HOW can any one be “deceived” as to HOW OFTEN THE LORD’S SUPPER should he received in the light of Acts 20:7?

Otherwise fine people will say of “sprinkling” for immersion, man-made names, voting people into a church, of “baptizing into a local church” instead of “into Christ” (Galatians 3:27). “I KNOW it is not in the Bible, BUT...! Unless repented of, all such shall “BUT” themselves into hell (11 Peter 3:9). Such teachers cause “the way of truth” (John 14:6) to be “evil spoken of,” or reviled.

“And through covetousness shall they... make merchandise of you.” (II Peter 2:3) “Covetousness” is unlawful desire for personal gain. All false teachers are greedy of “filthy lucre.” They “love money” (I Timothy 6: 3-10). Their “damnation” is sure (Philippians 3:19). Remember Ananias and Sapphira, members of the early church (Acts 5:1-11). Many “false teachers” see that if they CHANGE SOME THINGS ABOUT THE GOSPEL they will appeal to denominational people. So, they say, “SPRINKLING” is “just as good as immersion.” “It makes no difference WHAT YOU BELIEVE just so you are sincere,” and “to observe the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day makes it commonplace!” Many believe them and perish in their lies. We must stand for “ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD” (Acts 20:27, 7: John 14:6; 17:17; II Timothy 4:2f).

B. Illustration of Certain Doom (II Peter 2:4-8)

1. Fallen Angels (II Peter 2:4).

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“For if God spared not angels that sinned...” (II Peter 2:4) What the nature of their sin was, WHEN they sinned, and the NUMBER of angels sinning is not here stated. “Angels” that “kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation,” and are kept “in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). Some hold that Satan was a created “angel”, led a REVOLT IN HEAVEN (Revelation 12:7), and that the occasion for the revolt was A SPIRITUAL PRIDE and a DESIRE FOR HIGHER POSITION (I Timothy 3:6). For this arrogance was “cast down to hell.” “Hell” here is “not Gehenna, but “tartarosas,” a Greek term used for the place of future punishment.”

“Chains of darkness.” “Pits” in the Revision. “Dungeons of darkness” (Goodspeed). See Jude 6. Both passages point to a time when “angels” sinned, fell, and thus became angels of darkness.

2. The World of Noah's Time (II Peter 2:5).

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah...” (II Peter 2:5) The “old world” embraced the people who lived before the flood. The account of this flood is recorded in Genesis 6:13-8:19). Noah was “a preacher of righteousness by Word and EXAMPLE!” Only he, his wife, his three sons their wives were “SAVED by water” (I Peter 3:20, Genesis 7:7). “Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). As a “herald” of righteousness, he denounced the corruption of those about him, and exhorted the people to repentance for 120 years. Only EIGHT were saved, and every living substance... both man, and cattle, was destroyed.” (Genesis 7:23).

3. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (II Peter 2:6-8).

“And turning the cities... into ashes.” (II Peter 2:6) The “angels” fell because of PRIDE, the world perished by water because of DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WORD, and the third example of the “righteous” is marked as the punishment of the wicked (Genesis 19:1-7). The prophets cited the destruction which befell these Old Testament cities (Isaiah 1:9-10, Ezekiel 16:48-56), as did our Lord (Luke 17:28-32). Jude in more detail than Peter describes the destruction to the two cities (Jude 7).

“And delivered just Lot...” (II Pete 2:7) Lot is called “just” or “righteous” because he kept himself from the combination of world about. The “filthy conversation of the wicked” wore down Lot beyond endurance with their “lawless doings.” Though in the midst of extreme wickedness:

1. Lot was not corrupted by it.
2. He did not become indifferent to it, and
3. He was daily concerned about it. This is a pattern for us today.

C. Comfort for Believers (II Peter 2:9).

“The lord knoweth how to deliver the godly...” (II Peter 2:9) "The Lord" can deliver his servants, as shown by Noah and Lot, out of "temptations" or "testings." He holds the wicked in "reserve" for "the Day of Judgment!"

II. THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF FALSE LEADERS (II Peter 2:10-16)

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh...” (II Peter 2:10) Those who “yield to their physical nature and indulge in passions that defile them.” Their judgment will be greater (Luke 12:47-48).

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“Despise government...” They do not respect “authority” in Christ or in His Church (Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 13:17; Jude 8; Romans 1:24-28).

“Presumptuous... self-willed... not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” Arrogance, audacity, and pride mark such false teachers. They blasphemed dignities without fear. They spoke evil of the true leaders of the church.

“Whereas angels...” (II Peter 2:11) Such evil presumption in false leaders is rebuked by the example of angels who refrain from insulting beings less powerful than themselves.

“But these, as natural brute beasts...” (II Peter 2:12) Such evil teachers like “animals,” or “irrational brutes” or beasts, who make a pretense of knowledge, are certain to be punished for their wrong-doing. They shall “utterly perish” or “be caught and killed.”

“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness...” (II Peter 2:13) Balaam (Numbers 31:8, 19) and Judas (Acts 1:18) are examples of those who “receive the reward of unrighteousness” in this life. All the wicked will receive it in the world to come. Such men find pleasure only in ceaseless indulgence (I Thessalonians 5:7). They are “spots” and “blemishes” in contrast to the “lamb without spot” (I Peter 1:19; Ephesians 5:27).

“Having eyes full of adultery... cursed children.” (II Peter 2:14) “They have eyes for nobody but adulterous women;” they are unable to look at a woman without regarding her as an objective of sin (Matthew 5:27-28). They “deceive” and “bait” or lure front the right “unstable souls.”

“Which have... followed the way of Balaam.” (II Peter 2:15) The “right way” is the “way of truth” (verse 2). For the story of Balaam and his effort to curse the children of Israel see Numbers 22:1-41. This prophet of old “sold himself out for an evil cause for the sake of gain.”

“But he was rebuked... dumb ass.” (II Peter 2:16): Balaam “was rebuked” by the “dumb ass” he rode (Numbers 22:27-34). He wanted Balak's gold; he wanted to “curse Israel” CONTRARY TO GOD'S COMMAND. The “dumbness” marks the “false prophet” and not the “dumb ass” or beast of burden. Note that Peter accepted as authentic the narrative in Numbers 22 regarding Balaam and the “dumb ass,” whose words have been recorded in Numbers 22:28.

III. THEIR EVIL INFLUENCE (II Peter 2:17-22)

“These are wells without water...” (II Peter 2:17) “Waterless wells” disappoint thirsty travelers. Such FALSE TEACHERS PROMISE MUCH; they deliver nothing but DISAPPOINTMENT and DEATH IN THE END.

“Clouds that are carried with a tempest.” Misty “clouds” promise rain, but it fails to come. Such apostates offer blessings, but deceive and dupe their followers. For such apostates “is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 13).

“For when they speak great swelling words...” (II Peter 2:18) They “utter arrogant nonsense,” or entice those about to be delivered by the truth from sin. Their motive, method, and result:

1. Their motive was to allure and lead astray.
2. Their method of enticement was by “great swelling words.”
3. The sphere of enticement was in the list of “the flesh.”
4. The “bait” dangled before those taught was gross fleshly indulgence (verse 14).

“While they promise them liberty, they... are the servants of corruption.” (II Peter 2:19) Such teachers were the SLAVES OF SIN. These apostate teachers despise the truth which alone can set us free (John 8:32; Galatians 5:1, 13, 17-21).

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“For... the latter end is worse... than the beginning.” (II Peter 2:20) The antecedent of the pronoun “they” is the false “servants of corruption” of verse 19. These men had obeyed the gospel and “escaped the contaminations of the world through a knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” If one who has been converted is ENTICED BACK AGAIN INTO HIS SINS HIS STATE IS WORSE THAN BEFORE! He KNOWS the TRUTH; he will not continue in it (Luke 12:47-48). Ponder well the words of verse 21. EPIGNOSIS is the fullest possible form of knowledge. “The way of holiness” is so plain that “wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isaiah 35:8).

“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb...” (II Peter 2:22). Cited in this proverb are two beasts held in greatest contempt in Oriental lands. Surely a relapse is described in “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.” (Proverbs 26:11). The “dog” is a scavenger. The “sow” or swine is regarded as an abomination. Jesus associated these two beasts in an illustration of what is most profane and degrading (Matthew 7:6). The picture is real. The dog had ejected that which was foul. The “sow” had had been washed. That each returned to its former manner of life reveals that the OLD NATURE. RETURNED. Peter cites the “proverb” as an illustration of that which had occurred in the lives of men who, though they had escaped the corruptions of the world through the gospel, had again become “entangled again therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (verse 20).

QUESTIONS: Your Answers

1. Did “The Everlasting Gospel” (Revelation 14:6) come to man by “private origination” (II Peter 1:20-21).
2. What did Peter say “false prophets” would bring in (II Peter 2:1)? What did Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, and Jude say of “false prophets”?
3. Can you name some “pernicious ways” which exist today (II Peter 2:2)?
4. Regardless of their “sweet spirit” and “fair words,” what is on the way for teachers of error (II Peter 2:3)?
5. By what was Lot “vexed” (II Peter 2:7)?
6. What had these “false prophets” forsaken (II Peter 2:15)?
7. What animals are used to illustrate those “again entangled” in “the pollutions of the world” (II Peter 2:20-22)?

Fill In Blanks with Proper Words

8. “_____ was rebuked” by the “dumb ass _____ voice” (II Peter 2:15-16)
9. These “false” teachers are described as “_____ without water, _____ that are carried with a tempest (storm, II Peter 2:17)?
10. “God spared _____, but cast them _____, and delivered them _____ to be _____” (II Peter 2:4).
11. God “spared not the Old World, but _____, a preacher of _____, bringing in the _____” (II Peter 2:5).
12. God “_____ into ashes condemned with _____, making them _____ unto those THAT AFTER _____” (II Peter 2:6).

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Bible Bonus: True or False?

13. "The Lord" does not know how "to deliver the godly out of temptation" (II Peter 2:9). _____
14. "False prophets" are "afraid to speak evil of dignities" (II Peter 2:10). _____
15. Lot is spoken of as a "just" or righteous man in II Peter 2:7. _____
16. Peter names more than two Old Testament cities in II Peter 2:6. _____
17. The term, "eyes full of adultery," is not found in II Peter 2:14. _____

Write "Yes" or "No" in Blanks

18. Is it possible for one who has "escaped the pollutions of the world" to become "again entangled therein"? (II Peter 2:20)? _____
19. Is the "flood" referred to in both the second and third chapters of II Peter 2:5; 3:5-6)?
20. Are "false prophets" who "promise them liberty" free from the "corruption" of the world (II Peter 2:14, 19)? _____
21. "Unstable souls" take the "bait" of "false prophets." (II Peter 2:14) _____
22. Balaam is cited as an example of a prophet who "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15).

23. Peter did not believe the narrative in Numbers 22 regarding Balaam and the "dumb ass" (Numbers 22:28; II Peter 2:15-16.) _____
24. Will "false" teachers and those who follow them today be punished (II Peter 2:21, Matthew 25:41-46)?

25. If today we have been "born of water and of the Spirit," we have "entered into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5; Acts 2:38-41, 47; Galatians 3:26-27). _____

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 29
II Peter 3

Page 1
Memory Verse: II Peter 3:9

Memory Verse:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

“Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching,
In His glory they shall share;
If He shall come at the dawn or midnight,
Will He find us watching there?”

“O can we say we are ready, brother?
Ready for the soul’s bright home?
Say, will He find you and me still watching,
Waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come?”

– Fanny Crosby

The return of Christ and the establishment of His PERFECTED KINGDOM has been the blessed HOPE of the Church through the passing centuries. In First Peter, this HOPE was used by the apostles an inspiring MOTIVE FOR PATIENCE AND SUFFERING, and for FAITHFULNESS IN the PERFORMANCE OF ONE’S DUTY. The SAME TRUTH so dominates Second Peter that the two letters have commonly been called the “EPISTLES OF HOPE.”

I. THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S COMING (II Peter 3:1-7)

A. Pure Minds Need Prompting (II Peter 3:1-2).

“This second epistle...” (II Peter 3:1) “Now” suggests that the Second epistle came soon after the first. From this it appears that:

1. Peter had written an earlier epistle. It had been addressed to the same readers. See I Peter 1:1-2.

“Beloved...” A term of endearment, and occurs four times in this chapter (verses 1, 8, 14, 17).

“I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance...” Both of Peter’s epistles were written for the same purpose of exhorting the Jewish Christians to lead “pure” or “unsullied” lives in the midst of awful, pagan surroundings. “Stir” means thoroughly to arouse (see II Peter 1:13). When a Christian gets to the place where he DOES NOT FEEL A NEED for spiritual “RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2), he is in a serious position and does not realize it (I Corinthians 10:12).

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We all need to be “stirred” up to “remembrance” as Peter so well knew (II Peter 1:12, 13, 15, 3:1-2). Otherwise we are prone to fall before the moral and doctrinal evils around us (II Peter 1:4, 2:12, 19-20).

“That ye may be mindful of the words... spoken... prophets.” (II Peter 3:2) The things that Peter would have them recall were the principles, the truth and the doctrine which the “holy prophets” and “the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” had taught them. See Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Acts 11:27; 13:1. Peter was included among those designated, as was Paul (II Peter 3:15).

B. One Fruit of False Teaching: Rejection of the Second Coming of Christ (II Peter 3:3-7).

“Knowing this... in the last days scoffers.” (II Peter 3:3) Recognize this fact in the beginning. The prophets are apostles reminded them that such “scoffers” will arise in the church, as plainly showed by “Warnings Concerning False Teachers” in II Peter 2.

“Last days...” Embrace the days of the gospel of grace age, or since Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus and until He shall come again. “Mockers shall come with mockery” is a play on the worry EMPAIZO, to sport, play, jest or deride.

“Where is the promise of his coming?” (II Peter 3:4) These “scoffers” asked questions, as though the coming of Christ was so long delayed that all HOPE HAD ENDED THAT HE WOULD COME (John 14:1-6). They take advantage of the disappointment of the Jewish Christians and try to destroy FAITH in CHRIST. Jesus predicted such “scoffers” would come (John 3:19). The very existence and words of such “scoffers” PROVED THE TRUTH they attempted to deny!

“For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue...” Our Lord promised He would come (John 14:1-6; Matt. 24:3f); Paul often alluded to it (I Corinthians 15:51; II Corinthians 5:4); and Peter taught it (II Peter 3:12; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:8; Revelation 1:3). YET, our Lord in the Parable of the Talents HINTED that. His return was that of the Bridegroom (Matthew 25:6, 13).

From the days the “fathers fell asleep” or “died,” “all things continue as they were from the beginning.” The “fathers” were likely the first generation of Christians, many of whom had died by now. They had “died without witnessing the Lord’s return. Paul plainly dealt with this question in I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:13: II Thessalonians 2:1-7).

Two extremes are found respecting the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: 1. There are those who are continually setting dates when they think Christ is coming. Christ is CERTAIN to “COME.” but “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:32). 2. There are the skeptics of “scoffers” (II Peter 3:3f) who think and teach that Christ will NEVER COME AT ALL. These men are absolutely wrong.

“For this they willingly are ignorant of...” (II Peter 3:5) In their self-chosen ignorance, “false prophets” stubbornly forget the lesson of the flood. If God sent a deluge to punish a guilty world, is it not possible that Christ may appear in FLAMING FIRE to punish the UNGODLY and to deliver His saints? In the flood the “fixed order was interrupted!” The Almighty Creator can “interrupt” the “fixed order” again by FIRE!

“The heavens... the earth.” The “earth” was “compacted” or formed out of water. Water is the principle element in the formation, a fact seen in three-fourths of its surface being sea, and water being found in the depths of the earth everywhere. God caused “the world,” “the earth” to “perish” being overflowed with water (verse 5-6). Read Genesis (1:7-10; 7:11). The world “perished” or was “destroyed.” It was not annihilated. The existing order was changed. The evils of the age were removed and a “new world” emerged cleansed of its former impurities.

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“But the heavens and the earth... by the same word are kept in store” (II Peter 3:7) The heavens and the earth of old were FORMED BY THE WORD OF GOD, but the SAME WORD, which has always been sure, declares they are RESERVED FOR FIRE. Study Psalm 50:3; 97:3; Isaiah 66:15, 24; Daniel 7:9; Malachi 4:1.

“Fire” is a symbol of divine judgment and purification.

Paul affirms that “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.” He says, “In FLAMING FIRE they will take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

“Day of judgment...” This “destruction” or purification of “the earth” by “fire,” will be when the Lord is “revealed” in “judgment” and perdition on ungodly “false prophets” and teachers.

III. THE TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE (II Peter 3:8-13)

“But, beloved, be not ignorant...” (II Peter 3:8) Peter’s second answer to the “false” teachers is that LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN THE PROMISE and the REALIZATION of HIS COMING is not to be interpreted as meaning that God will not keep HIS PROMISES and CARRY out his THREATENINGS.

I was branded as “ignorant” by two professors in one of our Brother Seminaries for expecting a “literal, visible, glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.” Jesus DECLARED He would “come again” (John 14:6) Angels CONFIRMED HIS COMING “in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The New Testament teaches He will RETURN (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). I choose to believe MY Lord, According to Peter, the “ignorant” ones are those who FORGET GOD’S WORD!

“One day... as a thousands years” Delay was the objection of the scoffers, but TIME is no element in the counsels of God. He has eternity in which to work out His purposes. He can as well take “a thousand years as one day.” If He seems to us short-lived creatures to delay His “judgment” by “fire” it is for wise purposes (Psalm 90:4),

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...” (II Peter 3:9) The SEEMING DELAY in our Lord’s coming is not due to any “Slackness” of our Lord in keeping His word, God is “longsuffering.” He is giving time to call the world to “repentance” (Acts 17:30-31; I Timothy 2:4).

“But the day of the Lord will come...” (II Peter 3:10) The verb “will come” is emphatic; “COMING SURELY IS THE LORD.”

“The day of the Lord” is the day when He shall appear in the clouds on this occasion of his Second Coming to:

1. Raise the Dead (John 5:28-29; I Thessalonians 4:15).
2. Conduct the Judgment (II Thessalonians 1:7-9, Matthew 25:32-46).
3. Be Seen of “Every Eye” (Revelation 1:7).
4. “Be Glorified in His Saints” (II Thessalonians 1:10).
5. Have “Every Knee’ BOW to Him (Philippians 2:10).
6. Take His church home to Heaven (Ephesians 5:26-27).

“The day... will come as a thief in the night.” He will come suddenly and surprise of a thief. The Lord first used the figure (Matthew 22:43-44).

God has stored up in “the earth” He created (Genesis 1:1) ALL THE “elements” needed to “burn up,” “melt with fervent heat,” or purify and give His Saints the “new heavens and a NEW EARTH” HE has promised them!

“The heavens shall pass away ...the earth also... works therein shall be burned up”: The flood was literal; it “destroyed” the earth in removing evil men. Next time the “earth” will be “destroyed” or “purified” by fire. Will the burning of the earth be only on the surface? Or, will it be by explosion, “a great noise”? Or, by collision with some other heavenly body.” Both of these things, astronomers tell us, do happen. When God's PLANS ARE READY this old “earth” by explosion from within, or by collision with some other heavenly body will “flare into a seething mass of flames” (verses 10-12). The manner in which the Lord will accomplish all this is not stated. It is idle to speculate, but it will occur.

“Nevertheless we... look for new heavens and a new earth.” (II Peter 3:13) The promise of a “new heaven” and a “new earth” is found in Isaiah (65:17; 66:12; Revelation 21:1. The heavens and the earth will be FRESH AND NEW, and not worn and old, as are the heavens and earth that now exist. In this NEW HEAVEN and EARTH RIGHTEOUSNESS will dwell. They will be the abode of righteous and obedient people.

III. THE CONSEQUENT EXHORTATIONS (II Peter 3:14:18)

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent.” (II Peter 3:14): Peter makes two facts clear: 1. Christ will COME! 2. The RESULT will be a REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS in “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1).

“Be diligent...” In view of the certain coming of our Lord, Peter gives some earnest exhortations. “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye DO these things, ye shall never fall” (II Peter 1:10). “Make every effort to be found by Him unstained, irreproachable, and at peace”! We are to live in a state of CONTINUAL PREPARATION for his coming. “Without spot,” undefiled, and “blameless.”

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...” (II Peter 3:15) The seeming DELAY of our Lord’s coming is designed to PROMOTE SALVATION!” God wants “every creature” to come to repentance (Mark 16:15-16, II Peter 3:9).

“Even as our beloved brother Paul... hath written”: Paul preached the same gospel as Peter – Peter to the Jews, and Paul to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:8). Paul wrote Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians to the Christians of the area included in I Peter 1:1-2.

“As also in all his epistles speaking... of these things” (II Peter 3:16) Paul's epistles were at this time being read in the churches generally. The “judgment” is taught in I Thessalonians 3:13; Romans 14:10; the resurrection of the dead in I Corinthians 15; “an house... eternal in the heavens” (II Corinthians 5:1-10); the “end” of the world and the destruction of the wicked in II Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1-12.

“In which are some things hard to be understood...” Peter knew of many epistles, then, that Paul had written and knew also that they contained some very profound arguments, which a Jew found difficult to understand. Paul had openly rebuked Peter, but Peter knew he was WRONG (Galatians 2:1-21). Peter did not “hold a grudge.” He knew Paul’s letters were “scripture,” God-breathed.

“Hard to be understood” may refer to Paul's discussions of the Lord’s coming in Thessalonians. Those who are “untaught and unsteady twist – those writings as they do the other Scriptures – to their own ruin.” Is it not an awful thing to read I Corinthians 11:23-30; Acts 20:7) and then observe quarterly communion? God will hold accountable those who “wrest” or pervert the “scriptures”.

“Ye therefore, beloved, beware...” (II Peter 3:17) “Beware” means to keep watch, and to be on one’s guard. You may not understand all that the “day of the Lord” will contain, but Peter makes the duty of the Christian very plain. “Beware” of the false prophets -- then and now. Let us “continue steadfastly” in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

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“But grow in grace...” (II Peter 3:18) “Grace” is here usual to sum up all the favor of God. To “grow” in “knowledge” is to become better informed in the doctrine of Christ. One who grows in “grace” without “knowledge” of the Word becomes a “hothouse” Christian. Daily and diligently we must develop the virtues revealed in our Lord.

“To him be glory both now and ever. Amen.” The doxology with which the epistle concludes ascribes to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ “glory now and to the day of eternity,” or forever!

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. What was Peter’s purpose in “This second epistle” (II Peter 3:1-2)?
2. Who would “come in the last days,” and why (II Peter 3:3)?
3. What questions were these “scoffers” asking, and why (II Peter 3:4; Matthew 24:48-51)?
4. What form of catastrophe came upon the original world (II Peter 3:5-6)?
5. Can you describe the next form of judgment to overtake the world, and is it “perdition” or “destruction”, not annihilation (II Peter 3:7)?
6. Since “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise,” why has He delayed for such a long time (II Peter 3:9); I Timothy 2:4)?
7. How does Peter describe “the day of the Lord,” and in particular what will be consumed (II Peter 3:10)?
8. What will God create immediately after purging this “earth” (II Peter 3:13; compare Isaiah (65:17; 66:12; Revelation 21:1)?
9. “What manner of persons ought” Christians to be in the light of the “new heavens and a new earth” (II Peter 3:11,14)?
10. What does Peter say about the “epistles” of Paul (II Peter 3:15-16)?

Fill in Blanks with Right Words

11. “One day is with the Lord as a _____, and a _____ as one day” (II Peter 3:8).
12. God is long suffering, not _____ that that “any should perish, but all should come to _____” (II Peter 3:9).
13. Peter warns Christians, lest being “led away with the _____,” they “_____” (II Peter 3:17).

TRUE OR FALSE?

14. Peter speaks of himself in his second epistle (II Peter 3:1). _____
15. God has not promised “new heavens and a new earth” (II Peter 3:13; compare Isaiah 65:17; 66:12; Revelation 21:1). _____
16. Peter says “all” of Paul’s writings are easily understood (II Peter 3:15-16).
17. The learned and informed “wrest” the “scriptures, unto their own destruction” (II Peter 3:16). _____
18. The expression “last days” is not used in this epistle (II Peter 3:3). _____
19. The apostle says the “day of the Lord” will come “as a thief in the night” (II Peter 3:10). _____
20. Christians are to “grow in grace, and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 30

Page 1

I John 1-3

Memory Verse: I John 1:6-7

Memory Verse:

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:6, 7).

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THE FATHER

First John is possibly the last apostolic message to the whole church. It is complementary to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John, the First, Second and Third Epistles of John and Revelation were rewritten by the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ.

The aged apostle John wrote this epistle about the year 90 A.D., probably at Ephesus. It was addressed to all Christians, not to any particular church or individual (I John 2:12-14).

Key words: “KNOW,” “FELLOWSHIP,” and “love” or its derivatives occur 54 times.

John “the beloved disciple” is named only four times in the Acts, and his name occurs once in the epistles of Paul (Galatians 2:9). Probably this is the only time when John and Paul ever met face to face.

I. THE LIFE ETERNAL REVEALED IN CHRIST (I John 1:1-4)

“That which was from the beginning...” (I John 1:1) There are three persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ has EXISTED from all eternity. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God... And the Word was MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-2, 14, compare Genesis 1:1). In Jesus, the Word, “was LIFE; and the life was the LIGHT OF MEN” (John 1:4).

“From the beginning” points to that period of time before creation, and therefore the ETERNITY that precedes it.

“That... which we have heard... seen... looked upon, and handled.” The apostle John (and the others) had heard, seen, looked upon, and handled “that which was from the beginning.”

Each of the verbs in rising gradation sharpens the concept and makes live the thought intended by the writer. Three senses are appealed to as COMBINING TO SHOW THE REALITY OF CHRIST’S HUMANITY. Soon after the Christian Church was founded on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and ten days after His ascension to heaven (Acts 1:3; 2:1f), ERROR crept into the Christian Church.

Converts from Judaism and paganism sought to bring into the Christian faith their former theories. This led to error and apostasy. These false leaders admitted the DEITY of Jesus, but denied His HUMANITY. They called themselves “Gnostics,” or “knowing ones,” and looked down on all others with pity and contempt if they stuck to the apostolic faith.

However, the apostle John emphasized it was the ACTUAL, LITERAL, FLESHLY BODY OF CHRIST which he had “heard... seen... looked upon, and our hands have handled.” He affirmed the same thing in the Gospel of John (John 1:14).

“The Word of life.” John was careful to guard his readers against the conclusion that the Word of life was merely sonic speech or saying delivered by Christ. “The Word” actually “became flesh and TENTED AMONG US” (John 1:14).

“The life was manifested to show unto you that ETERNAL LIFE, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (verse 2).

“That... our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (I John 1:3) This highest “fellowship” with “The Father” and “His Son Jesus Christ” means fellowship with LIGHT, LOVE, AND LIFE!

“And your joy may be full.” (I John 1:4) John wrote “these things that your joy may be full.” Read John 17:13, 20-21; III John 3, 4.

II. THE LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (I John 1:5-2:26)

A. Tested by righteousness (I John 1:5-2:6)

1. Conditions of Fellowship with God (I John 1:5-7).

“This then is the message... that God is LIGHT.” (I John 1:5) God is the SOURCE of all LIGHT, physical, moral, or spiritual. Jesus said, “I am the LIGHT of the world” (John 8:12, 1:4). “Light” is the symbol of purity and love and truth. It stands for God’s REALM of truth, righteousness, purity, joy (I Timothy 6:16; Revelation 1:14-16).

“And in him is no darkness at all.” “Darkness” is a figure of ignorance, superstition, and sin. Thus God is contrasted with the devil and his agents who are styled “the world rulers of this darkness” (Ephesians 6:12). Their domain is “the power of darkness” (Colossians 1:13).

“If... we walk in darkness, we lie.” (I John 1:6) To claim to FELLOWSHIP with Him who is LIGHT and then STALK in the DARKNESS OF ERROR “We lie, and do not the truth!” If “men loved DARKNESS rather than LIGHT,” they are excluded from the “fellowship with” God.

“But if we walk in the light... we have fellowship.” (I John 1:7) If we keep on walking in the Light means a CONTINUING WALK with God. See John 8:12.

“And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” By “walking in the light” daily, we have “Fellowship one with another,” and “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“Cleanseth” is in the “present tense. As we constantly “walk in the light,” the “blood of Jesus Christ” operates to keep us constantly cleansed from the defilement of sin and its condemnation.

2. Sin and Its Forgiveness (I John 1:8-10).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (I John 1:8) John penned these records to refute the heretics, then and now, who say it is possible for one to live above SIN. Such “deceive” themselves, and “the truth is not in them.”

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful... to forgive... cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9) “If we keep on confessing our sins...” indicates a continuous process. We are to keep on “confessing” to the Father who has provided through His Son Jesus Christ. By means of His death, “sin” is pardoned, the barrier is removed, and FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS RESTORED!

“In case we say, ‘We have not sinned,’ we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not within us” (I John 1:10). Divine grace in Christ presupposes universal human sinfulness (Romans 3:9-19), “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

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3. Jesus Our Advocate (I John 2:1-2).

“My little children... if any man sin, we have an Advocate” (I John 2:1) John is now an old man. He regards his readers as “little children.” He has no “patience with professional perfectionists” (I John 1:8-10), but he has still less patience with those like the Gnostics, or “knowing ones,” who went to all sorts of excesses without shame.

“We have an Advocate...” We “keep on having” an “Advocate” or lawyer or attorney whose function is to represent one in court. Jesus thus represents us in the COURT OF HEAVEN, pleading our cause and advocating our case before the bar of God’s divine justice. As our Advocate, He is “with the Father.”

“And he is the propitiation for our sins...” (I John 1:2) To “propitiate” is to appease, render favorable, and to conciliate. The word “propitiation” occurs only here and in I John 4:10, though other forms of it are in Luke 18:13; Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 2:17.

The mercy seat of the Tabernacle where God met man was called the propitiation. Christ is OUR MERCY SEAT, where God MEETS US IN MERCY AND FORGIVENESS. He offers this to “every creature” Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 2:9).

4. Tests of the Christian (I John 2:3-6).

“And hereby we do know... if we keep his commandments.” (I John 2:3) The PROOF that we “know God” is that we “keep his commandments.” One who does not “KNOW” God “is a liar” (verse 4; compare John 17:3; John 8:44).

“But whoso keepeth his word... love of God perfected.” (I John 2:5) “Keepeth his word” is equal with “keeping his commandments” of verse 4. “Perfected” means to “stand complete” in Christ (I John 5:3). “Hereby we KNOW that we are in him,” by “keeping his Word.” We are to “walk, even as he walked.”

Martin Luther remarks: “It is not Christ’s walking on the sea that we are to imitate, but his ordinary walk.” Compare John 8:12; 12:35; 14:15, 15:14.

B. Tested by Love (I John 2:7-17).

1. Loving one’s Brother (I John 2:7-11).

“Brethren, I write no new commandment... old.” (I John 2:7) Christ earlier commanded what John here writes. He said, “Follow me.” It was a “new commandment” in that Christ first gave it. “A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). It was the MEASURE or EXTENT of the “love” that made it “new.”

“The darkness is past” for the Christian (I John 2:8). We are in the “LIGHT.” “He... that HATETH his brother is in DARKNESS” (verse 9). “These things I command you, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER” (John 15:17) affirmed Jesus. “Love” is the Christian’s BADGE Of discipleship (John 13:35)! WE PROVE we are in the LIGHT when we “love our brother” (verse 10); to hate our Christian brother shows we are “IN DARKNESS...walketh in darkness... knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (verse 11).

2. Not Loving the World (I John 2:12-17).

“Love not the world...” (I John 2:15). This exhortation is to the “little children” (verse 12), “young men” (verse 13), and “fathers” (verse 14) BECAUSE “your sins are forgiven” (verse 12), “you are strong, and ...have overcome the wicked one” (verses 13-14), and “you fathers have known Him Who is from the beginning (verse 14). Whether young or old in Christian experience, we must KNOW the Father, and the “Word of God abideth in you” (verse 14).

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“World.” By this term is meant “the ways of the world, its passions, pleasures and pursuits.” John does not refer to the beautiful “world of nature,” sunrise in the Grand Canyon, the majesty of El Capitol or of the Redwoods, or the exquisite world of flowers. Nor does John refer to the “complex world of human relationships.” He refers to “the world” of UNBELIEVING MEN and WOMEN, to the society of the unspiritual and godless. To “love” this “world,” court its favors, follow its customs or covet its prizes PROVES the “love of the Father is not in him.” Compare Matthew 6:24; James 4:4; II Corinthians 6:17-18.

“For all that is in the world... passeth away.” (I John 2:16-17) The Christ-less “world” is opposed to God. It shall “pass away”. Note:

“The lust of the flesh.” This is the evil desire that finds its origin in the flesh and through the flesh finds expression. Here the animal nature predominates Study Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 2:3; II Peter 2:18; Colossians 2:18.

“The lust of the eyes.” Carnal desires awaken through the appeal of objects to the eye. Even the love of beauty and the love of knowledge may prove to be worldly substitutes for the true LOVE OF GOD. Study Genesis 3:6.

“And the pride of life.” “The proud display of life.” The “pride” of place, possessions, the foolish sense of “security” apart from the Lord! The “have their origin not from the Father but from the world.” The Christian who “does the will of God remains forever”, while “the world with its lust passes away” (verse 17).

C. Tested by Belief (I John 2:18-29).

1. Heresy Was Already at Work (I John 2:18-19).

“Little children... many antichrists.” (I John 2:18) The word “antichrist” occurs nowhere else in the Bible, except in verse 22; 4:3; II John 7. “Anti” is “over against” or “opposed to.” John applies the word not to “ONE PERSON” as the “man of sin” (II Thessalonians 2:3), or the “beast” of Revelation 13:2, but to the WHOLE GROUP OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN TEACHERS! These two verses show that “The worst men are often those who were once outwardly religious and have fallen away.” Stalin once studied for the priesthood! Ponder Matthew 24:5, 24.

2. True Believers Are Sage: Guarded by the Holy Anointing (John 2:20-29).

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One...” (I John 2:20) The Holy Spirit has taught us “all things” (verse 27; John 16:13). The Spirit prepared the New Testament to guide the church (I Corinthians 13:8; II Peter 1:20-21). He teaches us “ALL THINGS” through the WORD today. We must “ABIDE” in Him and His Word and “bear fruit... more fruit... much fruit” (John 15) until “JESUS COMES” (vs. 28-29)!

III. THE LIFE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD (I John 3:1-24)

A. Tested by Righteousness (I John 3:1-10).

“Behold... we... the sons of God.” (I John 3:1) God through the gospel has given us NEW LIFE (James 1:18). “The seed is the WORD OF GOD” (Luke 8:11). “Behold” or take notice of “what a wealth of love the Father has lavished on us,” His sons through the gospel (John 1:29, 19:5, 3:16). “The world” does not approve the Christian’s God as their Sovereign and King (John 15:18-19).

“Beloved... it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” (I John 3:2) We shall be fully LIKE HIM WHEN HE APPEARS. ALL the blessings of sonship are ours. Since we “shall see Him as He is... every man... purifieth himself” (verse 3; Philippians 3:20-21).

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“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.” (John 3:4) “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is born of him” (I John 2:29). Verses 4-10 establish the utter impossibility of RECONCILING SIN WITH THE WORK REDEMPTION, with fellowship with Christ and with the new birth (John 3:3-5).

“Whosoever is born of God... cannot sin.” (I John 3:9) The thought is that he does not live a life of HABITUAL SIN, “for a seed divine remains within him; having been born of God, he cannot practice sinning.” To say that “IF” we “SIN” it is proof that we have not been “born” of God is just not so. When we do “fall” into sin, “we have an ADVOCATE,” and if we “CONFESS OUR SINS, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:7-9, 2:1). Do you belong to “God” or are you of “the children of the devil” (verse 10).

B. Tested by Love (I John 3:11-24).

1. A Selfish Murderer (I John 3:11-15).

“For this is the message... that we should LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” (I John 3:11) There is a tradition that when the aged Apostle John saw his capacity to work and teach was gone, he lacked the strength stand alone. He would direct that he be BORNE, to the meeting of the saints where rising and supporting himself with his cane, he would say with quivering voice, “LITTLE CHILDREN, LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

“Not as Cain... slew his brother” (I John 3:12) Cain is offered as an example of what true children of God are NOT TO DO (Genesis 4:1-17). “Slew” literally means to butcher, or slit the throat with a knife. This is the first fratricide. Abel was “righteous” (Hebrews 11:4; Genesis He offered in “faith” (Romans 10:17). Cain was evil and offered deliberately what God had not commanded – a substitute offering which God rejected (verses 12-13).

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”(I John 3:15) To harbor hate in the heart leads to “murder” (verses 14-15). Examine your attitude toward your brother in Christ today, dear brother!

2. A Self-sacrificing Example (I John 3:16-24).

“Hereby we perceive the love of God, because He LAID DOWN HIS LIFE for us.” (I John 3:16) He laid down “his life” for us (John 15:12-13). Our love will meet the need of others (verses 17-18), as we “keep his commandments” and “know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (verse 24).

I John Outlined

Theme of the book: How to Know that you are a Christian (I John 5:13).

I. Three Tests of Our Fellowship with God (I John 1:5-29)

- A. The Tests of Right Living (I John 1:5-2:6).
- B. The Test of Genuine Love (I John 2:7-17)
- C. The Test of True Believing (I John 2:18-29).

II. How God's Children Are Tested (I John 3:1-4:6)

- A. Tested by righteousness (I John 3:1-10)
- B. Tested by Love (I John 3:11-24).
- C. Tested by Belief (I John 4:1-6).

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III. Three Things A Child of God Should Know (I John 4:7-5:12).

- A. The Source of Love (I John 4:7-21).
- B. The Triumph of Righteousness (I John 5:1-5).
- C. The Grounds of Belief (I John 5:6-12).

Conclusion: Christian Certainties (I John 5:13-21).

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Who wrote this Epistle, and was it written to believers or unbelievers (I John 5:13; John 20:31; I John 1:3)?
2. One who claims to have “fellowship with him” while “walking in darkness” does what (I John 1:6)?
3. What is said of those who say, “We have no sin” or that they “have not sinned” (I John 1:8, 10)?
4. For whose “sins” is Christ the “propitiation” (I John 2:2)?
5. How may we “know that we know him” (I John 2:3)?
6. In whom has the “love of God perfected” (I John 2:5)?
7. Who is said in I John 2:17 to “abide forever?”
8. What does John say sin is. (I John 3:4)?
9. Why did Cain murder “Abel” (I John 3:12)?
10. How does John 3:23 say we should love?”

FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. Of that which was “from the beginning,” John said, “We” have “_____ ... _____
... _____ and _____ of the word of life.” (I John 1:1)
2. To have _____ with one another and be _____ from sin by Christ’s
_____, we “must walk in the light _____.” (I John 1:6-7)
3. “If we _____ our sins,” God will _____ and _____.” (I John 1:9)
4. “If any man sin, we have an _____ Father, _____ (I John 2:1)
5. “For all that is in the world, the _____ .. the lust of the _____, and the
_____ is not of the Father, but of the _____” (I John 2:16).
6. This is “the _____, that denies _____” (I John 2:22).
7. He that keeps on doing sin “_____” (I John 3:8).
8. “He that _____ dwelleth in him, and he in him” (I John 3:24).

“True” or “False”

1. We are told in I John 1:1 who wrote this epistle. _____
2. John said, “A new commandment I write unto you” (I John 2:7). _____
3. Those to whom John wrote “knew” the truth (I John 2:21). _____
4. John speaks of writing to “young men” more than once (I John 2:12, 14). _____
5. Both Cain and Abel are mentioned in I John 3:12. _____
6. We should be willing to “lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3:16).
7. The apostle speaks of “the Spirit which he hath given you” (I John 3:24).

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 31

Page 1

I John 4-5

Memory Verse: I John 5:4

Memory Verse:

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORLD

What “world” does God command the Christian NOT TO “LOVE” (I John 2:15-17)? It is not the beautiful world of nature, nor the complex “world” of human relationships. The apostle refers to “THE WORLD” of “UNBELIEVING MEN AND WOMEN,” the unspiritual and godless society of those who dwell upon the “earth” God called “very good” (Genesis 1:31). We are not to love this Christ-less, unbelieving “world.”

Of His followers our Lord said: “They are NOT of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (I John 17:14-15).

I. TESTED BY BELIEF (1 John 4:1-6)

A. False Teachers Marked By False Doctrine of Christ's Person (I John 17:14-15).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits...” I John 4:1 “Beloved” occurs three times in this chapter (verses 1, 7, 11). It indicates the warmth of affection of the writer for those addressed. “Stop believing,” he warns them, as the spirits of error among them carried some away. Some gullible believers become easy victims to the “latest fads in spiritualistic humbuggery.”

“Try the spirits.” Or prove them. “Put them to the acid test of truth as the metallurgist does his metals.” In the days of the apostles there were special “gifts” of the Holy Spirit, among them “discerning of SPIRITS” (I Corinthians 12:10).

“The Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24) “will guide you into all TRUTH,” Christ promised His disciples (John 14:26). Those who made counterfeit were exposed as being “FALSE PROPHETS.” These leaders had gone out into “the world;” they had joined the “godless world.” They claimed to be “spiritual,” “Christian,” and “divinely inspired.” Our Lord during His ministry had warned, “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray” (Matthew 24:11). John says they were “false prophets,” and had the spirit of the devil.

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God... the Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” (I John 4:2) This is the acid test. It is always possible to distinguish between TRUTH and ERROR by the ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRIST. Those who denied that CHRIST HAD COME IN THE FLESH—the INCARNATION – had the “spirit of ANTICHRIST” (verse 3).

Mediums, palmists and all other fakes today can NEVER GIVE US LIGHT BY TAKING US INTO DARKNESS OF SEANCES and other humbuggery! The Christian should shun all such false teachers. OUR ONLY HOPE IN CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT FOR EVERY SORROW AND NEED WE HAVE TODAY (I Corinthians 15:57; II Corinthians 12:9).

“Ye are of God... and have overcome them.” (I John 4:4) The saints had “overcome” these “false prophets,” because they were “of God,” and the SPIRIT IN THEM was MIGHTIER than the EVIL SPIRIT, that of the “prince of the world,” the devil, which was in the FALSE PROPHETS. The false prophets were “of the world” (verse 5). They were not of God. The acid test still is “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42). This furnished the touchstone of character, the test of belief, the proof of spiritual life! At the root of every heresy concerning Jesus there has been worldliness in some form. To DEGRADE THE PERSON OF CHRIST is to SHAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH! Study John 8:44; 15:19; II Timothy 4:1-4.

“We are of God.” (I John 4:6) By way of contract, John and his fellow apostles claimed to be “of God,” and to be GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Those who are “in tune” with God are “in tune” with each other, hence “Whoever has acquaintance with God, listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. In this way we distinguish the SPIRIT of TRUTH from the SPIRIT OF ERROR.” “He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 7:47).

II. THE SOURCE OF LOVE (I John 4:7-21)

A. Love Is the Essence of God (I John 4:7-8).

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God” (I John 4:7) Twice before in this epistle “love” had been cited as a TEST of the Christian life (I John 2:7-17). It was the “new commandment” which showed he “loveth his brother,” was “abiding in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (I John 2:10).

In (I John 3:11-24) “LOVE” was a SIGN OF LIKENESS TO THE FATHER which “children of God” should show. In this section it “IS A DISPOSITION which is traced to ITS SOURCE in the very nature of God as manifested in the GIFT OF HIS SON” (John 3:16). “LOVE” is the favorite theme of John in this epistle.

To keep on loving our brethren is PROOF that one “is BORN OF GOD, and KNOWETH GOD” (verse 7). To claim one “LOVES GOD” while he “HATES HIS BROTHER” proves he is in “darkness” and is a “liar” (I John 2:9-11).

“He that loveth not knoweth not; FOR GOD IS LOVE” (I John 4:8): Twice in this paragraph the apostle says “GOD IS LOVE” (verse 8 and 16). This is God's character and essence, not merely His characteristic.

B. Love Found Its Highest Manifestation in Christ (I John 4:9-11).

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us... God sent his only begotten Son into the world...” (I John 4:9) “That we might LIVE through him” is the PURPOSE of God in sending “his only begotten Son into the world.” From this we learn:

1. God's love for man.
2. It has been “manifested,” that is, “revealed” or made known.
3. It was “revealed” in the “gift” of God's Son (John 3:16.)
4. The PURPOSE of this gift was that we might “LIVE” through Him.

“Herein is love... that he loved us.” (I John 4:10) This shows the PRIORITY of God's “love” for us. Propitiate means to atone, and atonement means a COVERING. Atonement always scant the DEATH OF A SACRIFICE through SHED BLOOD which signified a “poured-out” life, resulting in a guilty sinner being able to stand in the presence of God without fear or condemnation.

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“Beloved, if... we OUGHT also to love one another.” (I John 4:11) This is the PRODUCT of love. In view of the FACT of God’s loving us to the extent of giving his “only begotten Son,” we Christians “OUGHT ALSO TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER!”

C. Love Is the Sure Evidence of the New Birth (I John 4:12-16).

“No man hath seen God.” (I John 4:12) No man has seeing the divine nature, the real essence of the Godhead, inasmuch as it is invisible to the physical eye. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” that is, REVEALED HIM (John 1:18). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do not constitute three separate Gods; there is but “ONE GOD” (Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:6).

God is “invisible to mortal eyes,” yet we may have a sense of His presence “IN US, and his love is perfected in us.” If we “love” each other, God “dwells” in us (verse 13). Such love is the SURE PROOF that we are “born again” (verses 14-16; John 3:3-5).

D. Love Brings Boldness Before Judgment (I John 4:17).

“Herein is love made perfect... boldness in the judgment.” “As he is, so are we in this world.” We are made AS CHRIST. Purified like Him, made sinless like Him, filled with love like Him, we appear at the “judgment” in HIS LIKENESS! This transformation BEGINS WHEN WE ARE CONVERTED, hence, in this world.

E. Love Banishes Fear (I John 4:18).

“There is no fear in love.” (I John 4:18) Perfect or immature love literally “throws out” FEAR.

F. Love Verified Love (I John 4:19-20).

“We love him, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19) “First” is in the emphatic position. It is a thorough refutation of the credal statement that Jesus came into the world to appease the wrath of an angry God! John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 verify with this verse that such theology is a slander on the character of God. God “LOVED” us before we LOVED HIM and expressed His love by giving His Son to die in our behalf. How can you refuse to love Him in return?

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother.” (I John 4:20) “If someone says, 'I love God,' while he hates his brother, HE IS A LIAR; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, is not able to love God whom he has not seen.”

G. Love Fulfills God's Commandment (I John 4:21)

“And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also” (I John 4:21). Love for God is INSEPARABLE FROM LOVE FOR MEN. Hatred for men is a PROOF that love is not CONTROLLING THE LIFE; it shows one to be a “liar” if he is boasting his love for God. We are to “love” men because they are made in the image of God and “love” is the “first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:36-40).

III. THE OVERCOMING LIFE (I John 5:1-12)

A. Love and Life (I John 5:1-3).

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“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... loveth Him... love the children of God.” (I John 5:1-2) In I John 4:21 the apostle was enjoining the DUTY of BROTHERLY LOVE. One who “LOVES GOD” must “LOVE THE CHILDREN OF GOD and KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS” (verse 2). In the light of verse 3 do YOU “LOVE GOD” (compare John 14:23)?

B. Faith and Victory (I John 5:4-5)

“For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.” (I John 5:4) All who are “born again” (John 3:3,5) and have the NEW LIFE from God “OVERCOMETH THE WORLD and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” They do not love of obey the “evil” spirit of the “world” which is contrary to God’s will.

A dear brother’s prayer was sound when he cried, “Lord, help me to understand that you won’t let nothing come my way that you and me together can’t handle!” Right as I Corinthians 10:13 and Romans 8:37 “Overcometh” is in the present tense, and thus denotes a continuous struggle. The faithful one continues to “overcome” because “his seed” (the WORD OF GOD, Luke 8:11), continues to abide in him (I John 3:9).

C. Christ and Witnesses (I John 5:6-12).

1. Christ and His Witnesses (I John 5:6-12).

“This is he that came by water and blood... the Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (I John 5:6) The “water” refers to his baptism by John (John 1:31). The “blood” was shed on the cross (John 19:34). Two commandments, BAPTISM and the Lord’s Supper, testify of Christ’s suffering, and death (Romans 6:1-3; Matthew 26:26-28).

“For there are three that bear record in heaven... three are one.” (I John 5:7) “The Father, the Word (the Son), and the Holy Ghost” bear witness to these things; The Spirit of Life, the water of LIGHT, and the blood of LOVE. These three agree in ONE, and that ONE is the Son of God! Study Matthew 3:15; John 1:32, 24; Hebrews 10:1-4; I Corinthians 11:23-29). The Spirit of God descended on the apostles on Pentecost, and bore “witness” with mighty power that the crucified Jesus was BOTH LORD AND CHRIST (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 5:32).

2. The Christian and His Witness (I John 5:10-12).

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” (I John 5:10) The Christian keeps on believing in the Son; the Spirit is the abiding PRESENCE in all believers (Acts 5:32; Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6). “God hath given unto us eternal life... in HIS SON” (verse 11). Only those who “hath the SON hath LIFE...” (verse 12; Mark 10:29-30; Titus 1:2; I John 2:25). A man may have fame, fortune, a fine education, reputation and worldly honor; BUT, “he that hath NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE!”

IV. CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES (I John 5:13-21)

A. The Assurance of the Possession of Eternal Life (I John 5:13).

“These things have I written unto you... that ye may KNOW... have ETERNAL LIFE.” (I John 5:13) For WHAT we KNOW consider the following: I John 2:3, 5, 13, 14, 20, 21, 29; 3:2, 5, 14, 15, 19, 20; 4:2, 6, 13, 16; 5:2, 13, 15, 18, 19-20). FACE THE FACTS, AND FOLLOW THEM!

B. The Assurance of the Power of Prayer (I John 5:14-15).

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“And if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us” (I John 5:14) The Father “wills” for us only that which is for our good. Study prayerfully Matthew 7:7-11.

C. The Assurance of Protection Against Sin (I John 5:16-17).

“If any man see his brother sin... a sin unto death I do not say that he shall pray for it” (I John 5:16) When we sin, we must repent and pray. If a brother sins “unto death” we are not to “pray” for him to be saved in that condition. This simply means that a brother who will not repent of his sins CANNOT BE SAVED. A Christian may be saved from ANY SIN, IF HE WILL REPENT AND PRAY. If he will NOT or cannot repent, there is NO WAY FOR HIM TO BE SAVED (I John 1:8; James 5:16). “Sin” consists of doing that which is wrong and of neglecting to do that which is right (verse 17, I John 3:4). These are sins of COMMISSION AND OMISSION.

D. The Assurance of the Presence of Christ (I John 5:18-21).

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” (I John 5:18) Verses 18, 19, and 20 begin with the verb “WE KNOW.” Compare also I John 3:2, 14, 5:15. One who KEEPS ON SINNING no longer seeks or enjoys God, nor knows or recognizes God in his life. The Christian being “begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” We are “of God” and “more than conquerors” through Christ who “loved us” (Romans 8:37). Through Christ we “KNOW HIM THAT IS TRUE” (Verse 20) and have “eternal life!”

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” (I John 5:21) Idolatry was rampant in the land and age when John wrote, even as it is today. John must have had in mind graven images, those made by man, but we must remember that anything is an “IDOL” which takes the place of Christ in our hearts whether persons, property, pleasure, or the “Holy Cows” of India today!

I have been informed that as much as one-third of the grain America ships to feed the hungry PEOPLE OF INDIA goes to feed the “sacred cows” of India. New Testament Christianity accepted by “every creature” in India would solve that nation's food and other problems!

The “COW” is to the Hindus the “Gp-mata –” the Mother Cow. The killing of the sacred cow outrages the Hindu. The Muslims, however, according to their scriptures are commanded to use the cow as a sacrificial animal. Thus there is a real communal conflict. What is your solution toward the “holy cows” and their consumption of food that the people of India ought to be eating?

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Why did John say, “try the spirits” (I John 4:1)?
2. Who does John say, “heareth us” (I John 4:6)? Who does not?
3. How did God “manifest” His love “toward us” (I John 4:9)?
4. In view of God’s “love” for “us,” whom should we love (I John 4:11)?
5. What is God’s “love” “perfected in us” (I John 4:12)?
6. How do we “know” we “love” the children of God (I John 4:16)?
7. What is the “victory that overcometh the world” (I John 5:4)?
8. Who “hath given us eternal life,” and who has it (I John 5:11-12)?
9. Whom does the “wicked one” not touch (I John 5:18)?
10. What is the final command in 1 John (I John 5:12)?

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Fill in Blanks with Right Words

1. "Every spirit that _____ that _____ is come in the _____ is of God" (I John 4:2).
2. "Greater is he that is in _____, than he that is in the _____ (I John 4:4).
3. "They that are of the world speak of the _____, and the world." (I John 4:5).
4. "Every one that loveth _____, and knoweth _____" (I John 4:7).
5. "If God so _____, we ought also to _____" (I John 4:11)
6. "For there are three _____ in earth, _____ and the _____, and the _____: and these three _____" (I John 5:8)
7. "The witness of _____" than "the witness _____ (I John 5:9).
8. "There is a _____" (I John 5:16).
9. "All _____ is sin"(I John 5:17).

True or False?

1. We should "believe" "every spirit" since we have no means of trying them. _____
2. The spirit of anti-Christ was in the world when John wrote. _____
3. The "spirit of truth" and the "spirit of error" are mentioned in I John 4:6. _____
4. "God is love" appears three times in I John 4:8,16. _____
5. John says, "There is no fear in love" (I John 4:18). _____
6. Some men who "hate" their brother, actually "loves God" (I John 4:20). _____
7. God's "commandments are" grievous (I John 5:3). _____
8. The word "God" is used 29 times in I John 4, and 20 times in I John 5. _____
9. "If we ask anything according to" God's will, "he heareth us." _____
10. The word "liar" appears in the last two chapters of I John. _____

YES or NO

1. Are we told how we may "know the spirit of God"? _____
2. Can one who does not love, really "know" God (I John 4:7-8) _____
3. "No man hath seen God at any time" (I John 4:12). _____
4. Does God "dwell" in those who "love" one another (I John 4:12). _____
5. Will "love" give us "boldness' or confidence in the "Day of Judgment?" _____
6. Did Jesus come both "by water and blood" (I John 5:6)? _____
7. Are God, the spirit and all men spoken of as "bearing witness" (I John 5:7-8). _____
8. Does the "whole world lie in wickedness" (I John 5:19). _____
9. Has the "Son of God" given "us understanding" (I John 5:20)? _____
10. Do I John 4 and 5 have the same number of verses? _____

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Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 32

Page 1

II John

Memory Verse: II John 9

Memory Verse:

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (II John 9).

ABIDING IN THE TRUTH

II John is notable as being the ONLY ONE in the New Testament exclusively addressed “unto the elect lady” (verse 1). It is a private, personal letter addressed to an unknown Christian woman and her family. John rejoiced not only that this “elect lady” was a Christian, but that her children were walking in the faith. It is a charming example of the private correspondence of the apostles, and of the early Christian Church.

Author

There is no name of an author given in the introduction. The authorship of this epistle had been much disputed. There is complete evidence that John the beloved disciple and apostle wrote it. It resembles his first epistle very closely – eight (8) of its thirteen (13) verses may be found in the first epistle, either in sense or expression. John must have been a very old man when he wrote it. He calls himself “The elder” (verse 1). He must have been at least ninety years of age. He is the last surviving apostle.

Date

II John was written about 90 A. D.

Key Words

“Truth” occurs five times in thirteen verses. Twice in verse 1, once each in verses 2, 3, and 4. That word is used in three senses: 1. For the body of Christian teaching (verses 1, 4). 2. For Christ, Himself (John 14:6). 3. For “truly.”

“Love” occurs four times.

“Commandment” appears four times, and the word “walking” is mentioned (verses 4,6).

I. THE PATHWAY OF TRUTH AND LOVE (II John 1-6)

A. “Love in The Truth” (II John 1).

“The elder.” (II John 1) This is the apostle John. The other apostles had died years before. John alone was left. He was the last surviving companion of Jesus, and possibly ninety years of age, or older.

“The elect lady.” There is no way of deciding whether “elect lady” is a Christian woman, or a church. “The OBVIOUS WAY OF TAKING IT IS TO A WOMAN OF DISTINCTION IN ONE OF THE CHURCHES” (Dr. A. T. Robertson; compare I Peter 5:13; I Corinthians 9:5). “Her children” are united with her in the salutation, so more persons than one are addressed in this epistle.

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There is a tradition that the person addressed was Martha of Bethany. Bengel says that the Greek “kyria” (“lady”) answers to the Hebrew “Martha.” If this were true, the “sister” referred to in verse 13 would be Mary.

“Whom I love in the truth”: John loved this Christian sister “in truth,” that is, sincerely, genuinely and truly. Compare I John 3:18. He “loved” them for their devotion to the cause of Christ, and because they were genuine Christians. From verse 10 we learn that she opened her home to receiving teachers into her home, thus providing occasion for a wider acquaintance among the saints than otherwise would have existed. All those who “knew the truth” loved her.

“Truth” is the source of love. There is no pretense of love. Her loyalty to the “truth” was the basis of the love of the apostle John.

B. Faithful through Truth (II John 2)

“For the truth's sake.” (II John 2) All who hold to the “truth” are bound together by imperishable ties of love. Such friendships endure. Can not “truth” here be spelled with a capital “T”? Jesus is the “TRUTH” (John 14:6). Jesus as “TRUTH” “dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever” (compare Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:19-20).

C. Salutation in the Truth (II John 3)

“Grace be with you.” (II John 3) “Grace” is the principle on which God gives “mercy” and “peace.” This is a most unusual form of salutation, found only in the Pastoral Epistles.

All Christians NEED “grace... mercy, and peace.” “Charis” (grace), is the wellspring in the heart of God. “Eleos” is “mercy,” its outpourings; “eirene” (peace), its blessed effect (David Smith). These things shall be ours “from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Repetition of the word “FROM” here is indicative of the twofold relation which man sustains to the Father and to the Son of the Father. The function of the Son was to REVEAL THE FATHER (John 1:18), that is, to make God known. Since the coming of the Son into the world, it is not possible for man to plead that God is UNKNOWABLE.

“In truth and love.” The enjoyment of “mercy... truth, and peace” flow out to man in “truth and love,” keynote words of the letter. John wanted his readers to remain faithful to the “truth” which they had “received,” and always to display the “love” which issues from that “truth.” “Truth” occurs five (5) times in II John, and six (6) times in III John.

D. Walking in the Truth (II John 4-6)

“I rejoiced... I found thy children walking in truth.” (II John 4) No man of God has greater joy than to find Christians walking in the “truth.” John found that the sons of the “elect lady” while far away in the great city were TRUE TO THEIR EARLY FAITH. How glad their mother would be to hear this of them! Can you imagine how the cause of the church --would GROW IF EVERY CHRISTIAN EVERYWHERE LIVED ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD. What would happen if “every creature” obeyed the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16), observed the Lord’s Supper “Upon the FIRST DAY of the week” (Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 11:23f), and demonstrated “the proof of your love” (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8:5, 6; 9:6-7)? God gave us “TRUTH” in which to WALK! “And now I beseech thee... that we love one another” (II John 5): Christ gave us a “NEW” standard, example and motive of love. (John 13:34-35). All Christians are to “love” one another (I John 3:11, 2:7-8).

“And this is love... walk after his commandments” (II John 6): – “Walking after his commandments” is the DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE. “For this is the LOVE OF GOD, that we keep his commandments...” (I John 5:3; John 14:15; 14:23). Right living is certain to result from “love.” We must KEEP ON WALKING IN LOVE, and be GUIDED BY LOVE in all our relationships.

II. THE PERIL OF UNSCRIPTURAL WAYS (II John 7-11)

A. The Test of the Truth (II John 7-9)

“For many deceivers are entered into the world.” (II John 7) These false teachers are the same set of “false prophets” (I John 4:1), those who deny the true deity of Jesus (I John 2:18-29). They were “imitating John's evangelists, they were going from place to place, preying on the churches, teaching in the name of Christ doctrines that were utterly subversive of the Christian faith. This letter was written to warn the 'elect lady' against showing HOSPITALITY TO SUCH TEACHERS. The warning is prefaced with an exhortation to 'love' (verses 5-6), as if to indicate that we should give NO encouragement to the enemies of truth.”

These false teachers are called “deceivers,” for they lead to false living as well as to false views of truth. Corrupt doctrine inevitably results in corrupt morals.

“Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”: This was the “error” of these false teachers and leaders. These Gnostics FLATLY DENIED the INCARNATION; that Jesus was God-Man in the flesh (John 1:14). “Nothing could be more fatal than to deny either His true humanity or His essential deity.” They were the first in a long line of heretics who, under various names, have refused to accept this cardinal truth of God's Word!

“This is the deceiver and the antichrist.” See I John 2:18, 22; 4:3 for the characteristics and identity of the anti-Christ. The DIVINE HUMANITY ever continues and will again be manifest. Were Christ ONLY A MAN, then His claims were FALSE, and His death would have NO SAVING POW-ER (Matthew 1:20-21; II Corinthians 5:14-21).

John in unsparing terms condemns such teachers as the enemies of Christ.

“Look to yourselves... that we receive a full reward” (II John 8): The apostle John warns “the elect lady and her children” to be on their GUARD AGAINST the false leaders lest they lose the faith, hope and love which came to them through the labors of true teachers. Unless they were “FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH,” Christ would not give them the “crown of life” (Revelation 2:10c; II Timothy 4:6-8; Matthew 10:22). John emphatically states:

1. The possibility of apostasy;
2. The importance of consent, and careful self-examination; and
3. The vital necessity of eternal vigilance against the evil one.

“Whose transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, HATH NOT GOD.” (II John 9) Verse 8 warns of the loss to be sustained in listening to the false teachers and “deceivers” mentioned in verse 7. Those who DENY the teachings of Christ about His person and SAVING WORK ON THE CROSS have fallen BACK INTO DARKNESS. They had DENIED and LOST GOD.

One cannot KNOW GOD and live in vital union with Him and REJECT THE REVELATION WHICH GOD HAD MADE OF HIMSELF IN CHRIST. Some teachers, then and now, claim to be “advanced,” “progressive,” and “leaders of NEW THOUGHT.” “PROGRESS which denies fundamental truth is retrogression” (G. Campbell Morgan). To deny any teaching of Christ is to brand one, regardless of

his claims, as behind the times. “Progress we all desire, but progress TOWARD CHRIST, not AWAY from Him ...Jesus Christ is still AHEAD OF US ALL CALLING US TO COME ON TO HIM”!

B. “Deceivers” Are Not to Be Received, Greeted, or Sheltered (II John 10-11).

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine...” (II John 10) John's advice is uncompromising. This reference is to TEACHERS who were deceiving propagandists who carried dissension and danger with them. He does not refer to “entertaining strangers” (Hebrews 13:2, I Timothy 5:10). It is dangerous to allow false teachers (Gnostics then, now Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses or other anti-scriptural leaders and their “isms”) to VISIT IN THE HOME or CHURCH. Then the church usually met in the home. To greet or give one's blessing to a false teacher is FORBIDDEN. If these travelling deceivers were allowed to spread their doctrines in these homes (for example, Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15), and then sent on with endorsement as Apollos was from Ephesus to Corinth (Acts 18:27), there was no escaping responsibility for the harm wrought by these propagandists of evil.

“For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (II John 11) “For he who bids him welcome makes himself a sharer of those wicked works of his.” John teaches that we must do nothing that would in any way support or encourage the teaching of that which is not true. To do so is to share in the guilt of the false teachers themselves.

III. PARTING WORDS (II John 12-13)

A. Things to Say Are Better Expressed By Word than By Paper and Ink (II John 12a).

“Having many things to write unto you...” (II John 12a) John has given his counsel of Christian love. He had sounded his warnings against compromising essential truth. There were many things the apostle desired to “write with paper and ink.” The “paper” was the pith of the papyrus plant, pressed into sheets, and pasted together. The “ink” was made from mixing soot and water and thickened with gum.

B. An Expectation of an Early Visit (II John 12b).

“But I trust to come... speak face to face” (II John 12b): “Face to face” is literally “mouth to mouth,” a phrase occurring in III John 14. By such personal presence and conversation, John desired that:

1. He might communicate with “the elect lady” the other matters he had in mind.
2. “Our joy may be full.”

C. Salutation from an Elect Sister's Children (II John 13).

“The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen” (II John 13): The salutation was from the children of the “elect sister” of the “elect lady” to whom John wrote. The mother was not included. She was dead or lived elsewhere. These “children” being near where John wrote, joined in the salutation or greeting to their aunt.

This godly woman, a sister of the one addressed by the apostle, was a Christian because she is described as “elect,” that is, CALLED, or CHOSEN. Read I Peter 2:4. No further information is given regarding her. However, we can deduce that:

1. She reared her children to be Christians, and though apparently dead, her influence lived on in them.
2. She was a MOTHER, not a nun, and thus performed her true function in life (I Timothy 2:15). Though unknown by name to us, she is a part of “the whole family in heaven and earth.” (Ephesians 3:15)

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QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. To whom is II John addressed?
2. What does John say will be with us “for ever” (II John 2)?
3. What is said in both letters to make John “rejoice greatly” (II John 4)?
4. How does John tell us what “love” is (II John 6)?
5. What is the result of “abideth not in the doctrine of Christ” (II John 9)?
6. Who, undoubtedly, the author of II John? Why?
7. What does the author call himself (II John 1)? How old, probably, was he?

FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. “For many _____ are entered into _____” (II John 7).
2. He who “confesses not that Jesus Christ is _____ in the flesh” is said to be “a _____ and an _____” (II John 7).
3. “Look to _____, that we _____ we have wrought, but that we _____” (II John 8).
4. “If there come any unto you, _____, receive him _____, neither bid him _____” (II John 10).
5. To bid a “deceitful” or “false prophet” “God speed _____” (II John 11).

YES OR NO

1. II John was written about 90 A. D. _____
2. “Truth” occurs five times in thirteen verses (II John 1, 2, 3, 4). _____
3. “Love” occurs four times in II John. _____
4. Was the command to “love one another” said to be “new” (II John 5). _____
5. Were there “many deceivers” in John’s day (II John 7)? _____
6. Is it right to bid “God speed” to false teachers (II John 10)? _____
7. Does John mention saluting his friends in II John? _____
8. Is the name of the writer of II and III John mentioned in either of them? _____

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The term, “from the beginning,” is used more than once in II John 5-6. _____
2. The “elect lady” and her children knew and obeyed the “truth”. _____
3. The salutation is found only in the Pastoral Epistles (II John 3). _____
4. Christians are not besought “to love one another” (II John 5). _____
5. Christians are not warned against receiving false teachers in their “house” (II John 10). _____
6. John did not have “many things to write” unto them (II John 12). _____
7. The apostle anticipated seeing them shortly. _____
8. Speaking “face to face” with them would cause them unhappiness. _____
9. “The children of the elect sister” sent the salutation (II John 13). _____
10. We may deduce that “thy elect sister” reared her children to be Christian, and that she was a mother, and not a nun. _____

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Third Quarter

Lesson 33

Page 1

III John

Memory Verse: III John 11

Memory Verse:

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (III John 11).

GREETINGS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The writer of III John: John the aged apostle. Where written: From Ephesus. The date: Probably about 90 A. D.

Purpose of III John?

It shows the duty of hospitality in the church. It sets forth the peril of domineering leadership in the church. While no vital doctrinal teaching is given III John is of “great value in giving us the beginning of arrogant, autocratic, and domineering leadership, which has been such a curse to the Christian Church, both in the days of the past, as well as the present. Even an apostle's authority was CALLED INTO QUESTION!”

The Second and Third Epistles of John the Apostle are so similar in outline, grammatical construction, the strengthening of faith, encouragement under trial, and warnings against false teachers, they have been called “Twin Sisters.”

I. INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATION (III John 1-4)

A. The Apostle's Love (III John 1).

“The elder...” (III John 1) The author is the same as the writer of II John. “The elder” is the apostle John. He is at Ephesus, the last of the twelve apostles. Now an aged man, he is possibly in his nineties.

“Unto the well beloved Gaius...” There are five men referred to by this name in the New Testament:

1. Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19:29).
2. Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4).
3. Gaius whom Paul baptized (I Corinthians 1:14).
4. Gaius one of Paul's hosts (Romans 16:23).
5. “The well beloved Gaius” here referred to by John.

Probably the last three were one and the same. Therefore we learn that Gaius was converted by John (verse 4), baptized by Paul, and was a wealthy and hospitable member of the church at Corinth.

There is a tradition that John appointed a certain Gaius “bishop” of Pergamum. If this is the same Gaius, then here is a very tender personal letter to a “bishop” whose church had recently received, or soon was to receive, a stern official warning from the same writer (Revelation 2:12-17). John “loves him in the truth.”

“Beloved” appears in verses 1, 2, 5, and 11.

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B. The Apostle's Prayer (III John 2).

“Beloved, I wish above all things... prosper... in health, even as they soul prospereth.” (III John 2) The Revised Version has “I pray.” John prays that Gaius may have all good things, but most of all he prays for the prosperity of his SOUL. “Brooke wonders if Gaius' health had caused his friends anxiety.” Here is the standard to determine how rich one may safely become: Just SO LONG AS THE SOUL PROSPERS. Paul taught it was not wrong to be rich (I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). Riches ruined the young ruler who made GOLD his GOD, and “went away grieved” from Jesus. He had “great possessions” (Mark 10:17-31).

C. The Apostle's Rejoicing (III John 3-4).

“For I rejoiced greatly...” (III John 3): The good tidings about Gaius caused this joyous outburst. “Certain brethren had been where Gaius lived, and enjoyed his hospitality and had spoken well of him to John on their return.” Such a report was constantly coming to John concerning Gaius.

“Thou walkest in the truth.” “Truth” in John’s writings covers every sphere of life, moral, intellectual and spiritual. “Thou” is in sharp contrast to Diotrophes (verse 9) and others like him who refuse to “walk in the truth.”

“I have no greater joy...” (III John 4) The apostle John, now an aged “elder” of the Ephesian church, was accustomed to call the saints “my children” in the gospel (compare I John 2:1, 12, 18, 28; 4:4; 5:21).

Nothing brings a minister of God more joy than to see those whom he has led to Christ, live the truth as it is in Christ, “allowing it to dominate and to control the mind and the soul, to mold the character and to deter-mine all choices and all acts”!

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE (III John 5-12)

A. The Care of Gaius for Christian Workers (III John 5-8).

“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest...” (III John 5): “Thou doest a faithful work” (Revised Version). “You are acting faithfully when you do anything for the brothers, and specially for the strangers” (Berkeley).

Gaius had been friendly to the missionaries or workers sent out by John. Paul some forty years before had established churches in and around Ephesus. There were no seminaries to supply the preachers needed. Preachers were developed out of the converts.

John, assuming the pastoral care of these churches, it seems, gathered round himself, and trained a great number of teachers and preachers to aid him. Apparently, some of these evangelists or John’s, on one of their tours, had been refused admission to the church over which Diotrophes presided. However, Gaius had received and entertained them. Gaius had been sharply criticized by Diotrophes, a domineering church boss, for what he had done in “truth” and “love.” On returning to Ephesus, the evangelists had told the story of it in John’s home church as Ephesus.

“Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church...” (III John 6) The missionaries or evangelists were sent on their way, worthily of God. “Since they are God's representatives, treat them as you would God” (Holtzmann).

“From Homer’s time (ID. XV 74) it was customary to speed the parting guest, sometimes accompanying him, sometimes providing money and food. Rabbis were so escorted and Paul alludes to the same gracious custom in Romans 15:24 and Titus 3:13” (Robertson).

“Thou shalt do well”: It is still a privilege and a responsibility of individual Christians and churches to help faithful Christian workers by showing them hospitality and by giving them adequate support in their Christ-appointed field of labor. It would appear that some group of missionaries of John would be in the region of Gaius, and would have need of his aid. He would “do well” to set them on their journey in a manner worthy of a follower of God.

“Because that for his name's sake they went forth...” (III John 7) “For the sake of the Name” (Revised Version). This means “The name of Jesus” (Acts 4:12; I Peter 4:16). Of course, UNFAITHFUL MISSIONARIES ARE FORBIDDEN SUPPORT. Men who do not GO for the PRIMARY PURPOSE OF SAVING MEN from their sins actually are disobeying the Great Commission (Luke 19:10; Matthew 1:21; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8). Jesus is the “NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME” (Philippians 2:9-11).

“Taking nothing of the Gentiles.” “To avoid all appearance of selfishness and all suspicion of unworthy motives in preaching,” these particular missionaries “refused to accept hospitality or remuneration from the Gentiles to whom they were bringing the gospel. “If a pagan Gentile accepted Christ and the gospel, he would of course be taught to “PROVE THE SINCERITY OF” his love by bringing his tithe and offerings of love for the Lord’s work (II Corinthians 8:8, I Corinthians 16:2).

“We therefore ought to welcome such, that...” (III John 8) Christians “ought” to help such Christian workers. We are under obligation to “support such people in order to be FELLOW WORKERS WITH THEM IN THE TRUTH.” We actually become “co-workers” with the workers and with the truth of the Gospel itself.

B. The Condemnation of Diotrephes (III John 9-10)

“I wrote unto the church...” (III John 9): John had written a brief letter to the church in which Gaius held membership. Perhaps the missionaries who had come their way had sent it along.

“But Diotrephes...”: “Dios” and “trepho,” nourished by Zeus,” or “nursling of Zeus,” the king of the gods, may indicated some BOASTED ARISTOCRACY of the gods or social connection. It may be related to the pride and vanity of this man, who so loved to have the preeminence among them, “receiveth us not.”

Diotrephes was insolent toward John, overbearing toward his fellow-workers, and for whose welfare he had no regard. He was probably one of – the false teachers spoken of in I John, of what city we do not know. It was probably a city near Ephesus.

If the tradition is right that this Gaius was of Pergamum, then Diotrephes, probably, was one of the Nicolaitan teachers spoken of in Revelation 2:15. He openly DEFIED THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLE John! In reality this ambitious, false leader defied the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who chose the Apostle John and commissioned him as one of the twelve (Luke 6:12-14; Matthew 28:18-20). The quicker such leaders are de-posed, the better for the truth and the church. If a minister, elder, deacon, teacher, or member is openly and willfully trying to SPREAD FALSE DOCTRINE in the local church, the sooner the party or parties get the axe of discipline, the better for the church – if it is to remain a New Testament Church.

“I will remember his deeds...” (III John 10) This man was a dictator. The Dictatorship of Diotrephes consisted of the facts that:

1. He “prated” used not merely idle but EVIL words against John the Apostle.
2. He refused to “receive the brethren” who came from John.
3. He forbade others of the church to “receive” the brethren from John.
4. Those who refused to bow co his will he “EXPELS THEM FROM THE CHURCH.”

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C. The Commendation of Demetrius (III John 11-12)

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but... good” (III John 11) Having shown the evil, ambitious nature of Diotrefes, and having warned Gaius of such conduct as seen in this “Church boss,” John then exhorted Gaius not to “imitate evil, but good.”

“He that doeth good is of God...” Since God is the source of all good, he who is a “well doer is from God: the evildoer has enjoyed no vision of God.” Not to do well “daily” (Luke 9:23), means one is of the devil, and not of God. What we do and say classify us (Matthew 7:16-20).

“Demetrius hath good report of all men...” (III John 12) Demetrius is contrasted with dictator Diotrefes. “All men,” of faithful Christians, spoke well of him. The “truth itself,” and “we also bear record” that Demetrius is a faithful servant of Christ. What a commendation!

III. THE CONCLUSION (III John 13-14)

“I had many things to write unto thee...” (III John 13) The aged apostle explains why he wrote such a short letter. Read II John 12. “Ink” is mentioned three times in the New Testament-- here, in II John 12 and II Corinthians 3:3.

“But I trust I shall shortly see thee... speak face to face.” (III John 14) How John valued the friendship of the genuine Christians. He hoped soon to see Gaius and talk with him “face to face.”

“Peace be to thee.” This is an unusual greeting. Compare with our Lord’s greeting following the resurrection (John 20:19, 26). “Peace” is the sum of the divine blessings through Christ.

“Our friends salute thee”: The salutation is one that all genuine disciples extend to others. They were faithful members of the body of Christ.

“Greet the friends by name”: In saluting “by name” the name of EACH WAS TO BE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. It is a heart-warming experience to have people remember us. We remember people by name in PRAYER and in birthday greetings. Said one man: “YOUR CARD WAS THE ONLY ONE I RECEIVED. I REALLY APPRECIATED IT!”

The Apostle John lived to a great age. When he was VERY OLD, tradition says, and was unable to preach to his people any longer, he would be carried into the church and repeat over and over again: “Beloved, if God so loved us, WE OUGHT ALSO TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER” (I John 4:11). When asked why he so often repeated the words, he replied: “If this one thing were attained, it would be enough.”

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Who is the writer of III John? When was it written?
2. To whom is III John addressed?
3. Of what value is III John?
4. How many men are described in III John (verse 1, 9, 12)?
5. Can you name some of the charges brought against Diotrefes (III John 9-10)?

FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. III John is addressed “unto the _____” (verse 1).
2. John prayed “that thou _____ and be in _____, even as _____” (verse 2).
3. The apostle refers to brethren “Which have borne witness of _____ before the church” (vs. 6).
4. “_____, who loveth to have _____,” John said, “receiveth us not” (III John 9).
5. _____, _____, and _____ are names mentioned in III John 1, 9, 12.
6. John said, “Ye know that _____” (III John 12).
7. The writer said, “Our _____. Greet _____” (III John 14).

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YES or NO

1. Did John say he would “remember” the deeds of him who would not receive us (III John 9).
2. Is the man who “casteth (or expelled) them out of the church” commended by the aged John (III John 10).
3. Did the apostle have hope of seeing those to whom he wrote (III John 14).
4. Does John use the expression “speak face to face” (III John 14).
5. Is it a fact that neither the word “love” or “charity” appears in III John (see verse 6).

TRUE Or FALSE?

1. John said that the “brethren” should have taken support of the pagan Gentiles (III John 7). _____
2. Of Demetrius it was said, “prating against us with malicious words” (III John 10). _____
3. “Whom I love in the truth” is found in II and III John. _____
4. John said, “He that doeth evil” hath “seen God” (III John 11). _____
5. The word “antichrist” is used in III John. _____
6. In II and III John, the apostle uses the term, “many things to write” (II John 12: III John 13). _____
7. The expression “paper and ink” appears in both II and III John.
8. II John has more verses than III John does. _____
9. Diotrephes had a “good report of all men” (III John 12). _____
10. Christians are to “follow not that which is evil, but that which is good” (III John 11). _____

A MISSIONARY LESSON (III John 5-8)

I. They Had Been Friendly to Missionaries (III John 5)

- A. John Pronounces Their Friendliness a Faithful Work.
- B. The Ones Supported Were Christians, Therefore It Was a Faithful Work.
- C. If We As Christians Give Support to Non-Christians, It is Not a Faithful Work!

II. The Missionaries were sent on their Way, Worthy of God (III John 6)

III. Missionaries Should Be Supported (III John 7).

- A. One Who Goes Out for the “Sake of the Name” This Forbids the Support of Unfaithful Missionaries.
- B. Ones Who Do Not Receive Their Support tom the Ones to Whom They Minister (Gentiles).

IV. In Supporting Missionaries, You Become a Missionary (II John 8)

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Jude

Memory Verse: Jude 3

Memory Verse:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

The author of this letter introduces himself as “Jude... brother of James” (verse 1). Two of the apostles bore the name of “Jude,” or its exact equivalent “Judas,” and two others were called “James.” However, this writer, not his brother, was a member of the group of twelve apostles.

This James was probably the well-known leader of the church in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:19; 2:9), and a half-brother of our Lord (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).

To Whom Written?

It was not written to any particular church or people, but to all Christians everywhere. Hence it is called a “General Epistle.” Addressed primarily to Jewish Christians, it contains primarily warning against false teachers.

When Written?

The epistle was written “about 65 to 67 A. D.” according to A. T. Robertson.

KEY WORD: “KEEP.”

I. KEPT OF GOD FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Jude 1-2)

“Jude...” (verse 1) To this half-brother of our Lord his human relationship to Christ was less important than his spiritual relationship. He was “brother of James,” the influential leader of the church at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9), and also a half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55). He calls himself “the servant (literally, 'bondservant' or 'slave') of Jesus Christ.”

“To them that are sanctified by God the father...” The persons addressed are unnamed and unknown. They are “SANCTIFIED,” or set apart by “God the Father.”

“Preserved” is “KEPT” in the Revised Version and in the Berkeley version. God does not merely “keep” us through present trials and temptations, but He is “KEEPING” us in or “for Jesus Christ.” Such favored persons are “CALLED.” They have heard and heeded the gracious message of salvation by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16).

“Mercy unto you...” (verse 2) “Mercy” is that favor toward the UNDESERVING shown by the Father!

“Peace” denotes a perfect relation to God and our fellow men.

“Love” is the deepest and most blessed experience of the human race.

These three graces are CERTAIN to be increased as we are loyal to the loving Son of God!

II. KEEP THE FAITH (Jude 3-4)

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation...” (verse 3) “Beloved” is an indication of the warmth of feeling which characterized the writer toward those primarily addressed.

“Common salvation” does not mean a “salvation” that is cheap and of little value, but a “salvation” available for all, as our village commons or parks are for all who frequent them. The writer was planning to write his fellow believers on subjects related to this “common salvation.” However, the Holy Spirit constrained him to CHANGE HIS THEME.

“It was needful for me to write... that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”: The “FAITH” was in peril. It became “needful” for Jude “to write” that his “beloved” brethren in the gospel should “earnestly contend” or wrestle for the body of REVEALED TRUTH, the Gospel. There is no other GOSPEL; nor will another gospel be given. “Fight the good fight of faith...” (I Timothy 6:12).

“The faith... once delivered unto the saints” means that THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IS DELIVERED FOR ALL TIME. Shun pretenders who claim to BRING you a new revelation. All such are from the devil, not from God. “The doctrine of a PROGRESSIVE REVELATION AFTER THE APOSTLES IS NOT FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.”

“But though we,” said Paul “an apostle... by Jesus Christ and God the Father,” “OR an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8, 1, 9).

God’s DEPOSIT of truth was infallibly delivered through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 1:11-12; II Peter 1:21). Every part of it is necessary, and unchanging. It is relevant for all ages, until our Lord shall come again (II Timothy 3:16-17).

“For there are certain men crept in unawares...” (verse 4) They stole in without their true character being known. Do you know of a modern “sect” which will come into prominent places BOLDLY without announcing WHO THEY ARE, and use all sorts of clever devices and gifts to “deceive even the very elect” if possible. Finally they announce their identity, but they have “hooked” a few of these “fringe” members of the church! A genuine study of the WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE of “Seventh Dayism X-Rayed” by Kelly will “unhook” those who “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”!

“Ordained to this condemnation”: Their coming was predicted, and their loves placed under condemnation. They were “ungodly,” boldly blasphemous of anything religious.

“Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness...”: The “grace” of God is SALVATION (Ephesians 2:8-9). These “ungodly men” “turned the grace _ of our God” or PERVERTED the gospel by interpreting it as actually allowing or supporting the practice of “lasciviousness,” gross fleshly indulgence. The words of the writer here are similar to those in II Peter 2:18-19, where these teachers promised “liberty” but were living lives in positive disobedience to all inspired writers.

They changed the GOSPEL OF PURITY (Matthew 5:8) into evil practices in their lives. From the very times of the apostles there have been Antinomians who have held that what was sin to others might be

permitted in the “sanctified” (verse 1). They asserted that the Spirit was not defiled by the SINS OF THE BODY.

Those who gratify the evil lusts of the body neither live nor “walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). All such “DENY JESUS CHRIST, our only Master and Lord.” Their denial of Christ was a DENIAL that He had COME IN THE FLESH. These sectarians held that the flesh was wholly sinful. However, the BEST DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL is a daily Christian life and LIGHT that ADORNS the gospel (Matthew 5:14-16).

III. KEPT UNTO JUDGEMENT (Jude 5-7)

A. Disobedient Israel (Jude 5).

“I will therefore put you in remembrance...” (Jude 5) Three examples were given of the evil results of apostasy, these of ISRAEL, ANGLES, and the CITIES OF THE PLAIN. While those to whom Jude wrote were perfectly familiar, like all faithful under-shepherds of the truth he will “put you in REMEMBRANCE” that the Lord once

“Saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” Reminding his readers how God sends judgment on sinners, Jude uses the case of Israel, the chosen people, “who in spite of their peculiar privileges and their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage, lost faith in God, and all 'that believe not' were 'destroyed'.” God’s judgment on unbelievers is certain in this life and in the life to come (Numbers 14:29; I Corinthians 6:9-10).

B. Rebellious Angels (Jude 6)

“And the angels that kept not their first estate...” (Jude 6) Even angels when they sinned were subjected to punishment. See II Peter. These “angels,” created holy, had sinned and become “wicked angels,” or evil spirits.

“Left their own habitation”: Or their own home. God had them imprisoned and “reserved” or “KEPT” “in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” So God will punish false, exalted apostates.

C. Immoral Sodom (Jude 7).

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah... set forth for an example.” (Jude 7) Read II Peter 2:6-10 and Genesis 19:24-25. The immoral men of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them “in like manner,” “abandoned themselves to sexual immorality and were bent on perverted sensuality, are placed before us as a warning in suffering the punishment of eternal fire.” Sudden and awful destruction came upon them. So surely shall FALSE TEACHERS suffer a like penalty!

The ruins of ancient Sodom are probably under the waters of the southern end of the Dead Sea. The name is preserved in Mt. Edom (Jebel Usdum) a salt mountain on the southwest shore of the sea, where there are potash works

III. DETERIORATION OF CHARACTER THROUGH NOT KEEPING THE FAITH (Jude 8-19)

A. Warnings Unheeded (Jude 8-10)

1. The Unfaithful Israelites in the Wilderness (verses 8, 5).

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“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh...” (Jude 8) These false, apostate and “filthy dreamers” refused to be warned. They vainly dream that they can safely pursue their unholy way.

“Despite dominion”: They treated with insolence the Church leaders who would restrain and admonish them.

2. The Angels Which Sinned (Jude 9,6).

“Yet Michael the archangel...” (Jude 9) Michael is brought forward as a contrast with those who speak evil of dignities. He is called by Daniel “the Great Prince” (Daniel 10:21; 12:1 and Revelation 12:7). Here he is the “archangel,” or head angel. Yet, in addressing the devil, a fallen angel, he did not rail at him, but only said, “The Lord rebuke thee.” The reference is not a statement of the Bible, but to a Jewish tradition that held that the burial place of Moses was placed under the charge of Michael.

3. The Cities of the Plain (Jude 10, 7).

“But these speak evil of those things which they know not...” (Jude 10): These false teachers in contrast with the conduct of Michael, do not hesitate “to speak evil of” or “rail” or “sneer” on matters which they do not understand. They “corrupt themselves” by yielding to animal passions. They were living on the level of “brute beasts.”

B. Three Instances of Individual Wickedness (Jude 11)

1. Cain, an Example of Disobedience (Jude 11a)

“They have gone in the way of Cain...” (Jude 11a) Cain is cited as one of the most outstanding examples of Old Testament characters who became “wicked.” He defied the simple law of God (Romans 10:17), followed his own will rather than God’s REVEALED WILL, and MURDERED HIS OWN RIGHTEOUS BROTHER ABEL (Hebrews 11:4). Study Genesis 4:3-12.

2. Balaam, an Example of Greed (Jude 11b)

“Ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward...” (Jude 11b) Balaam is included because he degraded the prophetic gift for sordid gain.

His “error” was that “reasoning from natural morality, and seeing the evil IN ISRAEL, he supposed a righteous God MUST CURSE THEM. He was BLIND to the higher morality of the Cross, through Which God maintains and enforces the authority and awful sanctions of His law, so that He can be JUST and THE JUSTIFIER of a believing sinner.”

“Way of Balaam” (II Peter 2:15): He was a typical, hireling prophet, anxious only to make a market of his gift to the highest bidder.

“Doctrine of Balaam...” (Revelation 2:14): His teaching “Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication,” caused Israel to become corrupted, although he could not curse them (Numbers 22:5-6, 23:8; 25:1-18; 31:15-16). Israel married women of Moab, defiled their separation and abandoned their pilgrim character. It is that union of the world and the church which is SPIRITUAL UNCHASTITY (James 4:4)!

3. Korah, an Example of Railing (Jude 11c)

“And perished in the gainsaying of Core.” (Jude 11c) “Core” or Korah rebelled against DIVINE AUTHORITY (Numbers 16:1-33). By identifying these Old Testament characters, Jude demonstrated that they were guilty, in principle at least, of murder, covetousness, rebellion and pride.

Like Korah, who profanely thrust him self into the priesthood and perished, the “filthy dreamers” of Jude’s day, intruded irreverently into holy places.

C. An Analysis of the Wicked Men Against Whom He Warned, and With Tokens By Which Their Condemnation Would Be Manifested (Jude 12-19).

1. An Illustration from Nature (Jude 12-13)

“These are spots in your feasts of charity...” (Jude 12) These apostates were “stains” or “hidden rocks” who threatened the peace and purity of the church. The “love-feasts” were meals common to the apostolic age at which the saints met for social, charitable, and humanitarian reasons. These “feasts” are not to be identified in any way with the Lord’s Supper; indeed Paul sharply rebuked the corruption of the supper into a meal (I Corinthians 11:17-34).

“Feeding themselves without fear.” They cared nothing for the sheep of the flock (Ezekiel 34:2, Isaiah 56:11).

“Clouds they are without water...” Like “clouds” which offer promises of refreshing waters, they are “borne past,” and leave NO RAIN! Compare Proverbs 25:14.

“Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit...” The tree was not only “barren,” it was “plucked up by the roots.” No roots, no fruit.

“Raging waves of the sea...” (Jude 13) These false leaders were like “Wildly raging sea waves that foam up their own disgrace, STRAYING STARS for whom the gloom of darkness is FOREVER RESERVED.” Compare Isaiah 57:20, II Peter.

2. Recognized from Identity of Conduct with Those About Whom Enoch Wrote (Jude 14-15).

“And Enoch also... prophesied of these” (Jude 14): This “seventh from Adam” PROPHESED that God would bring judgment upon all ungodly men because of “their ungodly deeds” (verse 15). Read Genesis 5:3-32.

“Behold, the Lord cometh...” Enoch’s prophecy was one of judgment. See Matthew 25:31f.

3. By Their Ungodly Language, and Their Evil Thoughts (Jude 16).

“These are murmurers, complainers...” (Jude 16) These “grumblers, complaining of their lot, who go along in accord with their passions mouths give vent to arrogant remarks, while they flatter to one's face in hope of gain.”

4. By Fulfilling the Prophecy of the Apostles (Jude 17-18).

“Remember... the apostles... told you there should be mockers in the last time.” (Jude 17-18) See Acts 20:29 where Paul calls such false ones, “grievous wolves.” Also I Timothy 4:1f; II Timothy 4:1f, I John 4:1f.

5. By Their Unfaithful Conduct (Jude 19)

“These by they... sensual, having not the Spirit.” (Jude 19) Man is composed of body, soul and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23). See Romans 8:9b; James 3:15.

V. KEPT IN THE LOVE OF GOD (Jude 20-23)

“But... building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” (Jude 20) They were to firm in the FAITH, steadfast in love (Jude 21a), and confident in hope (21b). They were to have “compassion” toward those in danger of being led astray (verse 22), and treat others with sternness and vigor, but with all abhorrence of their sins (verse 23).

VI. KEPT FROM STUMBLING (Jude 24-25)

“Now unto him that is able to keep us from stumbling...” (Jude 24) This is a striking, beautiful doxology. God can preserve us, save us, and KEEP US “both now and ever” (verse 25).

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Who was Jude (Jude 1; Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19; 2:9)?
2. How did Jude address believers (Jude 1)? When did he write the epistle?
3. What was Jude’s first intention (Jude 3)?
4. What was more “needful” than a letter on the “common salvation” (Jude 3)?
5. Can you define “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3; Acts 14:22; I Corinthians 15:1-5; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:23; I Timothy 4:6; 6:20; II Timothy 4:6-8; Titus 1:13-14)?
6. Who makes it necessary “earnestly” to “CONTEND for the FAITH” (Jude 4)?
7. Of what did Jude “give all diligence to write” (Jude 3)?

Fill in Blanks with Right Words

1. How did “certain” ungodly men come in “_____,” and “_____” (Jude 4).
2. “The Lord... saved _____, afterward _____” (Jude 5).
3. “Angels which kept not _____ ...he hath _____ in everlasting chains ... unto the judgment _____” (Jude 6)
4. “Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about the... are set forth, suffering the vengeance “(Jude 7).
5. “Michael... contending _____ ... said _____” (Jude 9).
6. Jude said of the “certain men,” false teachers, “they have gone in the way of _____, and ran greedily after the error of _____, and perished in the gainsaying of _____” (Jude 11).
7. “But ye, beloved _____ up yourselves on your _____, praying _____” (Jude 20).

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True or False

1. The writer Jude speaks of himself as an apostle (Jude 1). _____
2. Michael brought “a railing accusation” against “the devil” (Jude 9). _____
3. Five things are said of the apostate teachers in Jude 12-13. _____
4. Two things are recorded of Enoch in Jude 14. _____
5. Enoch “prophesied” that the Lord was not “coming with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14-15).

6. The apostles had not predicted the coming of “mockers in the last time” (Jude 18). _____
7. These apostates were “sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 19). _____

YES or NO!

1. Does the word “saints” appear in Jude? _____
2. Does Jude say he was the Lord’s brother? _____
3. Is Enoch spoken of as a prophet (Jude 14)? _____
4. According to Jude, should Christians “hate” anything (Jude 23)? _____
5. True believers, in the midst of apostates, are exhorted to do four things (Jude 20-21). _____
6. Christians are not to show “compassion” or try to “save” others (Jude 22-23). _____
7. Do you know the beautiful benediction of Jude 24-25? _____

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Revelation 1

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:19

Memory Verse:

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (Revelation 1:19).

THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN

The author of Revelation is the apostle John (Revelation 1:1, 4, 9).

When was it written? Probably in A. D. 96, the last year of the Roman Emperor Domitian. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons and Vienne, c. A. D. 180 states: “Then again, the church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the time of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles” (Irenaeus, AGAINST HERESIES, III. iii. 4).

Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp who had been taught by the Apostle John, affirms: “Revelation was seen no long time since, but almost in our generation, towards the end of the reign of Domitian” (81-96 AD).

How should one interpret Revelation? The main message of “The Revelation” is plain to all. Jesus Christ and those who trust Him shall ultimately triumph!

The great central portion of the prophecy has been given interpretations that widely differ. The differences are due to the system of interpretation employed. We shall give four interpretations, all containing some truth, but all in danger of being given wrong conclusions. “Every interpreter... accepts some of the results of all these systems” (B. W. Johnson). The theories:

1. The Preterist: “According to this system the successive visions apply to events chiefly in the history of the Jewish nation and the Pagan Rome,” that is, to **EVENTS WHICH ARE PAST**. They concerned the Roman persecution of Christians and predicted the fall of the empire.

However, the vision of the writer is turned toward the **FUTURE**. He sees a struggle that is **AGE-LONG**, and cannot be confined to the first century. The victory John describes will only be made complete by the **RE-APPEARING OF CHRIST**.

2. The Historical: This view holds that a series of “historical events, future when John wrote but **NOW IN PART OF THE PAST**, are portrayed by a series of visions.” This method of interpretation contains elements of truth, yet it needs to be modified by the other methods, and carefully guarded. Revelation is **NOT CONTINUOUSLY HISTORICAL FROM BEGINNING – to END**.

Advocates of this view have quite commonly united in declaring that the “beast,” or Antichrist, is the Pope, and “Babylon” is papal Rome. Then, by adding to the date the rise of the papacy the number of 1260, which measures the career of the “beast,” they have sought to determine the year of our Lord's return.

The failure of this last prediction (Matthew 24:35-36), and the absurdities of these interpretations, have brought prophetic study into disrepute. It should be pointed out that many world movements and historical events have illustrated principles and been the same in kind as those set forth in John’s Revelation of Jesus Christ. He began with the persecuting power of Rome and he looks forward to the last great conflict between the world power and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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3. The Futurist: This view confines the Visions of Revelation to EVENTS YET IN THE FUTURE, and will be fulfilled in the future history of the LITERAL ISRAEL. In its extreme form “The Futurist” holds that even the letters to the SEVEN CHURCHES are designed for an age still future. The Church, such advocates say, is caught away by a “SECRET RAPTURE,” and Revelation 4-19 refers to the experiences of the Jews and the career of the “beast” under whom they suffer during “the great tribulation.” According to this view, Jesus Christ returns to destroy the “best,” to bind Satan, and to introduce on earth his reign of 1000 years.

4. The Spiritual: This “poetic” or “ideal” theory of interpreting Revelation finds in this book NO REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC EVENTS or PERSONS of the PAST or FUTURE, but ONLY THE PRESENTATION OF GREAT – SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES, intended to guide and encourage the followers of Christ through all the ages of the world. These principles are illustrated by successive symbolic visions, which reach their CLIMAX in the great FACT THAT THE MORAL RULER OF THE UNIVERSE, CHRIST, will – triumph over His enemies, that the world is moving on through tragedy and disaster to its AGE OF GOLD!

Let us exercise love and restraint as we study “this prophecy” (Revelation 1:3). Good and sincere men may differ in their interpretation of various symbols in this book. Let us all “read... hear... and keep those things which are written therein” (verse 3) with humility, patience and prayer.

Major Divisions

- I. The Past (Revelation 1:1-20).
- II. Things Present (Revelation 2:1-3-22).
- III. Things Future (Revelation 4:1-22:21).

I. THE PROLOGUE (Revelation 1:1-8)

- A. The Inscription (Revelation 1:1).

“The Revelation...” (Revelation 1:1): “Revelation” is the translation of the Greek word “apokalupsis.” An unveiling or disclosure is something the writer intends the readers to understand. It was not a puzzle, a mystery or riddle which no one could solve, but to impart truth which otherwise would remain unknown.

“Of Jesus Christ...” This “Revelation” is not only about “Jesus Christ,” it came FROM HIM, “which God gave unto him.” Note the steps by which the “Revelation” came: from God unto Jesus; from Jesus unto an angel; from an angel unto John, and from John unto all God’s people – ALL CHRISTIANS!

“Show things which must shortly come to pass.” The series of events began to unfold in a few years after John wrote and has rolled on through all the centuries.

“John: Who bare record of the word of God...” (Revelation 1:2): This is the first of SEVEN BEATITUDES in this book (see 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). The PUBLIC READING is primarily intended. God will “BLESS” public or private reading of this book. The book must be obeyed or “kept” (see Matthew 7:21-23).

“For the time is at hand.” The season for the fulfillment of its prophecies is near.

- B. The Salutation (Revelation 1:4-8).

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“John to the seven churches... in Asia” (Revelation 1:4): “Seven” is used as a symbol. There were likely more than seven churches in Asia Minor. “Seven” is the sacred and complete number. Hence the “seven churches” were representative of the “whole church in all the world and in all ages.” See Acts 20:17; Colossians 4:13. The latter passage refers to the churches “in Laodicea, and... Hierapolis.”

“In Asia.” Asia was a small Roman province with Ephesus as its capital.

“Grace... peace, from him which is... was, and which is to come”: This is a prayer for divine gift of “grace” and “peace” from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is described in terms of His eternal being, the Self-Existing one (Exodus 3:14).

“The seven Spirits.” The FULLNESS of the Spirit’s activity in the number “seven,” the sacred number. Study carefully Isaiah 11:2. Note the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23. There is “ONE SPIRIT” (Ephesians 4:4).

“And from Jesus Christ...” (Revelation 1:5) The Son unites with the – Father and the Spirit in saluting the saints. Some of His glories are named. As “Faithful witness” ALL He says is true and “faithful.” As “the first be-gotten from the dead,” Christ is FIRST in time and rank of those who rise from the dead (I Corinthians 15:20-23) NEVER TO DIE AGAIN. As “PRINCE” He is RULER of the “dings” of the earth. He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings! The rulers of the earth may DEFY Him, yet He will rule it in His own time and way!

“Unto him that loved us... washed us... in his own blood.” “Loved” is in the PRESENT TENSE. He KEEPS ON LOVING US. His sacrifice on Calvary “loosed” or “washed” us from our sins as we OBEYED THE GOSPEL (Hebrews 5:9; 9:22; Acts 22:16).

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God...” (Revelation 1:6) Jesus Christ made us to “be a KINGDOM,” over which He is King. In this Kingdom each Christian is a “priest unto God.” As such we go directly to the Father – access to the throne of grace. Study Hebrews 4:16, I Timothy 2:5.

“Behold, he cometh with clouds...” (Revelation 1:7) There is to be an actual, personal, visible reappearance of our RISEN, REIGNING and RE-TURNING LORD. Jesus said, “I will come AGAIN” (John 14:3). Angels from heaven CONFIRMED this promise. “This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11). The Holy Spirit in the New Testament has revealed it repeatedly (Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-17).

“And every eye shall see him...” Literally. Td Star has helped us to see things as they happen anywhere in the world. One class is singled out, “They also which pierced him” (see Zechariah 12:10) the Jews. “All kindreds of the earth” include the Gentiles.

“Even so, Amen”: This is a double ratification of the prophetic utterance. “Even so” is Greek; “Amen” is Hebrew.

“I am Alpha and Omega... the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8) Or the “A to Z,” as in our English. Only here and in Revelation 21:5 is God represented as the speaker. The Greek alphabet letters are given to denote His ALL-INCLUSIVE POWER. God is EVERLASTING. He is ALMIGHTY. All begins with God, and God closes the drama of earthly history!

II. THE PERSON: CHRIST AMONG THE CHURCHES (Revelation 1:9-20)

A. A Sublime Charge (Revelation 1:9-11).

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“I John... am your brother, and companion in tribulation” (Revelation 1:9): John reminds his readers that he is suffering because he was true in preaching and living “the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

“The isle that is railed Patmos...” This barren, rocky isle in the Aegean Sea was some seventy miles southwest of Ephesus. Domitian (81-96 A. D.) banished John to Patmos in 95 A. D. 95. Emperor Nerva recalled John to Ephesus in 96 A. D.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...” (Revelation 1:10): The day of the Lord’s resurrection, or the “FIRST DAY of the week” (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2). In a high spiritual exaltation John “heard behind me a great voice.”

“What thou seest, write in a book, and send...” (Revelation 1:11) The visions and voices of Patmos were meant for the Church UNIVERSAL, not for John alone. The apostle was told to “write in a book, and send...” it to the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The order in which the cities are named is that in which a messenger normally might be sent, as he followed the great circular road that bound the populous and influential cities of the province of Asia.

B. The Glorious Vision (Revelation 1:12-16).

“And I turned to see... I saw... one like unto the Son of man” (Revelation 1:12-13) The VISION which meets John as he turns is “one like unto the Son of man, in KINGLY ATTIRE.” He was standing “in the midst of the seven candlesticks.” The lamps were not united into one as in the tabernacle, but seven distinct, separate lamps. The “seven golden candlesticks” represent the Church of Christ, which is divinely appointed to be the “LIGHT OF THE WORLD” (John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16).

“The Son of man, clothed...” (Revelation 1:13): This is Oriental imagery. Think of WHAT THE SYMBOL REPRESENTS in verses 13-16 and “rest not on the symbol” itself.

“Garment down to the foot...”: Think of One who occupies a place of high rank and royal power.

“His head and his hairs were white like wool...” (Revelation 1:14) Like sunlight gleaming on snow, the “white hair” pictures divine purity.

“Eyes were as a flame of fire.” He knows the inner most secrets of the heart. Nothing escapes his searching and penetrating “eyes... of fire.” Read Jeremiah 17:10.

“And his voice as the sound of many waters.” “His voice” was to John a symbol of irresistible power. John had heard the sound of the surf roaring on the shore of his rocky isle.

“And he had in his right hand seven stars...” (Revelation 1:16) Jesus is the possessor and upholder of his light-bearers, or ministers. By His grace, He sustains them. “He's Got the Whole World In His Hands” – here He has His ministers in His hands.

“And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.... his countenance was as the sun.” This is His word – sharp and the symbol of the Gospel by which Christ wins. Our offensive weapon is “The SWORD of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:15).

C. The Charge Repeated (Revelation 1:17-20).

“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.” (Revelation 1:17) John describes his own reaction to the wonderful vision. The apostle was over-whelmed by the appearance of the Christ of glory. He “fell at His feet at one dead,” for Christ is tenderness and mercy to His own, but He is One who is also ready to punish, to judge, and to destroy the wicked.

“And He laid His right hand upon me, Fear not...” What an expression of Divine love. Nor was this the first time the “beloved” disciple had felt the touch of this kind and mighty hand (see Matthew 17:7).

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“Fear not”: This indicates that John was terrified. After the tender touch, the Master gave utterance to a great declaration, the KEYSTONE OF THE ARCH of Christianity (I Corinthians 15:1-5).

“I am he that liveth, and was dead... I am alive for evermore.” (Revelation 1:18) Jesus Christ had accomplished His great REDEEMING WORK. He is ETERNAL. He was CRUCIFIED. “I was (or became) DEAD.” He died for OUR SINS. He was VICTORIOUS IN DEATH. He is “ALIVE FOR EVERMORE”! He had the “keys of hell and the death” in His hands. “Hell” or HADES is the realm of departed spirits; “death” the gate thereto. Christ has SUPREME POWER OVER BOTH. Rejoice in the truth of John 11:25-26!

“Write of the things, which thou hast seen..., are... shall be” (Revelation 1:19) The Master repeated the solemn charge of verse 11, and gave an explanation.

“The mystery...” (Revelation 1:20) Truth now divinely revealed.

“Seven stars... are the angels of the seven churches.” “Angels” are the ministers of the churches. “The candlesticks... are the seven churches.” Does this remind us that the function of a minister and a church is to illuminate or enlighten the world in reference to God’s will?

A delightful period with headquarters at Smyrna (modern Izmir) will allow one to visit Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colossae, and Pamukkale (Hierapolis, “Sacred City”). It makes the Bible “come alive” for you!

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Whose Revelation, or unveiling, is this (Revelation 1:1)?
2. For what purpose and through whom was this Revelation given (Revelation 10)?
3. What part did John have in producing this book (Revelation 1:2-11)?
4. Whom did Irenaeus think wrote Revelation? When?
5. How are we to interpret Revelation?
6. What does God promise to those who “read... hear... and keep” the words of this “prophecy” (Revelation 1:3)?
7. To whom did John address this Scripture (Revelation 1:4,11)?

FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. Jesus Christ” _____; and _____, and they also which _____”
(Revelation 1:7).
2. John was in “the Spirit _____, and heard behind” him a voice, “ _____”
(Revelation 1:10).
3. The “great voice” commanded John to “write _____, and send it
_____” (Revelation 1:11).
4. When John saw “one like unto the _____,” he fell at
_____,” (Revelation 1:12-17a).

TRUE OR FALSE

1. John is referred to by name as the writer of Revelation (1:4,9). _____
2. Five titles are used for Christ in Revelation 1:5. _____
3. Christ has done four things for believers in Revelation 1:5b-6. _____
4. The Bible tells us why John was on Patmos (Revelation 1:9). _____
5. John and those to whom he wrote were “in the kingdom” (Rev. 1:9). _____
6. The apostle was not “in the Spirit on the Lord's day” (Revelation 1:10). _____
7. The Son of Man is described as wearing a leather girdle (Revelation 1:13). _____

YES OR NO

1. Is the “blood” of Christ mentioned in Revelation 1:5? _____
2. Did the Lord say, “Do it not,” when John fell at his feet (Revelation 1:17)? _____
3. Are both expressions, “I am the Alpha and Omega,” and “I am the first and the last” in Rev. 1:8, 17?

4. Jesus affirmed “I am he that liveth, and was dead... I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:18).

5. The “Son of Man” told John to “write” this book in three divisions (Revelation 1:19). _____
6. We are told what the “stars” and “candlesticks” are in Revelation 1:20. _____
7. The “stars” are the “angels” or ministers “of the seven churches,” and the “seven candlesticks... are the seven churches.” _____

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Lesson 36

Page 1

Revelation 2

Memory Verse: Revelation 2:5

Memory Verse:

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:5).

CHRIST'S MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

Chapters two and three of Revelation differ from the rest of the book. They are “Living Letters” dictated by our Living Lord to the “seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11). They were actual churches “in Asia,” in actual cities. These churches have been chosen to represent the entire church of God. The description of their conditions and commendations, rebukes, promises and warnings given them, are fitting introduction to a book which is designed to reveal the various phases of the church in history, its fortunes, its lapses, its tribulations, persecutions, and final triumph.

A Careful Pattern

Each letter follows the “most careful and exact literary scheme.” Each one has seven parts:

1. A superscription to the church addressed.
2. A description of the Divine Author.
3. An account of the spiritual condition of the church.
4. An appropriate message of praise or censure.
5. Exhortations in view of the special needs.
6. A promise to “him that OVERCOMETH” (Revelation 2:7, for example).
7. A call to attention.

I. EPHESUS, THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH (Revelation 2:1-7)

A. A Superscription to the Church Addressed (Revelation 2:1a).

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write...” (Revelation 2:1a) “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” (Revelation 1:20) “The angel” in each church was the evangelist, or preacher. John the Baptist was called an “angel,” or “messenger.” (Mark 1:2) The term is often applied to human beings.

“Ephesus...” Ephesus was the chief of capital city of “Asia,” the Roman province of the Western part of Asia Minor. A city of 225,000 population, it was the metropolitan and commercial center of “Asia.”

It was celebrated for its temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was a hotbed of every false religious cult and superstition.

At Ephesus forty years before, Paul had done his most successful work, about 54-57 A. M. (study Acts 18, 19, 20, I Timothy 1:3-4). Paul later addressed the Epistle to the Ephesians to this church, and placed Timothy there as leader and addressed the books of I Timothy and II Timothy to that faithful preacher.

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Tradition tells us John the Apostle lived there from about 70 A. D. until his death. In Ephesus John wrote his Gospel, three Epistles and Revelation.

“The church in Ephesus...” This was before the days of church buildings. Christians met in halls, homes, or wherever they could. There was no ONE GREAT CHURCH BUILDING, but many “churches” or small congregations. Many churches in one city – YET ONE CHURCH (Matthew 16:18-19).

B. A Description of the Author (Revelation 2:1b).

“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand...” (Revelation 2:1b) The Lord Jesus holds the “stars” or “angels” or “ministers” in “his right hand.” This is the emblem of His POWER. “Holdeth” is a stronger word than “had” in Revelation 1:16. By some phrase each letter is linked to the vision of the divine Lord. Our Lord not only stands, but also “walketh” in the midst of the “candlesticks” or “churches” (Revelation 1:20). He is in “the midst” where “two or three are gathered together in my name” (Matthew 18:20). He is here ready to reprove, to rescue, and to control

C. Spiritual Condition of the Church (Revelation 2:2-3).

“I know thy works... labor... patience” (Revelation 2:2) Having eyes “as a flame of fire” (Revelation 1:14), our Lord saw their activities. See also Revelation 2:9, 13, 19, 3:1, 8, 15.

The church in Ephesus is warmly praised for its “fatiguing and your endurance.” The endured in hard work; they were not quitters in the face of difficulties. Nor could they “tolerate the wicked teachers.”

“Tried them which say they are apostles... found them liars.” False teachers paraded themselves as “apostles.” They were “liars” and impostors, and hence rejected (I John 4:1) for trying to “harmonize the immoral indulgence of Diana with the Christian profession.” Paul foretold such “wolves” in “sheep's clothing” (Acts 20:29; Matthew 7:15).

“And hast not fainted.” (Revelation 2:3) They had not “grown weary” of being LOYAL TO THE CHURCH and to Christ who is “TRUTH” (John 14:6).

D. A Message of Condemnation (Revelation 2:4).

“Nevertheless... thou hast left thy first love” (Revelation 2:4): They did not LOVE Christ and the Christians as they once did (read Matthew 22:37-39). It is possible for a church to be “sound” in doctrine, “patient” under persecution, and yet be guilty of “giving up its first love”! Nothing but the fervent love of the Bride can satisfy the Bridegroom. Do YOU LOVE CHRIST and His Church as you DID when you FIRST BECAME A CHRISTIAN? If not, why not (II Peter 3:18, I John 5:1-3).

E. Exhortations in View of Their Special Need (Revelation 2:5-6).

“Remember... repent... do the first works.” (Revelation 2:5) The call to repentance is solemn and insistent. To realize there has been a LAPSE OF DEVOTION is the first step of returning to one’s “first love”! Ephesus or this church cannot exist without daily meeting this condition.

“Remove thy candlestick... except thou repent”: Christ comes now in Providence and judgment to those whose love grows cold. Such a church will CEASE TO EXIST. Not a trace of the Ephesian church remains. The city was “moved to a site two miles distant, and is now sunk to an insignificant village” (Sir William Ramsey).

“But... thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans...” (Revelation 2:6): It is thought that the Nicolaitans were a sect that “advocated licentiousness as the proper way of life,” and practiced positive immorality on the ground of spiritual liberty. Is “Nicolaitan” the Greek form of the Hebrew “Balaam” (Revelation 2:14)?

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F. Promise to the Overcomer (Revelation 2:7b).

“To him that overcometh... eat... tree of life.” (Revelation 2:7b) They were to “overcome” the world, not to “conformed to this world”

(Romans 12:2). The victor was promised “the tree of life.” This LIFE-GIVING “tree” which thrived in Eden, and was lost by DISOBEDIENCE of Adam and Eve, may now by OBEDIENCE BE REGAINED (Genesis 2:8; Revelation 22:2, 14). Such is the reward for those who overcome sensual temptations. The Christian life will always be ONE OF CONFLICT with evil in MANY FORMS.

G. A Call to Attention (Revelation 2:7a).

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith...” (Revelation 2:7a): The final promise is introduced by a formula that widens the application of the promise to all churches at all times. It is a solemn individual appeal to each hearer.

II. SMYRNA, THE PERSECUTED CHURCH (Revelation 2:8-11)

A. Salutation (Revelation 2:8).

“And unto... the church in Smyrna write” (Revelation 2:8): It is natural that Smyrna should follow the letter to the church in Ephesus. It was forty miles to the north of Ephesus, to which it was second in position and importance. It was a rich city, a seat of emperor worship, and is situated on an arm of the Aegean Sea. Because of its charm it was known as “The Beauty of Asia.”

“These things saith the first... last, which was dead, and is alive” (Revelation 2:8b): Christ had power OVER DEATH. So to the martyr church comes a WORD OF CHEER from the Lord who has triumphed over death and the grave (Revelation 1:18). What a comfort to those FACING DEATH (John 11:25-26).

B. Words of Praise (Revelation 2:9).

I know thy works... tribulation, and poverty...” (Revelation 2:9) Smyrna was poor in this world’s goods, but “thou art rich” before God. Their tribulation was severe; this form of “blasphemy” is attributed to Jews, whose insults and slanders they suffered. They slandered Christ by calling Him “The HANGED ONE”! Jesus said they “are the synagogue of Satan.”

C. Words of Prophecy (Revelation 2:10a).

“Fear none of this things which thou shalt suffer... tribulation ten days.” (Revelation 2:10a) Other trials and tribulations were to come. The author of these things was “the devil,” “the accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10). See Job 3:17; II Corinthians 4:17, 13; Hebrews 12:2.

“Tribulation ten days.” A persecution of a short time, or a “definite period” symbolized by “ten days”: Suffering should serve three purposes: It should cause us to seek His help, inspire us with courage, and clothe us with deep humility.

“Crown of life.” Not a royal crown, but the garland of crown of victory over death (II Timothy 4:8).

D. Words of Promise (Revelation 2:10b-11).

“Be thou faithful unto death...” (Revelation 2:10b): The Christian may suffer the death of the body, but not of the soul, as Jesus reminded the twelve (Matthew 10:28).

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11): Note the call to attention (verse 11a), and the call to attention. To die the second death is to be sent from the judgment throne into hell (Revelation 20:14). His name will be found in the “book of life” (Revelation 20:15).

III. PERGAMUM, THE MARTYR CHURCH (Revelation 2:12-17)

A. Salutation (Revelation 2:12).

“And to... Pergamum write...” (Revelation 2:12) About sixty miles north of Smyrna, near the site of ancient Troy. Its library of 200,000 rolls was second only to that of Alexandria. It was a center of culture.

“Sharp sword with two edges”: In the vision of Christ, remember that this “sharp two-edged sword” proceeded “out of his mouth” (Revelation 1:16). It was thus the symbol of HIS WORD, ready to avenge all disobedience, and able to fight against his enemies and to destroy them.

B. Approval (Revelation 2:13).

“I know... thou dwell, even where Satan's seat is.” (Revelation 2:13) This was the seat of Emperor Worship. It was obligatory to offer incense before the statue of the Emperor as to God. Refusal of Christians to do this brought the charge of disloyalty, and often death.

John the Apostle, Irenaeus says, appointed Polycarp (69-156 AD) as bishop or elder of Smyrna. When persecution arose Polycarp was offered his freedom if he would curse Christ. “Eighty and six years,” replied this elder, “have I served Christ and he has done me nothing but good; how then could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour?” He was burned to death.

“Antipas was by faithful martyr...” A faithful saint who died rather than deny Christ and the gospel. According to legend, he was shut up in a red-hot brazen bull, and ended his life in thanksgiving to God.

C. Reproof (Revelation 2:14-15).

“But I have a few things against thee...” (Revelation 2:14): The church was not free of fault. Some of its members deserved the most severe discipline, but they formed a small minority.

“Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam...” This false prophet taught Balak to corrupt the people whom God would not allow him to “curse” (read carefully Numbers 31:15-16; 22:5-6; 23:8; 25:1f). In Pergamum a number of false teachers advised Christians to participate in the sexual vices of heathen worship. The church tolerated the false teachers. The stern discipline of the church in Ephesus was lacking in Pergamum.

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans...” (Revelation 2:15): From “nikao,” to conquer, and “laos,” “The people,” or “laity.” Is this the earliest form of a priestly order which divides an equal brotherhood (Matthew 23:8) into “clergy” and “laity”? What in Ephesus was “deeds” (verse 6), in Pergamum had become a “doctrine!”

D. Admonition (Revelation 2:16).

“Repent; or else...” (Revelation 2:16). The church must not be lax toward those in error; it was to exercise discipline (see I Corinthians 5:4-5). Balaam the false prophet was “slain with the sword” (Numbers 31:8). Note the call to attention (verse 17a).

E. The Promise (Revelation 2:17b).

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“To him that overcometh... hidden manna” (Revelation 2:17b): God sustained Israel through a weary desert with “manna”; a table spread in the wilderness. Christ is for us the “BREAD OF LIFE” (John 6:48-51).

“A stone... new name.” A “white stone” meant acquittal, a “black stone” denoted guilt among the Greeks. Does the “white stone” mean a token of divine favor that admits one into the secret place of the Most High God? The “new name” may stand for a form of existence beyond anything we have known or dreamed (see Revelation 14:3, 19:12).

IV. THYATIRA-- SEDUCED BY FALSE TEACHINGS (Revelation 2:18-29)

A. Salutation (Revelation 2:18).

“And unto... the church in Thyatira” (Revelation 2:18): The longest of the seven letters is addressed to The Church of Compromise. It was a rich commercial city, a center of manufacturing and dyeing. Do you recall that Lydia, “a seller of purple” was “of the city of Thyatira” (Acts 16:11-15). It was forty miles southeast of Pergamum, modern Bergma.

“Eyes... flame of fire.” Nothing can be hidden from him (Revelation 1:16), not even Jezebel the wicked woman whom the church tolerated (verse 20).

B. Commendation (Revelation 2:19).

“I know thy works...” (Revelation 2:19). Love for God and man is the essence of Christianity (I John 4:20-21; 5:3, I Corinthians 13:1-13).

C. Condemnation (Revelation 2:20-23).

“Notwithstanding... Jezebel...” (verse 20) Either a person or a party of which the wicked wife of Ahab was a type. A faction of the church had an idolatrous spirit that taught Balaamism (verse 14, I Kings 16:28-33). Punishment, its purpose and divine judgment will follow (verses 21-23).

D. Encouragement (Revelation 2:24-29).

“But... hold fast till I come.” (Revelation 2:25) Not all had followed Jezebel; the exhortation, promise and call to attention follow (verses 26-29).

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. In view of Revelation 1:19, does Revelation 2 deal with “things which thou hast seen,” “things which ARE,” or “which shall be hereafter”?
2. Were the “seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11) actual churches in actual cities during Paul’s and John’s day?
3. Can you name these “seven churches” (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7,14)?
4. Since each letter has a “careful and exact literary scheme,” can you name the seven parts?
5. What was wrong with the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:4)?
6. Where is the “tree of life,” and who can eat of it (Genesis 2:8; Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14)?
7. What definite command was given to John SEVEN times as recorded in this lesson (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)?

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FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. The Church at Ephesus had “_____,” and has _____” (Rev. 2:2)
2. The devil at Smyrna would “cast _____ into _____,” and they would have tribulation _____” (Rev. 2:10)
3. Faithful Antipas at Pergamum “was my faithful _____, who was _____ among you, where _____ dwelleth” (Rev. 2:13)
4. _____, _____, and _____ are Old Testament characters in our lesson today (Revelation 2:14-20).
5. It was said of the church at _____, “I have a few things against thee” (Rev. 2:12-14)

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The Lord said He loved the “doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (Revelation 2:15). _____
2. The church at Pergamum was not told to “Repent” (Revelation 2:16). _____
3. “To him that overcometh” the Lord said he would “give him of the hidden manna... a white stone, and... a new name” (Revelation 2:17). _____
4. “No man knoweth” the “new name” saving “he that receiveth it” (Revelation 2:17). _____
5. An urgent call to attention was made to each church in our study today (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29). _____
6. Among the Greeks, a “white stone” meant acquittal, and a “black stone” denoted guilt (Revelation 2:17).

YES OR NO

1. The longest of the seven letters is addressed to the church at Thyatira (Revelation 2:18). _____
2. Thyatira, seduced by false teaching, may be called “The Church of Com-promise.” _____
3. Lydia, a “seller of purple” was “of the city of Thyatira” (Acts 16:11-15). _____
4. The “Son of God” is described as One who “hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass” (Revelation 2:18). _____
5. Did the Lord “know thy works, and character, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first” of the church at Thyatira (Revelation 2:19). _____
6. Our Lord approved “that woman Jezebel” a false prophetess who taught and seduced His servants “to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Revelation 2:20).
7. Historically was Jezebel the wife of Ahab, king of Israel (I Kings 16:28-33). _____
8. Words of strong encouragement are given to the church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:24-29).

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 37
Revelation 3

Page 1
Memory Verse: Revelation 3:20

Memory Verse:

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20).

CHRIST'S MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

“The things which are” is the second division of chapters two and three of this book (Revelation 1:19). We have studied the first four churches.

“The church of Ephesus” (Revelation 2:1-7): The Metropolitan Church. Ephesus means “Desirable.” The church has left “thy first love” (Revelation 2:4). It reveals conditions at the end of the apostolic period.

“The church in Smyrna” (Revelation 2:8-11): It is known as “The Persecuted Church,” and means “Myrrh.” Here Polycarp (69-156 A.D.) was burned for refusing to curse Christ. Plagued with hypocritical Jews (Revelation 2:9), this is the period of pagan persecution. The church had a great promise: “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11).

“The church in Pergamum” (Revelation 2:12-17) is “The Martyr Church.” Pergamum means “marriage” and “elevation.” It speaks of the time when the church was elevated to a place of power and was **MARRIED TO THE WORLD**. Those who held false doctrine would not eat “of the hidden manna” (Revelation 2:14-15, 17).

“The church in Thyatira” (Revelation 2:18-29). Here is “Weakness Made Strong.” It is suggested that “Thyatira” comes from two words, one meaning “a sacrifice” or incense-offering; the other, “that which goes on continually.” A possible meaning is “Continual sacrifice.” This letter covers the central period of the church’s history; it was a period of persecution, that which we speak of as the **DARK AGES**, in which a shameless harlot had usurped the power of the Church of Jesus Christ. Today let us study further.

I. SARDIS, THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD CHURCH (Revelation 3:1-6)

A. Salutation (Revelation 3:1a).

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write...” (Revelation 3:1a): Ramsey called Sardis “The City of Death.” The modern name of the city is Sart. G. Campbell Morgan thinks this letter covers the period of what is known as the **REFORMATION**.

The city was about thirty-five miles south of Thyatira. Sardis means “A remnant,” “those who have escaped.” Once the capitol of Lydia and the home of Croesus, it was one of the richest cities of the world.

“These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God...” The Author fittingly described Himself as the Christ, the anointed One, upon whom the “**ONE SPIRIT**” (Ephesus 4:4) rested **FULLY** with the seven-fold manifestation to the church (Isaiah 11:2). The Spirit abides in Him in all the **PERFECTION** of His Operation and Power.

“And the seven stars”: The “seven stars” are the “angels,” or “messengers” or ministers of the churches (Revelation 1:20).

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B. The Church Evaluated (Revelation 3:1b).

1. The Evaluation of man (Revelation 3:1b).

“I know thy works... name that thou livest” (Revelation 3:1b): Praise came to the lips of many for Sardis. She had a large membership, composed of prominent, wealthy men, an elaborate place of worship, and was marked by soundness of doctrine and cleanliness of morals. Ephesus had had Nicolaitans, Pergamum her Balaamites, Thyatira her Jezebelites, but Sardis free from false teachers and false doctrines. Did this church thank God she was not like other congregations (see Luke 18:9-14). Sardis was SOUND IN THE FAITH, but soundness alone, like FAITH ALONE, is “DEAD” (James 2:17, 20, 26).

2. The Evaluation of the Son of God (Revelation 3:1b).

“And art dead...” Men said of Sardis, “She is alive.” That was her reputation. The Son of God said to her: “Thou art DEAD.” That was her character. Reputation is what people THINK YOU ARE; CHARACTER is WHAT YOU ARE. As in animals one may see muscular movements AFTER LIFE IS GONE, so Sardis was “dead,” and all that could be seen were the ghastly twitchings of a corpse! Satan was not concerned about Sardis. Souls were not being saved, the saints were not being strengthened, help was not being given to those in need, and its services were formal, lifeless, and meaningless!

C. The Church Admonished (Revelation 3:2-3).

“Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain...” (Revelation 3:2) The admonition to be “watchful” may have been suggested by the fact that the citadel twice in its history had fallen into the hands of the enemy because of lack of vigilance: Once in the days of Croesus (549 BC). The city seemed impregnable. Cyrus saw a man descend the precipitous rock by a secret passage. That night Cyrus led his soldiers, one by one, up the steep ascent to a place on the wall which had been left unguarded, and took the city. The fall of Sardis was due to OVER-CONFIDENCE. Antiochus the Great captured the city in 218 BC.

The church is exhorted to “watch, and strengthen the things that remain.” Every element of love, faith and worship must be given new vitality and life! They are to be watchful against the devil (I Peter 5:8), and temptation from every source.

“Remember therefore... hold fast, and repent” (Revelation 3:3): The church must bring to mind the teaching it had heard and received, and “hold fast” to it, and “repent” of their present indifference by “holding fast” the Word of God (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21).

“I will come on thee as a thief...” Jesus had said this in Matthew 24:43. “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (I Thessalonians 5:2). Jesus repeated “I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth” (Revelation 16:15). Jesus MAY COME TODAY (John 14:1-6). Christians always are looking for His coming. Only those “booked, but not born-again,” “received but not regenerated,” “counted but not consecrated” will be dismayed at the return of the UNEXPECTED and UNLOOKED-FOR – CHRIST. Such will not “know what hour I will come upon thee!”

D. A Remnant Advised (Revelation (Revelation 3:4).

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis... not defiled.” (Revelation 3:4) A few persons in Sardis did not “defile their garments.” The church as a whole is condemned, but a few were praised.

“Walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” White is the symbol of purity. It is the livery of heaven (Revelation 3:18; 19:14; 4:4; 6:11; 7:10, 13, 14).

In this PROMISE we have three things: PROGRESS: “They shall walk.” PARTNERSHIP: “With me,” and PURITY: “In white.”

Noah “walked” with God; Enoch “walked with God” (Genesis 5:22), and a “few” at Sardis walked with God. Their merit is Christ’s in whose precious blood their garments had been “washed” (Revelation 1:5; I John 1:7).

E. Promises to the Victor (Revelation 3:5-6).

“He that overcometh... clothed in white garment.” (Revelation 3:5) Though “dead” (verse 1), Sardis was not hopelessly “dead.” To the “OVERCOMER” promises were made:

“White garment.” a beautiful robe. Does this relate to the ESSENCE of our GLORIFIED BODIES? At the “marriage of the Lamb,” the Bride, the church, shall be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and WHITE” (Revelation 19:8, II Corinthians 5:1, 4).

“I will not blot out his name out of the book of life...” The OVERCOMER has his name written indelibly in the “BOOK OF LIFE.” This is God’s register of the true heirs of immortality (prayerfully read Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; Philippians 4:3). The book is in our Lord’s hands.

“I will confess his name before my Father.” The confession here is essential (Matthew 10:32-33, Luke 12:8). This blessed promise is for those at Sardis and for the FAITHFUL in the ages of trial and spiritual deadness to come. Is this the period that covers the Reformation, with its believing remnant?

“He that hath an ear, let him hear...” (Revelation 3:6): The familiar formula is added. Will you LISTEN to the Spirit today (II Corinthians 6:2, Hebrews 3:15)?

II. PHILADELPHIA, THE TRIED CHURCH (Revelation 3:7-13)

A. The Salutation (Revelation 3:7).

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write...” (Revelation 3:7) Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” It was thirty miles southeast of Sardis. Along with Smyrna, it was the only church to escape censure. It was a faithful, humble and small church.

There is a three-folk description of the Lord Jesus: He is “holy... true, and He “Hath the KEY OF DAVID...” This is the key of the Kingdom of God as the Son of David. Hence He ONLY OPENS and SHUTS, or deter-mines who shall ENTER IN, or BE SHUT OUT. This is a reference to Isaiah 22:22. Jesus delegated the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” to Peter (Matthew 16:19). Peter by preaching the Gospel OPENED the doors of the Kingdom of God to the Jews in Acts 2:1-42, 47 and to the Gentiles ten years later in Acts 10:1-48. Peter LEFT THE DOOR OPEN. “St. Peter's keys” with SUCCESSIONAL and VESTED RIGHTS in the Roman Catholic clergy is an absurd anti-scriptural idea. “No man shutteth” what God has left open!

B. Keepers of the Word (Revelation 3:8).

“I know thy works...” (Revelation 3:8) Christ knows all about His people in Philadelphia. He was able to describe their lives and opportunities.

“I have set before thee an OPEN DOOR...” A door of EVANGELISM (I Corinthians 16:9; II Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3). There was a DOOR OF REFUGE, for a trial of their faith is indicated in verse 10. The Saviour stood ready to admit the faithful into a “door” of REFUGE. There is the DOOR of ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS (II Peter 1:10-11). Jesus has complete power in OPENING and CLOSING DOORS to this day.

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“For thou hast a little strength... not denied my name”: The strength of the church was small. Her members were probably from the lower classes (see I Corinthians 1:26f). In a time of testing they had “not denied” Jesus. They were not ashamed of the GOSPEL (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 3:14).

C. The Keepers Are Kept (Revelation 3:9-10).

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan...” (Revelation 3:9) The “synagogue of Satan” refers to the Jews who DEPENDED on the FLESHLY relationship, denying that Christians, especially Gentiles, were the Lord’s people. The ONLY TRUE Jews are those who accept Christ according to Romans 2:28-29. The triumph of the Christians was to be brought about by the conversion of their foes (see Acts 16:19-34).

Historically, the church at Philadelphia may cover the great period of evangelism which, ushered in by the Puritan movement, broke into power in the Protestant Reformation, and flowered in the Restoration Movement?

“Because thou hast kept... I also will KEEP THEE.” (Revelation 3:10) Here is our Lord’s promise to keep them, and us, from suffering, or a safe emergence from “the hour of temptation,” or testing.

D. The Keepers Are Partakers (Revelation 3:11-13),

“Behold, I come quickly...”(Revelation 3:11) The Lord’s coming is promised in Revelation 2:25; 3:3 and here. In the first instance it is said that he will “come;” in the second, He will come “as a thief”; here that He will “come quickly.” Each one must be faithful to receive the “crown” (II Timothy 4:8).

“He that overcometh... pillar in the temple of my God” (Revelation 3:12): “Pillar” implies strength and permanence. “Temple” probably refers not to any material temple, but to the church in heaven (Ephesians 2:19-22). We ENTER “into Christ” by baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). This brings us into the SPIRITUAL TEMPLE OF GOD ON EARTH (Acts 2:47). When we enter the kingdom above “three names are again written upon him; the name of God, of the heavenly city, and Christ's heavenly name.” Let us have the HEARING EAR (verse 13).

III. LAODICEA, THE LUKEWARM CHURCH (Revelation 3:14-22)

A. Salutation (Revelation (Revelation 3:14).

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write...” (Revelation 3:14) This is a compound word, meaning “the rights of the people.” It was “forty miles south-east of Philadelphia” (A. T. Robertson). It was a banking center, noted for the manufacture of rich garments of black glossy wool, seat of a medical center which made a powder for the treatment of eye troubles, and the church was probably founded by Epaphras of Colossae (Colossians 1:7-8; 2:4, 8). Colossians was also addressed to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16).

The letter of the Church of Laodicea describes the final period before the advent of the Lord. It is a dark and terrible picture. This is the seventh letter and last in the series; recall that seven is the number for completeness and perfection. The SEVEN CHURCHES SYMBOLIZE THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL – the CHURCH OF OUR LORD IN EVERY LAND AND IN EVERY AGE OF THE CHURCH’S HISTORY.

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“These things saith the Amen...” “The Amen” is used here alone of God applied to Christ. His UNCHANGEABLE in nature and guarantees every word He utters. He is “the faithful and true witness,” competent to testify. He is “the beginning of the creation of God,” not the “first creatures as the Arians held and Unitarians do now, but the ORIGINATING SOURCE OF CREATION THROUGH WHOM GOD WORKS” (Colossians 1:15, 18; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2).

B. Luke-warmness (Revelation 3:15-16).

“I know thy works... neither cold nor hot... LUKEWARM.” (Revelation 3:15-16) They were not hostile to Christ, nor zealous for Him. “Christ would rather that men should be OPPONENTS OF HIM THAN FORMAL, APATHETIC PROFESSORS OF THE GOSPEL!”

“Spew thee out of my mouth.” This is indignant disapproval and rejection. Christ had far more hope for the publicans and sinners, than for the proud hypocritical Pharisees. There is an end to the PATIENCE and LONG-SUFFERING of our Lord. He rejects both individuals and churches which reject Him (Matthew 12:30).

C. Wisdom (Revelation 3:17-18).

“Because thou sayest, I am rich... I counsel thee” (Revelation 3:17-18) Laodicea was a self-satisfied city, rich in beauty and money. It doubtless had “leading men” of the town as members. They were “rich” in this world’s goods, but “wretched... miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” They admitted they had “need of nothing!” God counsels them lovingly (Colossians 2:3, I John 2:20). They can expect “chastening,” (Hebrews 12:5, 16). In “love, I reprove and chasten -- be zealous... repent” (Revelation 3:19).

“I counsel thee...” (Revelation 3:18): The Lord wanted them to have “gold refined by fire,” or treasures in heaven. They were “naked” and needed the “white garments” of the redeemed – the righteousness of the Lord. Because they were “blind,” they needed “eye salve” or FAITH to enlighten their spiritual vision.

D. Warmth (Revelation 3:19-22).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...” (Revelation 3:20) Christ was on the OUTSIDE, driven there by the INDIFFERENCE of the church’s members. “Open... I will come in” is his tender plea to every heart’s door (see Matthew 24:33; Luke 12:36; James 5:9). Holman Hunt’s great picture shows Christ READY TO ENTER if in repentance we “OPEN THE DOOR!”

“To him that overcometh...” (Revelation 3:21) The CONQUEROR will be ENTHRONED! We may SHARE WITH CHRIST the GLORY OF HIS KINGDOM, and help in its rule (II Timothy 2:11-13). A stirring appeal closes the letter and the second division of the book (verse 22). With authority Christ CONDEMNS or COMMENDS as He walks in the midst of “candlesticks... the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20).

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QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. With what division is Revelation 2 and 3 concerned (Revelation 1:19)?
2. Can you name the churches studied in Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18, and briefly define their condition?
3. How many churches will we study today (Revelation 3:1, 7, 14), and evaluate each?
4. What was the reputation and character of Sardis (Revelation 3:1)?
5. Whose name will not be blotted “out of the book of life” (Revelation 3:5)?
6. What was “set before” the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:8)?
7. Can you give fine names used to describe Laodicea which said, “I am rich” (Revelation 3:17)?

FILL IN BLANKS WITH RIGHT WORDS

1. “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I _____ thou shall not know _____” (Rev. 3:3).
2. “He that overcometh... shall be _____” (Rev. 3:5).
3. “He that hath the key of David” is “he that _____ and no man _____; and shutteth, and no _____” (Revelation 3:7).
4. Our Lord will “make them of the synagogue of Satan... come _____, and to know _____” (Revelation 3:9).
5. “Behold, I _____: hold fast _____, that no man _____” (Rev. 3:11).
6. The Lord said, “because thou art lukewarm, and _____: I will _____ thee out _____” (Revelation 3:16).
7. “As many as _____, I rebuke _____: be zealous _____, and _____” (Revelation 3:19).

YES OR NO?

1. The Lord did not say “I know” and “I will” of each church (Revelation 3:1, 3, 8, 9, 15, 16). _____
2. No reward was promised to the OVERCOMER in each church (Revelation 3:5, 12, 21). _____
3. The Lord did not “counsel” Laodicea to do anything (Revelation 3:18)? _____
4. Does the Lord “rebuke and chasten” those whom He loves (Revelation 3:19)? _____
5. The Lord prefers “luke-warmness” to “coldness” in His church (Revelation 3:14). _____
6. Christ and those who “overcome” will “set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). _____

True Or False?

1. There were a “few names even in Sardis which had not defiled their garments” (Revelation 3:14). _____
2. No titles of Christ are used in writing to the churches of today’s lesson (Revelation 3:1, 7, 14). _____
3. An urgent appeal was made to each church (Revelation 3:6, 13, 22)? _____
4. Our Lord has not promised to “come quickly” (Revelation 3:11). _____
5. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me” is our Lord’s definite promise. _____
6. Our Lord commends nothing in the church at Laodicea. _____
7. You are entering every “open door” the Lord sets before you, and are holding fast “thy crown” (Revelation 3:8, 11). _____

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 38
Revelation 4

Page 1
Memory Verse: Revelation 4:11

Memory Verse:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

A LOOK INTO HEAVEN

The letters to the “seven churches... in Asia.” (Revelation 1:4; 2:1-3:22) were given to prepare the followers of Christ for the “TRIALS to which they would be subjected BEFORE THE RETURN OF THE LORD.” The members of the churches were warned against impurity of doctrine and life. They were exhorted to active service and fervent love. They were strengthened by promises of great blessings, should they OVERCOME and prove steadfast amid all the persecutions and convulsions which the future held in store. Remember how our Lord ENCOURAGED His disciples before His death (John 14:1-6)?

With Revelation 4 the third section of Revelation begins. The prophetic portion, which embraces seventeen chapters, is now introduced by IMAGERY of the most striking character: “THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER” (Revelation 4:1-22:21).

While the fourth chapter begins the prophetic portion it is not itself prophetic, but introductory.

HOW INTERPRET REVELATION?

Probably no other portion of our Bible evokes so many interpretations, as does the book of Revelation. This has doubtless caused two reactions among our people:

“No one knows WHAT the book means,” they say, “so why study it?” But remember Jesus Christ says “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that -hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3).

Those who go “crazy” about the book, and write, preach, and teach us though the other 65 books of our Bible did not exist. Is there not a profitable “searching” of Revelation, and a possible intermingling of all the views of interpretations (John 5:39)? Is it not true that while our sympathies may be PRE-Millennial, we are not post-millennial, nor a-millennial, but PRO MILLENNIAL?

1. The Preterist

This system alleges that the successive visions apply to events chiefly in the history of the Jewish nation and of Pagan Rome. The events have occurred long since in the past. Many writers of this school insist that all events described HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE THE VISIONS WERE WRITTEN. Of course, this DESTROYS PREDICTIVE PROPHECY, which we cannot accept. Some Romanists and Protestants hold to this view.

2. The Futurists

Such interpretations insist that the predictions apply mainly to events yet in the future, and will be **FULFILLED IN THE FUTURE HISTORY OF LITERAL ISRAEL**. They affirm that Israel will again occupy Palestine (they have since May 1948), the temple will be literally **REBUILT**, that the Holy City will be literally trodden down for 1,260 days by the Gentiles. The Rapture of the Church takes place in Revelation 4, and all that follows to Revelation 20 relates to a **SEVEN-YEAR PERIOD** at the **TIME OF THE END**, according to the futurists.

Evaluation of the first two views: The Preterist is right in asserting that much of Revelation applies to what is **NOW PAST**, and the **FUTURIST** is **RIGHT** this far, in insisting that a portion applies to **WHAT IS STILL FUTURE!**

3. The Historical

Johnson in "The People's New Testament with Notes" admits, "In my opinion this system is more nearly correct, and yet it needs to be modified by the others, and carefully guarded. It holds that a succession of historical events, **FUTURE WHEN JOHN WROTE** but **NOW IN PART IN THE PAST**, are portrayed by a **SERIES OF VISIONS**." We must, however, **AVOID** the error of supposing that the book is continuously historical from chapter 1 through 22. Remember there are series of visions; one series ends and another begins which is synchronous, fits together like a jig saw puzzle, at least in part.

4. The Spiritual

The "spiritual," "poetic," or "ideal" theory of interpreting Revelation finds in the book **NO REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC EVENTS OR PERSONS** of the **PAST, PRESENT, or FUTURE**. They insist there are only **GREAT SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES**, intended to **GUIDE** and encourage the followers of Christ through all the ages of the world. Right ultimately triumphs. God is the moral Ruler of His universe. Christ will triumph over all His enemies. The world moves on, through tragedy and disaster, to the **AGE OF GOLD!**

I. THE THRONE IN HEAVEN (Revelation 4:1-3)

A. The Heavenly Door (Revelation 4:1).

"After this I looked... a door was opened in heaven." (Revelation 4:1) Or, "After these things" (Revised Version), meaning after the letters to the seven churches had been dictated. "The things which shall be here-after" (Revelation 1:19) **ARE YET TO BE SHOWN** to the apostle John.

"I looked..." Or, "I saw." "Behold" is an "Exclamation of vivid emotion as John looked," and in a vision he was given "A Glimpse of Glory," of Heaven itself. Read Matthew 3:16-17, Acts 7:55-56. Note the scene changes from earth (Patmos) to Heaven.

"A door was open in heaven": Heaven was standing open so that the throne within could be seen. This "door was opened" to enable the Seer to **PASS IN**. He "saw heaven opened" for the **SAINTS TO PASS OUT OF HEAVEN WITH CHRIST** (Revelation 19:11).

"Voice... as it were of a trumpet... **COME UP HITHER**." As John looked and beheld "A door was opened in heaven," he heard the same voice that spoke to him from the midst of the "Seven Golden Candlesticks" (Revelation 1:20, 10-13). "Come up hither" was said with the clear-ness and sweetness of a "trumpet." A higher insight into things spiritual was to be given. "I will show thee things which must be hereafter." Prophecy has its **SOURCE** in **HEAVEN**, and hence the Seer must make Heaven his point of focus

if the prophetic visions about to pass before his rapt gaze are to be divinely understood. “Things which must be hereafter” PROVES that “what John sees in the vision just opening BELONGS TO EVENTS STILL FUTURE WHEN HE WROTE!”

B. The Heavenly Throne (Revelation 4:2-3).

“I was in the spirit...” (Revelation 4:2): In a state of spiritual ecstasy, the apostle was lifted again to a state of spiritual exaltation which enabled him to see heavenly visions (Revelation 1:10).

“A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne”: As the vision opens John sees the “throne” already in place as the first thing in “heaven.” Keep in mind that the language is highly figurative even to the “throne,” for that was “SET” in “heaven,” like the “movies,” where every-thing is set for the panorama that follows. The “throne” of GOD IS REVEALED and “ONE SAT ON THE THRONE!”

“And he... like a jasper and a sardine stone... rainbow round about the throne.” (Revelation 1:3) The description of Deity (God) is – reverent and restrained. His FORM IS NOT DESCRIBED, except that it looked like a “jasper and a sardine stone.” In Revelation 21:11 “jasper” is called a stone “most precious and CLEAR AS CRYSTAL.” It is thought to have been a DIAMOND! “Sardine” or “sardius” was RED. Thus God appears clothed in clear, dazzling white, shaded with red, under a rainbow of GREEN, a representation of Him who “dwells in light unapproachable” (I Timothy 6:16). The two stones, the brilliant “diamond” or “jasper” and the blood-red “sardius” or RUBY gives the idea of GLORY AND SACRIFICE. Every Hebrew would recall the first stone in the breastplate of the High Priest was “SARDIUS”, and the last one” jasper” or diamond (Exodus 28:17-20). These stones bore the names of the tribes of Israel. The first stone would suggest Reuben, “Behold a Son,” and the last Benjamin, “Son of my right hand.”

“A rainbow round about the throne... like unto an emerald.” “Emerald” is GREEN, the stone of Judah, “Praise,” which suggest that God’s pledge of faithfulness be still in force despite man’s folly and wickedness (Genesis 9:9-17). “Great is Thy FAITHFULNESS” (Lamentations 3:23b). God is UNCHANGING IN HIS GOODNESS, and GREATNESS in His COVENANT OF GRACE with us, His saints today!

The RAINBOW was ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE. Noah’s “rainbow” was only SEMI-CIRCULAR, such as we now see in the heavens after a summer shower. The RAINBOW EZEKIEL was “round about” (Ezekiel 1:26-28), as that of John who saw a CIRCULAR RAINBOW around the “throne” of God. Noah’s throne is composed of seven primary colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet. The “rainbow” around the throne of God was “EMERALD.” What does this “CIRCULAR GREEN RAINBOW” about the throne of God signify? Does it not signify that God is a COVENANT KEEPING GOD and His promises shall all be kept?

A GLIMPSE OF GOD'S GLORY THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE

II. THE ENTHRONED ELDERS (Revelation 4:4-5)

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats... elders sitting... white garments... crowns of gold.” (Revelation 4:4) “Seats” is more correctly “thrones.” An “elder” sat upon each throne.

Twenty-four as a SYMBOLIC NUMBER occurs only in this book and ONLY FOR THESE ELDERS. (Revelation 4:4,10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4) We do not know why this number was chosen, perhaps TWO ELDERS FROM EACH OF THE TWELVE TRIBES, perhaps the TWELVE TRIBES and the TWELVE APOSTLES (Judaism and Christianity), perhaps the twenty-four courses of Aaron (I Chronicles

24:1-19), perhaps some ANGELIC RANK (Colossians 1:16) “of which we know nothing.” They may be “princes of heaven” who in number are associated with the twenty-four courses of priests who SERVED IN THE TEMPLE (I Chronicles 24; Luke 1:5). “Clothed in white raiment,” they had “on their heads crowns of gold.” Angels are never said to be “crowned,” nor have they KNOWN REDEMPTION. There are two kinds of “crowns” in Heaven, the Victor’s “crown” as used in verse 4, and the RULER’S DIADEM. The former was the victor’s wreath of LAUREL or PINE given in the Greek games (II Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12).

“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices...” (Revelation 4:5). The “lightnings and thunderings” denotes the MAJESTY and POWER of God (Exodus 19:18-19). This “throne” then was not of GRACE, but reminds us of Mt. Sinai – the “throne” of JUDGMENT.

“Seven lamps of fire... seven Spirits.” The “seven lamps of fire burning” is a “visual representation of the Holy Spirit in His complete working.” Here then is a picture of GOD THE CREATOR (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1, 3; Hebrews 1:1f).

Note in “A Glimpse of God's Glory” picture that “in the inner circle is God, the Lamb, the Holy Spirit. Around these, we see the four Living Creatures (Beasts). And around them, there are the twenty-four ELDERS. God and His CABINET.”

III. THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES (Revelation 4:6-8)

“And before the throne... sea of glass like unto crystal...” (Revelation 4:6). Between the door through which the prophet passes and the throne on which the Creator is seated, stretches this gleaming pavement. It flashes back the light as sunbeams are reflected from the summer sea, or Winona Lake (Exodus 24:10). Surely this is a symbol of the purity and calmness of Divine Rule. Remember the priests cleansed themselves in the BRAZEN SEA before entering the tabernacle or temple (II Kings 25:13, Jeremiah 52:17). “The sea of glass” is the calmness of God’s Rule. Is this a symbol of BAPTISM, for the figures of “lamps” (verse 5) and “sea” (verse 6) remind us that unless we are “BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT” one “cannot ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (John 3:3,5).

“Four beats full of eyes before and behind.” “Beasts” is an incorrect idea. The Greek for “beast” (“zoon”) is different. Here we have “FOUR ZOA,” “LIVING FORMS.” Some take them to be cherubim, actual beings of angelic order (Ezekiel 1:5f; 10:2, 20). It has been held they were symbols of the four gospels: Matthew, being the LION; Mark – the OX (Calf); Luke – the Man; John – the Eagle.

Others say they represent the four leading churches of the first three centuries; of the four ages of the church; of the Four Corners of the earth; of the four elements (fire, air, earth, and water), and the four continents (Asia, Europe, Africa, and America). It is my belief that they were “Cherubim” (Ezekiel 1:5f; 10:13, 20, 22). They were present at the FALL OF MAN IN EDEN and GUARDED EDEN to keep man from reentering it and eating from the “Tree of Life” (Genesis 3:24). Now they CELEBRATE MAN’S REDEMPTION and the TRIUMPH of Christ’s REIGN (verses 7-8, Isaiah 6:2).

“Living Creatures” are described by Ezekiel as having the likeness of man, with FOUR FACES, and FOUR WINGS, and feet like a CALF’S FOOT, and hands like a man’s hand under their wings on their FOUR SIDES.– Their four faces were different. The front face was that of a MAN, the right side face was that of a LION, the left side face was that of an OX, and the rear face was that of an EAGLE. Their whole body, back, hands, and wings were “full of eyes round about” (Ezekiel 10:12-14), a symbol of entire watchfulness and perfection of sight, in every possible direction.

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“Four living creatures.” In John’s vision of the “Cherubim” or “Living Creatures” they are described as LIKE ANIMALS, not actually but “like” a LION, a CALF, or a young OX, the third the “face as a MAN, and the fourth living creature was like a FLYING EAGLE” (verse 7). John’s “Living Creatures” had “SIX WINGS ABOUT THEM” (verse 8), while Ezekiel’s had only FOUR. In Isaiah 6:2 the seraphim had “six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.” These actions denote reverence, humility, and a readiness to obey.

“And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty...” The WORSHIP is BEGUN by the “LIVING CREATURES.” Their praise of the ORATORIO OF CREATION is CEASELESS.

GOD HAS THREE TABERNACLES

1. The Heavenly Tabernacle
2. Moses’ Tabernacle
3. Man’s Body—His Tabernacle for the Holy Spirit

IV. THE LIVING CREATURES AND ELDERS WORSHIP BECAUSE OF CREATION (Rev. 4:9-11)

“And when those living creatures give glory... to him sat on the – throne, who liveth for ever and ever.” (Revelation 4:9). The “Oratorio of Creation” or REDEMPTION begun by the “four living creatures” is taken up by “the four and twenty elders.” These are “thought by some to represent the GLORIFIED CHURCH-- a union of the Old Testament Tribes and the New Testament Apostles, symbolizing God’s People.” (Halley)

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory... honor... power.” (Revelation 4:11) The GROUND OF PRAISE is the holiness, creative power and the eternity of Almighty God. They are thinking of the WONDERS OF GOD’S WORLD and the HEAVENS that declare His glory (Psalms 14: 1-14, 148:1-13).

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. Were there seven letters written to “seven churches... in Asia” (Revelation 1:4; 2:1-3:22)?
2. What view of interpreting Revelation do you favor? Why?
3. What did the first voice that John heard say (Revelation 4:1)?
4. Where did John see “a throne,” and what was the Occupant LIKE (Revelation 4:1, 3)?
5. How many “elders” were seen, and how were they arrayed (Revelation 4:4)?
6. What were the four living creatures like (Revelation 4:6)?

Yes or No

1. Did John see an open door in “heaven” (Revelation 4:1)? _____
2. Was John “in the Spirit” when he viewed the throne in heaven (Revelation 4:2)? _____
3. Does John use the words “one,” “four,” “six,” and “seven” in Revelation 4? _____
4. Is the word “holy” used only three times in Revelation 4? _____
5. The “seven lamps” are “the seven Spirits” (Revelation 4:5). _____
6. Before the throne was a “sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6). _____
7. The “living creatures” of John were LIKE a “lion,” a “calf,” a “face as a man,” and “a flying eagle” (Revelation 4:7). _____

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VII

Third Quarter

Lesson 39

Page 1

Revelation 5

Memory Verse: Revelation 5:9-10

Memory Verses:

“And they sung a new song, saying, ‘Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals, thereof: for you were slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And has made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth’ (Rev. 5:9, 10).

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

In Revelation 4 is the great Oratorio of Creation (Revelation 4:11). The vision of God defies description (verses 1-3).

We study the Oratorio of Redemption in Revelation 5:1-14. This chapter introduces us to the Revelation of Christ as Redeemer. Here we see John’s vision of the HEAVENLY ARRANGEMENT for EARTHLY ADMINISTRATION.

I. THE LAMB WITH A BOOK (Revelation 5:1-12)

A. The Seven-sealed Book (Revelation 5:1).

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book...” (Revelation 5:1) The “book” was sublime. It was in the “right hand of God.” It was “written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.” The “book” was a ROLL of PARCHMENT or SHEEPSKIN.

“Seven seals.” The SEALED BOOK HELD THE SECRETS OF THE FUTURE. “Written within and on the backside,” this “book” contained the revelation of God’s FULL PURPOSE and COUNSEL CONCERNING THE WORLD. We learn from what is recorded in Revelation 6 that these “seals” were so arranged that when they were loosed in succession each one permitted a part of the book to be read. Possibly there were SEVEN LEAVES TO THE BOOK. The book was full; nothing more could be added to what it contained. Since it is a BOOK OF THE FUTURE, no man or the ANGELS OF HEAVEN know its contents, since it is the record of “what shall be hereafter,” to the END OF TIME. ONLY GOD THE FATHER knows the time of the “END” (Acts 1:7, Matthew 24:36).

Daniel was told to “SEAL” the book (Daniel 12:4), while John was told, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND” (Revelation 22:10).

The seven seals and the seven trumpets together form the FRAMEWORK of Revelation, and carry the story swiftly forward to the end. Then the writer, following a common literary method of Scripture, returns and PROCEEDS ANEW WITH ADDITIONAL or EXPLANATORY details.

How shall the Christian today interpret the first six seals. To the Preterist they “typify impending catastrophes on the Roman Empire, and the Church's security.”

To the Historical interpreter “they are predictions of political disaster to the Roman Empire, and its transformation to Christianity.”

To the Futurist “they describe the stages of the seven-year period of Antichrist's reign.”

B. The Challenge of the Angel (Revelation 5:2-4).

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“And I saw a strong angel... loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book...’” (Revelation 5:2) From a “strong angel” came a ringing challenge. His mighty voice penetrated heaven, earth and Hades: “NO MAN in heaven, nor in earth, neither under earth (Hades), was able to open the book, neither to look thereon” (verse 3). The universe was morally unworthy to “break” the seals.

“And I wept much...” (Revelation 5:4) The apostle “kept on weeping much,” perhaps weeping aloud. “Without tears the Revelation was not written, neither without tears can it be understood.”

When the piano on which Beethoven composed his music was exhibited in a European museum, visitors were given the thrill of sitting down and playing it.

Everybody took advantage of THAT HONOR – EXCEPT Ignace Jan Paderewski, Polish pianist and composer. When the museum guard asked him why he didn’t sit down and play, he replied, “I DO NOT FEEL WORTHY ENOUGH TO TOUCH IT!”

The Bible mentions three who felt unworthy: The patriarch Jacob (Genesis 32:10), John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11), and the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:8). Let us in all humility strive to live by “The scripture (that) cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

C. The Worthiness of the Lamb (Revelation 5:5-7)

“And one of the elders saith... Weep not... the LION of the tribe of Judah... hath prevailed to open the book” (Revelation 5:5): To John’s bitter crying, “one of the elders said to me, DO NOT WEEP.” When Jacob, the dying patriarch, said “Judah is a lion's whelp” (Genesis 49:9) he did not dream of the Messiah who in His lion-like character would crush every opposing force and establish His UNIVERSAL KINGDOM on the RUIN OF ALL OPPOSING FORCES OF EVIL. Another title of our Lord is “The Root of David.” That is, he descended in the flesh from David the king (Isaiah 11:1, 10; 22:16).

John was a prisoner on the rocky Isle of Patmos. It was a time of persecution. He loved the church better than he loved his own life. Separated from the saints where he had labored so long, he longed to know the future outcome of the struggles, sufferings and shedding of blood of the saints (Revelation 2:13).

“And I beheld... a LAMB” (Revelation 5:6): John the apostle looked for a “Lion” and SAW A “LAMB as it had been slain...”

Christ in the vision of the Seven Churches of Asia (Revelation 1:13-16) appeared as a Warrior. Here he is called the “Lion” (Revelation 5:5).

That the Lamb was not an ANIMAL is clear from verse 7 where “he came forth and took the BOOK OUT OF THE RIGHT HAND OF HIM THAT SAT UPON THE THRONE.” “Lion” represents POWER. “Lamb” represents a sacrifice.

The WOUND PRINTS which Thomas saw are now seen by John the Apostle in Heaven (John 20:20, 25, 27-29).

“I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand”!

The very DEATH of the “Lamb” of God (John 1:29; I Peter 1:18-19) was the MEANS OF HIS VICTORY.

Revelation's Favorite Name for Christ is "LAMB!"

1. The "Lamb" took the Sealed Book and "opened it" (Revelation 5:6,7; 6:1).
2. The Living Creatures and Elders worship the "Lamb" (Revelation 5:8, 14).
3. 100,000,000 Angels worship the "Lamb" (Revelation 5:11-13).
4. The great day of the "Lamb's WRATH is come" (Revelation 6:16-17).
5. Multitudes from all nations worship the "Lamb" (Revelation 7:9-10).
6. Their robes were washed in the blood of the "Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).
7. The "Lamb" leads them to fountains of living waters (Revelation 7:17).
8. They overcome Satan by the blood of the "Lamb" (Revelation 12:11).
9. The 144,000 follow the "Lamb" (Revelation 14:1,4).
10. They sing the song of Moses and the "Lamb" (Revelation 14:3).
11. The "Lamb" is Lord of Lords and King of Kings (Revelation 17:14).
12. Marriage of the "Lamb" to His Bride is come (Revelation 19:7; 21:9).
13. Twelve foundations of City are 12 Apostles of the "Lamb" (Revelation 21:14).
14. The "Lamb" is the Temple and Light of the City (Revelation 21:22-23).
15. Only those in "Lamb's" Book of Life shall enter (Revelation 21:27).
16. Water of Life from Throne of the "Lamb" (Revelation 22:1, 3).

"A Lamb... seven horns and seven eyes." (Revelation 5:6) Note the position of the LION-LAMB. He is "in the midst of the elders." He is the CENTRAL FIGURE. Both CREATION and REDEMPTION LOOK TO HIM. Note the EXPERIENCE through which He had passed, "As it had been slain." See John 3:36, Isaiah 53:1-7. His attitude: He was STANDING – an attitude of victory. No longer was He in the tomb. He "WAS DEAD; and, behold, I am ALIVE FOR EVERMORE, Amen; and have the keys of hell (Hades) and death" (Revelation 1:18).

"Seven horns." The Lamb is Omnipotent, ALL-POWERFUL. "Seven horns" indicates perfect or absolute power. Christ claimed: "ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

"Seven eyes." He was omniscient, knowing all things. He was therefore Qualified and "worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (verse 2). Nothing can be hid from His SEARCHING VISION!

"And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." (Revelation 5:7) The Lamb leaves the Throne to take the "Book." When our "KINSMAN REDEEMER" is handed the "Book," the "TITLE DEED" to the "PURCHASED POSSESSION," he had the RIGHT to break its SEALS, and claim the "INHERITANCE," and DISPOSSESS the present claimant SATAN. Study Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:22-23; Leviticus 25:23-34.

The Lion-Lamb breaks the SEALS. Satan is not evicted at once. He contests the claim of the Lamb. After a prolonged conflict he is finally deposed and is cast into the lake of Fire.

Titles Given to Jesus

In Matthew He is the Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of Man and Son of God.

1. As the Son of David, He has title to the Throne of David.
2. As the Son of Abraham, He has title to the Land of Palestine (but remember, too, that “The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” (Ps. 24:1).
3. As the Son of Man, He has title to the Earth and the World.
4. As the Son of God, He is the “Heir” of all things.

B. The New Song (Revelation 5:8-10).

“And when he had taken the book...” (Revelation 5:8) The Lion-Lamb is accorded the right to break the seals by the Eternal God, the “book” is entrusted to the “Lamb.” The worship of the Creator-Lamb is begun with a quartette of the “four Living Creatures,” followed by “four and twenty elders” who “fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps...” The solo voice of the “strong angel” (verse 2) finds the RESPONSE (verse 5). The GLORIFIED CHURCH has also “golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.” The PRAISE and PRAYERS of redeemed saints has the theme NOT OF CREATION, but of “REDEMPTION’S SWEET SONG.”

“And they sung a new song...” (Rev. 5:9) “New” because it is the song of Redemption ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED. “NEW” because it is sung in heaven on the eve of the burst of millennial joy. All who believe and OBEY the Gospel may sing the “new song” (Hebrews 5:9; Acts 5:32).

The “new song” is the song of the “new creation,” and is joined in by an innumerable company of angels. They are not subjects of REDEMPTION, yet they are interested in the redemption of man (Luke 15:10), so they join the song of the saints in a responsive strain. PERFECT PRAISE, seven things, are ascribed to the Lamb (verse 12).

II. UNTO GOD AND UNTO THE LAMB (Revelation 5:13-14)

“And every creature... in heaven... earth... all... Blessing be unto him that sitteth upon the throne.” (Revelation 5:13) The CLIMAX is reached when UNIVERSALLY the voice of every created thing is LIFTED in praising the Creator and Redeemer. “The four living creatures” (verse 14) conclude the song with a grand “Amen.” The GLORIFIED CHURCH, now too full to speak, “fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever”!

“Worthy Is The Lamb...” (Revelation 5:12)

Introduction: “A STRONG ANGEL” was seeking for one worthy to open the seven-sealed book in the hand of Him that sat on the throne. John “wept bitterly” because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. Then, the revelation of the “WORTHY ONE” was given to John.

I. He Is the Perfect One (Revelation 5:1-4)

- A. He Is Sinless.
- B. He Is More than Man
- C. He Is God (John 1:1-3, 14).

II. He Is the Prevailing One (Revelation 5:5-7)

- A. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).
- B. The Root of David (Revelation 5:5).
- C. The Slain Lamb (Revelation 5:6-7).

III. He Is The Praised One (Revelation 5:8-14)

- A. Worshipped by the “Living Creatures” (Revelation 5:8-10).
- B. Worshipped by the Angels (Revelation 5:11-12).
- C. Worshipped by All Creation (Revelation 5:13-14).

Conclusion: He is “WORTHY” for He is the ETERNAL SON OF GOD!

QUESTIONS: And Your Answers

1. What was seen “in the right hand of him that sat on the throne” (Revelation 5:1)?
2. How many “seals” were on the book?
3. What did a “strong angel” proclaim (Revelation 5:2)?
4. Why did John “weep much” (Revelation 5:3-4)?
5. When the “book” was taken, what did the “elders” and “living creatures” do (Revelation 5:9)?
6. What are those redeemed by Christ’s blood made “unto our God,” and what do they do (Revelation 5:10)?
7. How many did John hear praising the Lamb (Revelation 5:11)?

Fill Blanks with Right Words

1. The One on the throne had “a book _____, sealed with “ (Revelation 5:1).
2. John was told that the _____ of the tribe of Judah, the _____ of David had prevailed to open the book (Revelation 5:3).
3. The “Lamb” is described as having _____ horns and _____ eyes.
4. The “golden vials” (bowls) full of incense are said to be the “_____ of _____” (Rev. 5:8).

YES OR NO

1. Christ’s blood redeems men of every “nation” (Revelation 5:9). _____
2. Perfect praise of the Lamb involves seven things (Revelation 5:12). _____
3. If everybody sings in heaven, would it not be fine if all Christians would sing with the “spirit and the understanding?” _____
4. Angels are not subjects of redemption, yet they are interested in 'the redemption of man (Luke 15:10).

TRUE OR FALSE

1. “Every creature” everywhere joined in blessing the Lamb. _____
2. The “beasts” or “living creatures said, Amen.” _____
3. God is the “LIVING GOD” and still on the throne. _____
4. “God... hath... SPOKEN unto us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). _____
5. Your daily life is surrendered to the Eternal Son. _____