



DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

1,2,3 John; Revelation

Jim Shaddix, General Editor

LIFE BY DESIGN

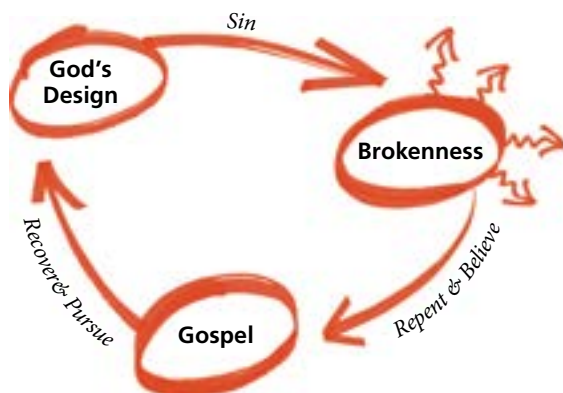
We live in a broken world. This brokenness is seen in suffering, violence, poverty, pain, and death around us. Brokenness leads us to search for a way to make **LIFE work.**

The Bible tells us that God originally planned a world that worked perfectly—where everything and everyone fit together in harmony. God made each of us with a purpose—to worship Him and walk with Him. (See Genesis 1:31 and Psalm 19:1.)

Life doesn't work when we ignore God and His original design for our lives. We selfishly insist on doing things our own way. The Bible calls this sin. Sin leads to a place of brokenness. The consequence of our sin is separation from God—in this life and for all of eternity. (See Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23.)

At this point we need a remedy—some good news. Because of His love, God did not leave us in our brokenness. Jesus, God in human flesh, came to us and lived perfectly according to God's Design. Jesus came to rescue us—to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. He took our sin and shame to the cross, paying the penalty of our sin by His death. Jesus was then raised from the dead—to provide the only way for us to be rescued and restored to a relationship with God. (See John 3:16, Colossians 2:14, and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.)

We don't have the power to escape this brokenness on our own. We need to be rescued. We must ask God to forgive us—turning from sin to trust in Jesus. This is what it means to repent and believe. Believing, we receive new life through Jesus. God turns our lives in a new direction. (See Mark 1:15, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Romans 10:9.)



When God restores our relationship to Him, we begin to discover meaning and purpose in a broken world. Now we can pursue God's Design in all areas of our lives. God's Spirit empowers us to recover His Design and assures us of His presence in this life and for all of eternity. (See Philippians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:10.)

Now that you have heard this Good News, God wants you to respond to Him. You can talk to Him using words like these: My life is broken—I recognize it's because of my sin. I believe Christ came to live, die, and was raised from the dead—to rescue me from my sin. Forgive me. I turn from my selfish ways and put my trust in You. I know that Jesus is Lord of all, and I will follow Him.

Excerpted from Life on Mission: A Simple Way to Share the Gospel.

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» GENERAL EDITOR



Today, ever expanding forms of media and the multiplication of world religions have intensified the onslaught of erroneous teachings against Christ's church. Agendas that pervert the blessings of personal and equal rights, as well as intolerance of the gospel's exclusivity, increasingly threaten Christians and their beliefs. Against these errors, John's Letters and Revelation give us great encouragement. I'm praying that Christ will use our study to help us remain true to His glorious gospel and anticipate with perseverance His glorious return!

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BIBLE READING PLAN

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ACCEPTING CHRIST

INA FAYE PRICE



I was born into a home with loving Christian parents. They took me to church regularly. In October, 1957, I accepted Jesus to be my Savior. Edith Harmon, a missionary to China, came to speak at my church. I felt I would be a missionary to China or Africa. But God had other plans. He called me to be an interpreter.

I learned sign language from Deaf people who became my best friends when we lived across the street from each other in Louisville, Kentucky. God used them to plant a seed of love in my heart for the Deaf, and my love continues to grow.

I have been through some difficult times, but God has helped me through them. My first child, a beautiful daughter, was born with spina bifida and died when she was two-years old. My first husband suffered a long time with a brain injury from a car accident before he died.

But God has blessed me with more children and a second husband to love. He has blessed me with forty-three years of service as an interpreter. God led me to chaperone at seven Miss Deaf America Pageants and to be involved with the Danville Kentucky Baptist Deaf Mission, the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf (SBCD), and the SBCD Interpreter Training Program.

Two Bible verses that have special meaning for me are:

John 3:16. “God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life.”

Philippians 4:13. “I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.”

These verses impacted me because of the emphasis on my family and that Jesus died just for me. I never wanted to be separated from my family or from a Savior who died for me. The verse from Philippians brought me through the trials in my life.

God has blessed me and given me joy abundantly. He will continue that joy as I continue to work with Deaf people I love and serve. God is good! All the time!

Maybe you are going through some difficult times. You can have the same joy that comes from God. He has a plan for your life. These verses tell you how you can have this joy:

Romans 3:23. “Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious standard.”

Romans 10:9. “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 3:22. “God makes people right with Himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe in Christ, because all people are the same.”

INTRODUCTION TO 1,2,3 JOHN; REVELATION

»» Who Wrote 1,2,3 John and the Book of Revelation?

The Bible books we know as 1, 2, and 3 John are all letters that seem to be written by the same person. The writing style is similar. The writer of these three letters does not give us his name. He calls himself the elder in 2 and 3 John. The Gospel of John has many similar words and ideas as these three letters. It is easy to conclude that John, one of the twelve apostles, wrote all three letters.

The Book of Revelation tells us in Revelation 1:1 that John also wrote the Book of Revelation. From the early church until today, the **Apostle** John is accepted as the writer.

»» When Was 1,2,3 John Written?

Most Bible teachers believe that 1, 2, and 3 John were written after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70 but before the writing of the Book of Revelation. It is not possible to be more specific than that.

»» When Was the Book of Revelation Written?

The **persecution** of Rome against Christians is the background for the book. We know from history that persecution of Christians happened under the Roman Emperor (**Caesar**) **Domitian** who ruled from A.D. 81-96. Several things point to the Book of Revelation being written about A.D. 95. That would have made John a very old man.

It is important to know the approximate time of writing for the Book of Revelation, because the historical background helps us understand what the many symbols in the Book of Revelation mean.

»» Why Was 1,2,3 John Written?

John said in his letter that he wrote to help people stay away from sin (1 John 2:1). But it is also clear that he wrote to celebrate Christian love and to encourage Christians to live in love because God is love. John's readers were being tempted to follow false teachers, and John wanted to warn them of this danger. Many Bible teachers believe the false teaching called **Gnosticism** was in the background for 1 John.

»» Why Was the Book of Revelation Written?

The church near the end of the **first century** (A.D. 80-99) experienced terrible persecution. All people were forced to **confess** publicly that Caesar was Lord, but Christians only held Jesus as Lord. The confession to Caesar was like a pledge of allegiance, and everyone in the Roman Empire was required to make this confession once a year in the Roman temple in Rome. Christians were willing to die before they turned from Christ.

John experienced a vision from God about the future. The future showed more hard times for Christians, but those hard times would end with full victory by Christ. The book was written to encourage Christians during persecution.

»» Who Received 1,2,3 John?

The letter does not tell us who received 1 John. Second John was written to the chosen lady (2 John 1:1) and 3 John was written to a man named Gaius (3 John 1:1). Bible teachers think the chosen lady is how John referred to the church, and Gaius was likely a church pastor. It is logical to think the three letters were sent to the same churches who received the Book of Revelation. Those were the seven churches of Asia, which today is Western Turkey.

»» Who Received the Book of Revelation?

The Book of Revelation was sent to the seven churches listed in chapters 2 and 3. However, John must have meant for Christians all over the Roman Empire to receive and read the book, which God gave to him in a vision.

»» Important Subjects in 1,2,3 John

Keeping the commands of Christ, staying away from false teachers, and loving one another are the general subjects in the letter. John also wanted to keep Christians thinking right about the person of Jesus Christ. Christians must believe that Jesus truly was the Son of God and He truly was human. Jesus is the God-man.

»» Important Subjects in the Book of Revelation

There are many important subjects in the Book of Revelation. Evil is real, and evil will always fight against God's people. God will judge evil and put evil to an end. When time ends, God will make all things right. In light of these truths, Christians should always be faithful even until death.

John's writing is called **apocalyptic** writing. This particular style made the ideas of the Book of Revelation understandable to Christians but confusing for non-believers.



Session 1

THE TRUTH PRESENTED

1 JOHN 1:1-4

We can have true **fellowship** with God the Father and His people but we must first have a right **relationship** with His Son, Jesus.

FIRST THOUGHTS

It has been 2,000 years since Jesus lived on earth. Who was this Jesus? Where did He come from? What did He do? What did His life mean? We can have answers to these questions today because there were people who saw and heard Jesus on earth

2,000 years ago. These people, **inspired** (given the message) by God, left us a perfect record in the Bible where we can learn some of the answers to these questions. In this letter, which John the **apostle** (one of the original twelve disciples) wrote, we learn how having a right relationship with Jesus Christ opens the door for us to know God and know His people.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The author of this short letter was John, one of the disciples of Jesus. In our Bibles, the letter is only five chapters long. John wrote his letter to help believers who lived near the end of the **first century**. John wrote about many different ideas, but all the ideas in this letter depend on the important truths in the first few verses of chapter 1. Verses 1-4 give the foundation for all the ideas in chapters 1-5. John used these introductory verses in chapter 1 to explain his reasons for writing. John said he wrote because he had a message to tell. It was not a message he invented. It was a message he received from God. The message was about Jesus Christ and how Jesus could change lives.

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 1:1-4)

1. Witnessed by Many (1 John 1:1)

VERSE 1.

¹*We write you now about what has always existed, which we have heard, we have seen with our own eyes, we have looked at, and we have touched with our hands. We write to you about the Word that gives life.*

In this first verse in his letter, John sets the theme for the whole letter. The letter is about the “Word that gives life.” In your Bible, find the Gospel of John (the fourth book in our New Testament).

Read John 1:1-18. This is what John said about the Word in his Gospel. When John wrote the word *Word*, he was talking about Jesus Christ. Why did John use Word to talk about Jesus? The Greek word **translated** into English as *word*, is really the Greek word *logos*. Our English word **logic** comes from the Greek word *logos*. *Logos* is an important idea from the **first century** world (the first one hundred years after Jesus was born—to A.D. 100). In the first century world, people thought there was an eternal logic, or an eternal creative mind behind the universe. John used this idea to help us understand something important about Jesus. Jesus is the eternal creative mind behind the universe. That is why John said He (Jesus, the Word) always existed. Jesus is eternal. Also, the eternal Word behind the universe is in a close relationship with us. That eternal Word, Jesus, gives life to us.

BIBLE SKILL: *Jesus the Word*

John wrote several other books in the New Testament. He wrote the Gospel of John. He wrote three short letters: 1, 2, and 3 John. He wrote the Book of Revelation we will study later this quarter.

John is the only writer who used the idea of “Word” to talk about Jesus. Look at these verses to see how John wrote about Jesus, the Word.

John 1:1-14 _____

1 John 1:1 _____

Revelation 19:13 _____

Sometimes we feel the Word (Jesus) is far away. But John said in verse 1, Jesus, the Word is not far away. He is very close. John said, “We have heard, we have seen with our own eyes, we have looked at, and we have touched with our hands.” John wrote about Jesus. John was with Jesus for more than three years. The other disciples and many other people saw and heard Jesus. John and the others knew Jesus as a real living person. They saw Him. They heard Him speak. They touched Him. They lived with Him. John did not have doubts. He knew Jesus was a human like us.

Later, after being with Jesus for a long time, John understood Jesus was also God. That is when John understood Jesus is the eternal Word. This is very deep and difficult for us to understand, but God will help us understand the Bible if we study and ask Him to help us.

Jesus was human. TRUE FALSE

Jesus was God. TRUE FALSE

How can Jesus be both human and God?

Discuss this idea with your class.

2. Revealed as Life (1 John 1:2)

VERSE 2.

²*He who gives life was shown to us. We saw Him and can give proof about it. And now we announce to you that He has life that continues forever. He was with God the Father and was shown to us.*

John saw Jesus almost every day for three years. That is why John knew Jesus so well. God had shown Jesus to the disciples and to tens of thousands of people on earth. The New Century Version of the Bible we use in these lessons uses the words *give proof*. Another word for this is **testify**. John testified about Jesus because John knew Him. What John learned about Jesus, he was now announcing to all people. This is what he announced: Jesus has eternal life. Jesus has eternal life just like God because He is God. Therefore, Jesus is the **source** of eternal life for people like you and me.

KEY DOCTRINE: *New Life*

If you have studied your Bible and attended church very long, you have learned one thing about Jesus. Jesus can give people a new life. When a person trusts in Jesus as his Savior, that person begins a new life. It is a new godly life. Jesus is the source of that life. By trusting Jesus, we can receive this new life.

3. Provided True Fellowship (1 John 1:3-4)

VERSE 3a.

³*We announce to you what we have seen and heard, because we want you also to have fellowship with us.*

Why did John and the other disciples announce what they had seen and heard from Jesus? It was **not** because they wanted to brag about how they knew something other people did not know. It was **not** because they wanted to judge how bad people were living. No. The reason they announced about Jesus was because they had a message for people who did not see and hear Jesus.

They wanted all people to have the opportunity to become a follower of Jesus and then become a part of the fellowship of believers (the church). When the disciples announced the good news about Jesus, they opened the door for people everywhere to be saved and to be in the new life of the church.

VERSES 3b-4.

³ *Our fellowship is with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.*

⁴ *We write this to you so we may be full of joy.*

John had deep joy because he knew Jesus. John knew he could not keep this joy to himself. Everyone needed to know that joy in Jesus Christ. That is why John wrote. He wrote this letter we are studying (1 John) so the readers could be full of the same joy John had. John's letter can help you find this joy too by finding and knowing Jesus.

John did more than learn about Jesus. John gave his life to Jesus. That is exactly what this lesson asks you to do—give your life to Jesus. When you give your life to Jesus, you become part of the **fellowship** of people who follow Him. We call that fellowship of people who follow Him *the church*. The church is not a perfect place. But when believers live rightly for Christ, they find a right relationship with God, the Father, and with Jesus, His Son, along with a right **relationship** with God's people.

And yes, as John said, there is great joy in these relationships.

How can people become a part of the fellowship of believers (the church)?



Why did John write his letter?

Do you have the same joy John had? YES NO



IN MY CONTEXT

Think about how these verses apply to your life today. What do you think it would be like to see Jesus and to hear Him speak? Do you think Jesus would sign to us? I think He would. How would that make you feel? Would you be excited to tell other people what you had learned from Jesus?

Who wrote the letter we are studying? Peter John Paul

Why did he write this letter?

Do you believe in Jesus as your Savior? YES NO

What must a person do to have a right relationship with God?

Where do you find joy?

How can you know who Jesus was?

MEMORY VERSE

“We announce to you what we have seen and heard, because we want you also to have fellowship with us.” —1 John 1:3



Session 2

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

1 JOHN 1:5–2:6

People will know that you have **fellowship** with God when they see your life is holy, you **confess** when you sin, you trust Jesus, and you are obedient to God.

FIRST THOUGHTS

How does a Christian live? That seems like it should be an easy question to answer. But when you look at the lives of Christians, you can see how they do not all live the same. Everyone has a different personality, so there will always be differences in the lives of people.

┌
In our Bible verses today, John used words to draw a picture of what a Christian needs to be like. John used words like “live in the light,” “confess our sins,” and “obey God’s commands.” When Christians live like this, they will live in the same way. They will begin to live as Jesus lived.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our lesson today follows the verses in last week’s lesson. The background is much the same as that lesson. John wanted Christians all over the world to read his letter. The background of the letter is the love of John for his readers. In 1 John 2:1 and 2:7, John called his readers, “my dear children,” and “my dear friends.” John’s great love for his readers led him to **challenge** them to live in the light, to confess their sin, to obey the commands of Jesus, and to live like Jesus.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Demonstrate Holiness (1 John 1:5-7)

VERSE 5.

⁵*Here is the message we have heard from Christ and now announce to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

We learned in the first lesson how John had been with Jesus for more than three years. He knew what Jesus taught. Jesus said: *God is light*. The sun is light, but you cannot look at the sun and see God. John used the word *light* as a **symbol** (picture word) for perfect goodness or perfect truth. When John said there is no **darkness** in God, John meant there is no evil and no falsehood in God. God’s character is not like humans. We are sometimes good and sometimes bad. God is always all good.

VERSE 6.

⁶ So if we say we have fellowship with God, but we continue living in darkness, we are liars and do not follow the truth.

To have fellowship with God means to have a right and complete **relationship** with God. That kind of fellowship only happens when people trust Jesus. If we have this kind of fellowship with God (the perfect light), we cannot go on living like darkness, in evil and falsehood. We are liars if we say we have a right relationship with God but our lives are evil.

VERSE 7.

⁷ But if we live in the light, as God is in the light, we can share fellowship with each other. Then the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin.

People who truly have **fellowship** with God live in a right relationship with other Christians. Also, the blood of Jesus is continually cleaning sin out of our lives. A right relationship with God draws us into a right relationship with other believers. Jesus wants us to have right relationships with other people in the fellowship of the church. When we know God, He will lead us to His church.

John wrote God is light. Can you explain this idea?

What are the two results of living in a right relationship with God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Using Symbols*

It is very important for us to understand the idea of “symbols” in the Bible. We use symbols all the time. For example when you sign the word “tree,” your arm and hand make the symbol for a tree. Your arm and hand do not become a real tree, but using that sign makes people think about a real tree.

John used the words “light” and “dark” as symbols. He was not trying to put the idea of the light of day or the darkness of night in our minds. He was trying to put the idea of good and evil in our minds.

The Book of John has many symbols. Watch for them as we study this book.

2. Confess Sin (1 John 1:8-2:2)

VERSE 1:8.

⁸*If we say we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

The Bible is very clear about sin. Every person is a sinner. Read Romans 3:23 to find this truth. If anyone **claims** to be sinless, that person does not know what God says.

People respond to this truth (everyone is a sinner) in only two ways. First, some people respond the way John described in verse 8. Some people **deny** (refuse to admit) they are sinners. John said if we deny our own sin, we fool ourselves, and we do not know what is really true.

VERSES 1:9-10.

⁹*But if we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done.*

¹⁰*If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and we do not accept God's teaching.*

Second, some people respond to this truth (everyone is a sinner) the way John described in verse 9. Some people **confess** (admit) their sin. They look at themselves truthfully and confess to God, "I am a sinner." Only by confessing our sin can we receive forgiveness.

If you steal something, confess to God and admit you have stolen and you know it is sin to steal. If you lie, do the same. Sin is anything in our lives different from what God wants. To confess means to agree God is right about sin and to tell Him we know the truth about sin.

VERSES 2:1-2.

¹*My dear children, I write this letter to you so you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a helper in the presence of the Father—Jesus Christ, the One who does what is right.*

²*He died in our place to take away our sins, and not only our sins but the sins of all people.*

John said he did not want people to sin, but it is impossible for anyone to live a perfect life. John explained the hope for sinners is Jesus Christ. He is the only hope we have for our sins to be "taken away."

BIBLE SKILL: *Words That Describe Salvation*

Verse 2 has an important word that describes salvation. The New Century Bible uses the words “take away our sins.” Other Bibles use the word “**atone**” or the word “**propitiation**.” There is no simple way to define these words. The word “propitiation” means to satisfy God’s anger against sin or to pay the price for sin. Atone has this same meaning as take away our sin. Here is the truth we learn from John in this verse: It is our sin, but Jesus did whatever was needed to take away our sin. He did it by His death and resurrection. Right now, take a minute to thank God for that.

What is sin?

Who has sinned?

What does it mean to confess sin?

3. Seek to Obey (1 John 2:3-6)

VERSES 3-4.

³ *We can be sure that we know God if we obey His commands.*

⁴ *Anyone who says, "I know God," but does not obey God's commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.*

Do you know God? There is a simple test to help you answer that question. You do *not* pass the test when you know a lot of stuff about God. You pass the test when you obey God's commands. Jesus said the greatest command is to love God first and then to love others (Mark 12:30-31).

VERSES 5-6.

⁵ *But if someone obeys God's teaching, then in that person God's love has truly reached its goal. This is how we can be sure we are living in God:*

⁶ *Whoever says that he lives in God must live as Jesus lived.*

If you know God, your greatest desire will be to obey this command. Here is a beautiful thought—when you obey this command, God has reached His goal for you. God's goal for your life and for every believer is to "live as Jesus lived."

How do you think a Christian should live?

Are you living like Jesus? Write your answer here.

IN MY CONTEXT

The passages in today's lesson teach and **challenge** us in many ways. We learn about God. God is light. He is perfect in every way. God is never a liar. We can know Him by having a right **relationship** with Him. God wants to put His light in us.

This lesson challenges us to be everything God wants us to be. God wants us to live in a right relationship with Him. He also wants us to live in a right relationship with other believers.

The Bible verses in this lesson call us to **confess** and be cleansed from sin.

As we obey Him, God shapes our lives to be like Jesus.

The best way to **summarize** the challenges in these verses is this: You are not everything God wants you to become until you are living your life like Jesus.

Are you walking in the light or living in darkness? _____

When we sin, how soon should we confess our sin? _____

What does it mean to "live as Jesus lived"?

If you really love another person, what kind of life will you hope they will have?

MEMORY VERSE

"But if we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done" —1 John 1:9



Session 3

DANGERS TO AVOID

1 JOHN 2:15-27

Believers will be tempted by the things of this **world** and by false teachers. We can stay faithful to the truth of the gospel by the power of God's Spirit.

FIRST THOUGHTS

In our lesson today, we see the early Christians struggling (wrestling) with the same kind of things we **struggle** with today. Some of John's readers loved the world too much and loved Jesus too little. The Christians faced enemies. Christians

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today face enemies. Today there are church members who drift away. In John's day the same thing happened. False teachers entered the churches. If we want to satisfy God, we must continue to live in Christ and for Christ, no matter what happens to us.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

John probably meant this letter to be shared with churches all over the world. Those churches faced many problems. One of the big problems was false teachers. John wrote this letter near the end of the **first century** (about A.D. 90). Already false teachers were slipping into the churches.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Lovers of the World (1 John 2:15-17)

VERSE 15.

¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.*

John warned us not to love the world. What did John mean by the *world*? John did *not* mean the things God created, like the earth and plants and animals. God's creation is not bad. When John used the word *world*, he was talking about the things of this life that rebel against God. We can love the universe (the world) because God created it. But we cannot love the things of this world that do not belong to Christ.

VERSE 16.

¹⁶ *These are the ways of the world: wanting to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, and being too proud of what we have. None of these come from the Father, but all of them come from the world.*

What are the things of this world that do not belong to Christ? When we want to please our sinful selves, we are loving the world. When we want the sinful things we see, we are loving the things in the world. When we become proud of how important we are or of the many things we have, we have left the way of the Father and are living the way of the world.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ *The world and everything that people want in it are passing away, but the person who does what God wants lives forever.*

The **world** and the things in this world seem to be so **permanent** (continue forever). But John said those things are really **temporary** (continue only a short time). Are people eternal? Yes. It seems we only have a few years of life, but the Bible teaches that when we are in Christ we have eternal life.

What does John mean by the word “world”?

BIBLE SKILL: *The First Century*

Often you will read the words “the first century” or “the second century.” What does that mean? This year is 2015. I can think back about 62 years ago to the year I was born. That year was 1952. If you keep going back, you will get to the first year—year number one. The first one hundred years were numbers 1–100. That was the first century. Years number 101–200 were the second century, 2001–2099 is the twenty-first century.

Today we live in the twenty-first century. Jesus and John lived in the first century.

2. Enemies of the Gospel (1 John 2:18-23)

VERSES 18-19.

¹⁸ *My dear children, these are the last days. You have heard that the enemy of Christ is coming, and now many enemies of Christ are already here. This is how we know that these are the last days.*

¹⁹ *These enemies of Christ were in our fellowship, but they left us. They never really belonged to us; if they had been a part of us, they would have stayed with us. But they left, and this shows that none of them really belonged to us.*

John wrote about the **last days**. Did John mean Jesus was about to return? John seemed to mean the times had the character of the end of time when Jesus will return. Through the 2,000 years since Jesus lived, Christians have often faced times that had the character of the end of time.

John described what it means to have the character of the last days. The clearest mark is when Christians face enemies of Christ. These enemies of Christ had been a part of the Christian fellowship. But since they were not true believers, they did not stay in the Christian **fellowship**. They finally showed their true nature by leaving the church and fighting against Christ.

VERSES 20-21.

²⁰ *You have the gift that the Holy One gave you, so you all know the truth.*

²¹ *I do not write to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know the truth. And you know that no lie comes from the truth.*

The false teachers spoke about a “special knowledge.” This group was called **Gnostics**. They said people needed this special knowledge to become saved. John told his readers they already had the gift of God’s Holy Spirit to live in them. That gift of the Holy Spirit was the gift that brought salvation.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Gnosticism*

In the second century (A.D. 100-200), a strong and popular false teaching called “Gnosticism” hit many of the churches. The word “gnostic” is from a Greek word meaning to know. In their teaching, knowledge is the way to salvation of the soul from the material world. They saw the material world as created through some other power, rather than directly by God.

Some gnostic ideas were already starting to show up while John was alive. That is why John warned about the “enemies of Christ” (verse 18), and the ones who were “liars” (verse 22). The churches with false teachers in John’s world needed his letter. So do the churches in our world.

VERSES 22-23.

²² *Who is the liar? It is the person who does not accept Jesus as the Christ. This is the enemy of Christ: the person who does not accept the Father and His Son.*

²³ *Whoever does not accept the Son does not have the Father. But whoever confesses the Son has the Father, too.*

Some people today believe Jesus is only one of many ways to get to God. John said a person who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar. John called that person an enemy of Christ. If someone does not accept the Son, that person will not have a right **relationship** with God the Father.

When are the last days?

Have we missed them already? YES NO

3. Faithful to the Gospel (1 John 2:24-27)

VERSES 24-25.

²⁴ *Be sure you continue to follow the teaching you heard from the beginning. If you continue to follow what you heard from the beginning, you will stay in the Son and in the Father.*

²⁵ *And this is what the Son promised to us—life forever.*

It is always tempting to chase after a new thing or a new idea. But if new teachings lead away from Christ, those teachings are never good.

Did John say a believing Christian can lose his salvation by turning away from Jesus? No. John knew some people were a part of the church in the past, but they left because of their false teaching. This showed they were never true believers. John did not say Christians can be lost again after they have been saved. He said true believers stay with Christ to the very end.

VERSES 26-27.

²⁶ *I am writing this letter about those people who are trying to lead you the wrong way.*

²⁷ *Christ gave you a special gift that is still in you, so you do not need any other teacher. His gift teaches you about everything, and it is true, not false. So continue to live in Christ, as His gift taught you.*

The false teachers claimed to have a special gift of wisdom. But John said we have the only gift we really need. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we can stay faithful to the truth.

If we have the Holy Spirit, do we truly need teachers? Yes! However, anytime someone teaches different from what the Spirit of God teaches us through the words of the Bible, then we should carefully avoid those false teachers.

How can we avoid false teachers?

IN MY CONTEXT

There are many dangers for Christians today. In some parts of the world Christians are killed just because they are believers. Most of us do not face that danger. The kind of danger we face every day is to become weak about God's truth.

There are many false teachers around. One Deaf pastor recently went on YouTube and said he is now an atheist. This person continues to teach through his YouTube videos. Even within the church there are teachers who try to lead Deaf Christians into false doctrines and wrong practices. If we stay grounded in the Bible and stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, we will stay in a right relationship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

What are some struggles Christians face today?

What are you struggling with in your Christian life?

What does it mean to live in Christ?

What dangers did churches face in John's day?

What dangers do churches face today?

Is your church facing the danger of false teachers?

How can you know who is teaching truth and who is teaching a lie?

How is a person saved—by God’s gift or by having special knowledge?

Who can you trust to lead you into God’s truth?

MEMORY VERSE

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.” —1 John 2:15



Session 4

IS THIS OF GOD?

1 JOHN 4:1-6

Believers must be ready to test the beliefs and way of life of others to see if they are truly from God.

FIRST THOUGHTS

John gave us a simple test to help us know what is true and what is false. The test is related to God living among us as Jesus, the Christ. So, who was Jesus? Was He only a man or was He God? The answer to those questions will show us what is true and what is false.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

John wrote his letter to help his readers live for Christ in their **first century** world. It was a personal letter, written to help Christians who were seeking the truth. First John is a collection of important themes—love is most important, a believer must live a righteous life, we must never follow false teachers, and God has commanded us to love each other.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Choose Carefully What to Believe (1 John 4:1)

VERSE 1.

¹*My dear friends, many false prophets have gone out into the world. So do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God.*

John had a deep love for those who received his letter. He used words like “my dear children,” “my dear friends,” and “brothers and sisters.” John started chapter 4 this way, “My dear friends.” John told his readers to love each other, and he gave them an example by loving them.

John wrote about false teachers again. He called them **false prophets**. They had gone out from the truth and were now teaching their false ideas. John warned his readers to “test the spirits.”

BIBLE SKILL: *Test the Spirits*

What did John mean to “test the spirits”? The Spirit that comes from God is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God Himself living in the world and living in us. The Holy Spirit always leads us right.

But there are other spirits in the world that are not from God. The Bible tells us about evil spirits (Acts 19:13-16; Matthew 12:43-45). John wrote about that kind of spirit here.

It is not clear how people experienced these evil spirits. These evil spirits were having some kind of direct influence on the false teachers. Some Bible teachers think the false spirits were speaking through the false teachers, like a **demon possession**.

We are not certain what the spirits were doing. But John knew the believers could test these spirits. In verse 1, John said to test the spirits. In verses 2 and 3, he explained how to do this.

What did John think about the people who received his letter?

Do you think evil spirits are living in our world today?

2. Test the Message (1 John 4:2-3)

VERSES 2-3.

²*This is how you can know God's Spirit: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ came to earth as a human is from God.*

³*And every spirit who refuses to say this about Jesus is not from God. It is the spirit of the enemy of Christ, which you have heard is coming, and now he is already in the world.*

In verse 1, John said to test the spirits. In verse 2, he explains how to do that. Just like we saw in chapter 2, the test again is related to Jesus. In 1 John 2:22, the enemy of Christ was the person who denied that Jesus is the Christ. Now in 1 John 4:2, the enemy of Christ is the person who denies that Jesus came to earth as a human. Chapter 2 makes it clear that Jesus is really God. Chapter 4 makes it clear that Jesus is really human. Any spirit that cannot say Jesus came to earth as a human is a false spirit. That false spirit lives in a false teacher.

If a teacher said Jesus was truly a real human who came and lived on earth, then the Spirit of God was actually teaching through that person. Believers must listen to and trust that teacher. However, if a teacher said Jesus was something other than a real human who came and lived on earth, then the spirit leading that teacher was a false and evil spirit. That teacher should not be listened to and could not be trusted.

In the second century there was a false belief called **Docetism**. That is a Greek word meaning “he seemed to be.” These false teachers said Jesus was not a real person. Jesus only seemed to be human. He just looked like a real person. In the **first century** this idea was just starting to show up. John ended verse 6 by saying the enemy of Christ was already in the **world**.

The person of Christ is always under attack. It is not easy to hold together the truth that there is only one God, and yet Jesus was God with us. However, if we are going to be true to the Bible, we must hold on to both of these truths. There are groups of

people today who **deny** that Jesus was God or deny that Jesus was truly a human. Those groups do not teach the whole truth.

What is the test we can use on the spirits?

If someone said Jesus was just a good man would you believe him?
YES NO

Why or why not?

If someone said Jesus only seemed to be God would you believe him? YES NO

Why or why not?

3. Observe the Audience (1 John 4:4-6)

VERSE 4.

⁴*My dear children, you belong to God and have defeated them; because God's Spirit, who is in you, is greater than the devil, who is in the world.*

It was easy for John's readers to become discouraged. Look at all the hard things they were facing. They were not only facing false teachers, they were facing evil in the spirit world. John did not want his readers, or us, to feel frightened. In fact, John said the false teachers and the evil spirits were already defeated. The evil these believers faced was real. And the evil we face today is real.

John saw the defeat of evil as so certain he can say it has already happened. It is because “God’s Spirit, who is in you, is greater than the devil, who is in the world.”

That truth should make us very glad. We do not need to fear the world or the evil of the world. We can know the devil will not win the spiritual war we face. God, the powerful One, has already won!

Read 3 John for more of John’s teachings on this.

BIBLE DOCTRINE: *The Devil and His Defeat*

The New Testament does not say much about the devil. The word is used about thirty-five times. The devil tempts, lies, torments, and fights against God’s plans. But the truth for us as believers is this: on the cross, Jesus overcame the devil (Hebrews 2:14). The resurrection of Jesus was the final blow against the rule of the devil.

The Book of Revelation is very complicated. But the message is clear: the devil is defeated. The believer has no reason to fear the devil.

VERSE 5.

⁵*And they belong to the world, so what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them.*

The world, which is under the influence of sin, is always in a war against Christ. Therefore, we should not be surprised when the world will not listen to the truth. The world will listen to false teachers who are led by wrong spirits.

VERSE 6.

⁶ But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. But those who are not from God do not listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit that is true and the spirit that is false.

Believers belong to God. That is why John was so **confident** about true believers listening to and following the truth. John taught the truth. John knew many true Bible teachers who taught what he taught. Therefore, John said, they listen to “us.”

When we stay true to God’s Word, we teach what John taught. We teach the truth about the person of Jesus. This is still God’s test to know the Spirit of God and the false spirits.

What test can you use to know who is teaching by the Holy Spirit and who is teaching false ideas?

IN MY CONTEXT

One of the biggest dangers to true Deaf Christians all over the world is a **cult** (false teaching) of people who **claim** to witness for God. This cult teaches that Jesus was not truly God. He was something else. They believe Jesus was something different from us humans and something different from the true God. This cult goes all around the world trying to convince Deaf people to leave the truth. We need to stand strong on the truth in God’s Word. When you face people from this cult knocking on your door, stand strong for the truth.

How do you decide what is true and what is false?

How will you answer if someone asks you, “Who is Jesus?”

Was 1 John written as a letter, a sermon, or a book?

What are some of the themes John wrote about in his letter?

Does the Deaf community in your city face false teachers trying to pull Deaf people away from the truth?

How would you answer these questions:

(1) John taught that Jesus really was God? TRUE FALSE

(2) John taught that Jesus really was a human like us?
TRUE FALSE

MEMORY VERSES

“This is how you can know God’s Spirit: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ came to earth as a human is from God. And every spirit who refuses to say this about Jesus is not from God. It is the spirit of the enemy of Christ, which you have heard is coming, and now he is already in the world.” —1 John 4:2-3



Session 5

REAL LOVE

1 JOHN 4:7-21

God is love. We can see His love in His character, what He does to save the **world**, and in the way His people live.

FIRST THOUGHTS

What is God like? God is love. That is what God is like. It will be very important for us in this lesson to find out what that love is like. Because God is love, He calls all believers to love like He loves.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

What happens when a person *knows* God? The one who knows God is placed into a new **relationship** in his life. The love of God changes everything in a person's life.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Seen in the Son (1 John 4:7-11)

VERSE 7.

⁷Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child and knows God.

The most important idea in these five verses is love. The original New Testament was written in Greek, not English. Greek has four different words for our one English word love. Only two of those four words for love are important in the New Testament. One of those words means the “love between friends.” The other word means the “kind of love God has for people—a godlike love.” This second word appears eleven times in verses 7-11. It is the most important idea in this section.

KEY DOCTRINE: *How Does Love Flow?*

In the New Testament, the Greek language had four different words that are translated by the English word “love.” Here they are spelled with English letters: “eros,” “storge,” “phileo,” and “agape.”

“Eros” means a type of feeling that flows one way—toward me. That is why it is most often used to mean sexual love.

“Storge” and “phileo” mean a relationship that flows two ways—back and forth between me and the ones I love. That is why it is most often used for family love and friendship love. The city name Philadelphia means the city of brotherly love.

KEY DOCTRINE: *How Does Love Flow?*

“Agape” means a committed love that always flows from me to the one I love. That is why it is most often used for God’s kind of love.

List people who are important in your life. Write the type of love beside their name.

VERSE 8.

⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

John expected Christians to have this godlike love for each other because Christians are God’s own children. These Christians have been born again (John 3:1-16), and they know God. John’s **logic** is perfect. Those who know God show through their lives that they know God. Anyone who knows God will have this godlike love for others because “God is love.”

VERSES 9-10.

⁹This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could have life through him.

¹⁰This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God’s love for us. He sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins.

The very heart of God is love. It is the kind of love that wants only the best for the one loved. That is God’s emotion and action toward people.

Our love for God is not the best picture of love. God’s love for us is the perfect example of love. And this is how God showed it—Jesus came to earth to die for our sin.

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *Dear friends, if God loved us that much we also should love each other.*

Because we know God in Christ Jesus, we have been changed to show the heart of God in our own lives. Therefore, like God loves us, we must love each other.

If you know God, what must you do?

2. Perfected by the Spirit (1 John 4:12-15)

VERSE 12.

¹² *No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God lives in us, and His love is made perfect in us.*

John gives four proofs that believers know God. First, believers know God and have a right **relationship** with Him because believers love each other. It is not common for people to have a deep love for one another. But such love should be common in the church.

VERSE 13.

¹³ *We know that we live in God and He lives in us, because He gave us His Spirit.*

Second, believers have God's Holy Spirit living in them. This was God's gift on the **Day of Pentecost** (Acts 2:1-4), and it is still God's gift to us today (Romans 8:9-11).

BIBLE SKILL: *The Work of the Holy Spirit*

The Bible says those who belong to God in Christ have God's Holy Spirit living in them. Read these verses, and write what the Holy Spirit does.

Galatians 5:22-23 _____

Romans 8:26 _____

John 14:26 _____

Romans 8:14 _____

1 Corinthians 2:6-14 _____

2 Timothy 3:16-17 _____

VERSE 14.

¹⁴ *We have seen and can testify that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.*

Third, when we trust Jesus as Savior, we receive God's Holy Spirit, and then we mature in God's love.

VERSE 15.

¹⁵ *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God has God living inside, and that person lives in God.*

The fourth proof that believers know God and have a right **relationship** with Him is because God continues to live in us.

What are the four proofs that believers know God and live in a right relationship with Him?

3. Defined by the Father (1 John 4:16-18)

VERSE 16.

¹⁶ *And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.*

John's word for love is not the selfish kind of romantic love like we see in movies. Love is not God. No, God is love! Someone might say, "I love everybody so I am all right with God." That is not quite on target with God's kind of love. This godlike love comes when we surrender our lives to God in Christ Jesus.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ *This is how love is made perfect in us: that we can be without fear on the day God judges us, because in this world we are like him.*

When we surrender our lives to God in Christ Jesus, we no longer need to fear the judgment at the end of the world. God's love has pushed out that fear. The eternal punishment of God's judgment against sinners could make a person terribly afraid. That is why the believer, who lives in God's deep love, can have no fear.

VERSE 18.

¹⁸ *Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's perfect love drives out fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear, so love is not made perfect in the person who fears.*

The **presence** of God's love shows us how we are right with God and so we have no more reason to be afraid of the judgment that will come to people who do not believe.

Have you let God push this fear out of your life? YES NO

4. Imitated by His People (1 John 4:19-21)

VERSE 19.

¹⁹*We love because God first loved us.*

If believers experience God's love, what will they do? They will love others and especially they will love other believers. If we know God and love God, then we will always love the people around us—especially other believers.

VERSE 20.

²⁰*If people say, "I love God," but hate their brothers or sisters, they are liars. Those who do not love their brothers and sisters, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have never seen.*

We cannot say we love God, but we hate our brothers and sisters in Christ. Anyone who could live this way does not know God. It is false to say we love a God we cannot see but hate a brother or sister whom we can see. Many people in our churches and our Deaf churches need to learn this truth.

Finally, if we really love God, then we will obey God. The little girl who loves her father will do what her father commands, right? The child of God who loves God the Father will obey Him.

VERSE 21.

²¹*And God gave us this command: Those who love God must also love their brothers and sisters.*

Here is God's command to us: "Those who love God must also love their brothers and sisters." That is not a **suggestion**. That is a *command* from God to all Christians.

Are you obeying God's command to love your brothers and sisters?

IN MY CONTEXT

There are two clear simple truths in this lesson. The first is the character of God. Here is the best way to describe God—God is love. The second truth is this: if we know God and live in a right **relationship** with Him, then we must love the people around us, especially other believers. We cannot escape this command of God. We must love other people with the kind of love God has for us. Look at every part of your life and ask yourself if you are living out God's love.

Do you show God's love in your relationships at home? YES NO

Do you show God's love at your work? YES NO

Are you living in obedience to God's command to love? YES NO

What do you think God is like? _____

How does it make you feel when you learn that God is love?

If you are in God, you are in His love. How does His love change your life? _____

Where does love come from? _____

What is one word that describes God? _____

How did God show His love to us? _____

What is God's command to Christians? _____

MEMORY VERSE

"This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters." —1 John 3:16



Session 6

JESUS ALONE

1 JOHN 5:1-12

We can only be free from sin and death and have eternal life with God when we trust Jesus Christ as Savior.

FIRST THOUGHTS

What is important for Christians? Christians love Jesus. We also worship Him, obey Him, follow Him, pray to Him, and tell other people about Him. Why is Jesus so important for us? In Christ, believers have victory over the sin of the **world**. Jesus can do this for us because He is the only Son of God who gives eternal life to people when they believe on Him as Savior.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Jesus Alone Offers Victory (1 John 5:1-5)

VERSES 1-2.

¹ *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is God's child, and whoever loves the Father also loves the Father's children.*

² *This is how we know we love God's children: when we love God and obey His commands.*

Who is God's child? The answer is everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ. We have learned this truth through our experience as believers. When we trusted in Jesus, we were born into God's family. But a wall cannot be built with one brick. So John quickly added that being God's child puts us in a whole new family of love. If we love God the Father, then we will truly love all of God's children.

VERSE 3.

³ *Loving God means obeying His commands. And God's commands are not too hard for us.*

But, as we have seen before, there is a way to test if we are truly loving God's children. The test is if we obey His commands. There is no way we can love God and disobey His commands.

VERSE 4.

⁴ *Because everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.*

John said that obeying God's commands is not hard because the child of God has already overcome the world—by faith. If it looks like the world is overcoming us, we know that is wrong. By faith we know the world has already lost its victory over us.

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The false teachers said Jesus was not really God. They said He was something other than God and less than God. Our victory over the world happens only because we are the ones who believe Jesus is the Son of God. The false teachers accepted the false ideas of this world. We must never do that. We always hold to this truth—only in Jesus, who is God the Son, can we have victory over the world.

VERSE 5.

⁵ So the one who conquers the world is the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

John reached a high point in these verses when he announced the truth that believers have a victory that overcomes the **world**.

What do you need to believe to have victory over the world?

2. Jesus Alone Is the Son of God (1 John 5:6-10)

VERSES 6-9.

⁶ Jesus Christ is the One who came by water and blood. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit says that this is true, because the Spirit is the truth.

⁷ So there are three witnesses:

⁸ The Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three witnesses agree.

⁹ We believe people when they say something is true. But what God says is more important, and He has told us the truth about His own Son.

BIBLE SKILL: *Son of God*

The New Testament has the words “Son of God” almost 40 times. Every time these words are used, they are written about Jesus. When the Bible says Jesus is the Son of God, the Bible does not mean Jesus is a son like a man and a woman have a son. The Bible means Jesus comes from the Father. The Bible also means Jesus is of the same character and nature as God the Father.

Read these and write what each verse tells you about Jesus:

Matthew 14:33 _____

Mark 1:1 _____

Galatians 2:20 _____

Hebrews 4:14 _____

John said there are three witnesses that agree that Jesus is the Son of God. Those three witnesses are the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

The false teachers said Jesus was not really God. They also said He was not really human. They denied He was the Christ (Messiah) and the Son of God.

John challenged these false teachings by bringing God’s witnesses to establish the truth about who Jesus is. The Old Testament law said truth could be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Three witnesses, according to John, support the truth that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Who Are These Witnesses?*

John did not give us a clear explanation about the “witnesses.”

1. The “Spirit” is clearly the Holy Spirit.
2. The “blood” seems to be the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.
3. The “water” is really the hardest of the three. Some Bible teachers say the water represents baptism, especially the baptism of Jesus. Other Bible teachers say the water refers to the water that came from the side of Jesus when He died on the cross (John 19:34).

Perhaps one way to interpret the three witnesses is like this.

1. The water is a witness that Jesus was fully human, born by water (normal human birth—Luke 2:4-7), baptized in water (Mark 1:9-11), identified with us by water, fully dead on the cross as shown by the water from His side (John 19:34).
2. The blood is a witness that Jesus was God’s sacrifice for sin on the cross, and therefore He was indeed God’s Christ who was to save the world.
3. The Holy Spirit is the third witness, and His witness agrees with the other two. The Spirit speaks within us and confirms that Jesus is the Son of God.

VERSE 10.

¹⁰ *Anyone who believes in the Son of God has the truth that God told us. Anyone who does not believe makes God a liar, because that person does not believe what God told us about His Son.*

The idea of the witnesses may be hard for us, but it seems they made good sense for John’s first readers!

What are the three witnesses?

To what do they give witness?

3. Jesus Alone Offers Eternal Life (1 John 5:11-12)

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

All people everywhere in the world must face the experience of death. We all know this is true. Nevertheless, there is a desire in all the peoples of the world to live beyond death. Many of the world's religions **claim** to offer eternal life to the people who follow their faith. This is true of Islam, Judaism, and certain other faiths. We are Christians, and we believe God has shown the truth in His Word, the Bible. John declared that God Himself said that there is eternal life for people, but that life only comes to people through faith in His Son, Jesus.

VERSE 12.

¹² *Whoever has the Son has life, but whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

John repeated this message in a different way. If someone believes in Jesus, God's Son, that person has life. However, any person who does not have Jesus, God's Son, does not have life.

Since this verse is with the verses about eternal life, we understand that John had eternal life in mind. However, it also seems clear that John had more than just eternal life in mind. John could have said eternal life but he said life. The life we have in Christ does not begin with our death. When we trust in Jesus, we receive life. We have His gift of life now (John 10:10) and His gift of eternal life as well.

How can a person receive eternal life?

When does eternal life begin—now or when I die?

IN MY CONTEXT

This lesson makes some big **claims** about Jesus. The Bible says only Jesus can give us victory over the sinful **world**. Jesus is the only Son of God, and therefore only Jesus can give us true eternal life. Do you believe this is true? The Bible clearly teaches this. Also, the experience of millions of Christians **confirms** this truth.

Maybe it is time for you to believe these truths also. The reason Christians hold so dearly to Jesus is because only He can fully change lives and give eternal life. When you give your life to Jesus, He will change your life and give you eternal life too. (See inside the front cover and page 4 of this quarterly.)

When you believe Jesus is the Son of God, you can _____ the world.

The three witnesses that Jesus is the Son of God are the _____, the _____, and the _____.

How do these three give a witness to Jesus?

_____ alone offers eternal life.

Eternal life begins for the believer: a. when he dies. b. when he accepts Jesus as Savior.

Why is Jesus the most important part of Christianity?

Do you think it is important to love Jesus? YES NO

Why?

What are some of the important ideas in 1 John?

MEMORY VERSE

“Because everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.” —1 John 5:4



Session 7

JESUS' REVELATION

REVELATION 1:1-8

Jesus Christ is the **Alpha and Omega**. He is the complete revelation of God to the whole world.

FIRST THOUGHTS

The Book of Revelation is one of the most interesting and yet difficult books in the whole Bible. It is interesting because it tells us things we want to know about the future. It is difficult because it is written in a style that is strange to us. Some Christians think this book tells us great details about the end

of time. Others think this book helps us understand the time when John wrote the Book of Revelation. Even more important than showing the future, this book will show us Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Book of Revelation was written about A.D. 95. The emperor of Rome at that time was named **Domitian**. Domitian led Rome A.D. 81-96. Domitian persecuted Christians badly. John does not write the name of Domitian anywhere in his book, but many of the difficult passages in the Book of Revelation become clear when we interpret them in light of the **persecution** against Christians by Domitian.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Revealed (Revelation 1:1-3)

VERSES 1-2.

¹*This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show His servants what must soon happen. And Jesus sent His angel to show it to His servant John,*

²*Who has told everything he has seen. It is the word of God; it is the message from Jesus Christ.*

The word **revelation** means “to show.” The revelation was shown to John. This book is the revelation of Jesus Christ. We will learn things about the days of John. We will learn things about the future. We will learn about the return of Jesus. But more than anything, we will learn about Jesus.

Christians have believed for most of Church history that the **Apostle** John was the writer, and this seems to be the best way to interpret this book.

VERSE 3.

³*Blessed is the one who reads the words of God's message, and blessed are the people who hear this message and do what is written in it. The time is near when all of this will happen.*

The Book of Revelation is God's Word. It is an important message that God sent to His people. John said this book brings great blessing on those who read it, study it, learn it, and follow it.

The Book of Revelation tells us things about the future. John said, "The time is near when *all of this* will happen."

Over the weeks ahead we will see more of what *all of this* is. We will see things about the return of Christ. But what did John mean by "the time is near"? It has been about 1900 years since John wrote those words, and Jesus has not yet returned. However, much of what John wrote about has happened. We will see these things too.

Do you think the return of Christ will be soon? YES NO

Why?

2. Revered (Revelation 1:4-6)

VERSE 4.

⁴*From John. To the seven churches in Asia: Grace and peace to you from the One who is and was and is coming, and from the seven spirits before His throne.*

Asia was the word used in New Testament times for the area we know today as Western Turkey.

We know the Book of Revelation came from God and was shown to John. While John wrote what God gave him, John had seven churches in mind. An individual note to each of the seven churches is in chapters 2 and 3. But God meant this book for every church in all of time.

This is a letter, so it begins with a letter greeting—*grace and peace*. Paul also used this in his letters (Romans 1:7). It seems the next few words are speaking of the **Trinity**. Grace and peace come from God the Father who is the “One who is and was...” The *seven spirits* are probably a **symbol** for the Holy Spirit. Of course, Jesus Christ is God the Son. The letters to the seven churches come from “God in three persons,” the Trinity.

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Trinity*

The word Trinity is not in the Bible, but the concept of the Trinity is found all through the Bible. God works as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:9, Paul uses all three words to speak of God. Three key Scriptures that show the Trinity are Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and 1 Peter 1:1-2.

Old Testament verses refer to God with a plural word (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; and Isaiah 6:8).

Read more in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Galatians 4:4-6; and Ephesians 4:4-6.

VERSES 5-6.

⁵*And from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful witness, the first among those raised from the dead. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He is the One who loves us, who made us free from our sins with the blood of His death.*

⁶*He made us to be a kingdom of priests who serve God His Father. To Jesus Christ be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*

John gives six short descriptions of Jesus: Jesus is the faithful witness who remained faithful to the mission of God, even to His death on the cross. However, God did not leave Jesus dead. God raised Jesus from the grave. Because of His resurrection, Jesus has all authority from God (Matthew 28:18) and is

therefore ruler over everything, including the kings of the earth. Jesus' death showed His great love for us because His death is what freed us from our sin. And now we are God's people and serve Him as priests. We do the work of priests, which is to show God to the people and to bring people to meet God. Verses 5-6 are a short version of the entire gospel story!

After writing this beautiful short version of the gospel, John burst out in praise. Jesus is worthy of our praise both now and forever more.

Make a list of the six short descriptions of Jesus.

3. Returning (Revelation 1:7-8)

VERSE 7.

⁷Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds, and everyone will see Him, even those who stabbed Him. And all peoples of the earth will cry loudly because of Him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.

John turns now to the return of Jesus (the **second coming**). No one wrote more about the return of Jesus than John in the Book of Revelation. John used words like coming with the clouds, and everyone will see Him. These words reminded Christians of Jesus' words about His return. The message from God included the fact that Jesus will return to earth. Christians will welcome

Jesus gladly. However, there will be many people around the world who will “cry loudly.” They will cry because they have not accepted Him as their Lord.

BIBLE SKILL: *The Return of Christ*

Many verses in the New Testament speak about the return of Christ. Read these Bible verses and write what each one tells us about the return of Christ:

1. What Jesus said about His own return:

Matthew 24:1-50 _____

Mark 13:1-36 _____

Luke 21:5-36 _____

John 14:1-6 _____

2. What Luke recorded:

Acts 1:10-11 _____

3. What Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 _____

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 _____

VERSE 8.

⁸*The Lord God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the One who is and was and is coming. I am the Almighty.”*

Our Bible study today ends with a statement from God about His eternal nature and great power. God calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega. Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet. So God is in control of everything from A to Z. God is the beginning of all things, and He will end all things. Yet God has no beginning and no end.

We can be **confident** that God is eternal. He is the One who was and also is. This is a true fact, and the return of Jesus is an equally true fact. He was and is and also is coming. We can have faith in His return because He is the one almighty, eternal God.

What do the words Alpha and Omega mean?

How do you know Jesus will come again?

IN MY CONTEXT

Christians all over the world want to know about the return of Christ. You probably do too. This study in the Book of Revelation will be of great interest for you. However, it is not enough to learn interesting things. The Book of Revelation will **reveal** Christ to you.

When you learn about Christ, and experience Christ, you will be called by Christ to submit your life to Him. Do not be afraid

to do this. Remember that those who *do what is written* are those who, in the end, will be happy and blessed.

The return of Christ does not lead us to think only about the future. The return of Christ also helps us focus on what God wants to do in our world and in our lives today.

Why are you interested in the Book of Revelation?

Why is it important to study the Book of Revelation?

More than anything the Book of Revelation will show us

Describe the background in which the Book of Revelation was written.

What has Jesus done for you?

Are you ready for Jesus to return? YES NO

Why, or why not?

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord God says, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the One who is and was and is coming. I am the Almighty.’” —Revelation 1:8



Session 8

LET THEM HEAR

REVELATION 2:7,11,17; 3:5,12;
2:26-29; 3:21

The people who overcome by faith in Jesus Christ will live with Him forever.

FIRST THOUGHTS

Chapters 2 and 3 in the Book of Revelation have seven letters that Jesus sent to seven churches. The seven churches were real churches. The churches faced different situations and had different problems. We will learn from these churches

the lessons Jesus wanted each of these real churches to learn. Looking at all seven churches at the same time, we see how every church needed to obey the instructions of Jesus. If the believers in the churches obeyed, they would know the gift of eternal life and the gift of doing the work of Jesus.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In Revelation 1:9 we learn what was happening to John. He was sent to a small Greek island called **Patmos** because he was preaching about Jesus. Many other prisoners were sent to this island. One Sunday, John was worshiping the Lord when he had a vision, and Jesus spoke to John. Jesus told John to write to each of the seven churches in the province of Asia. Then Jesus **dictated** the letters for John to write. That is where our lesson begins today.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Promise of Life (Revelation 2:7,11,17; 3:5,12)

BIBLE SKILL: *The Seven Churches of Asia*

Each of the seven letters has an outline:

1. The name of the church the letter was written to.
2. The One sending the letter is always Jesus, but different titles are used for Jesus in each letter.
3. Some words of praise to the church.
4. Some words of correction and warning to the church.
5. Jesus called each church to pay careful attention and promised them victory if they would “listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

VERSE 2:7.

⁷ *“Every person who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To those who win the victory, I will give the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life, which is in the garden of God.”*

This is the last verse of the letter to the church in Ephesus. Jesus said people who listen (or watch, or pay attention), will win a great victory. What is that victory? The victory is the right to eat from the tree of life. This is a **symbol** meaning those people will have eternal life.

BIBLE SKILL: *Understand the Words of the Bible*

In this verse, we find some words that are difficult for us to understand. These words are, “Everyone who has ears should listen.” This is difficult because we have ears but we are Deaf. Is this verse not for us? The truth is, this verse is not about ears. Ears are how the hearing world pays attention to words and commands. We do that with our eyes. We can translate this verse for Deaf readers like this: “If you have eyes to watch, pay attention to what the Spirit says.” A person who is deaf/blind can read, “If you have hands to feel words, pay attention to the words the Spirit communicates to you.” How we pay attention is not important. The command is to pay attention, which we will do with our eyes and with our hearts and minds.

See Romans 1:9-17 for some other verses where we need to use this kind of interpretation.

VERSE 2:11.

¹¹ *“Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. Those who win the victory will not be hurt by the second death.”*

Jesus promised a victory to those who pay attention to what the Spirit says. What is this victory? Those who pay attention to the Spirit will not be hurt by the second death. The **second death** is the eternal separation from God that non-believers will experience. Believers in Christ will never experience this separation.

VERSE 2:17.

¹⁷ *“Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. I will give some of the hidden manna to everyone who wins the victory. I will also give to each one who wins the victory a white stone with a new name written on it. No one knows this new name except the one who receives it.”*

Jesus spoke of hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name. Bible teachers do not all agree what each of these things mean, but all agree these three images are about the new life that comes with the victory we have by following Christ.

VERSE 3:5.

⁵ *“Those who win the victory will be dressed in white clothes like them. And I will not erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will say they belong to me before my Father and before his angels.”*

The Sardis church had very little good for the Lord to praise. They were a dead church. Jesus told them to wake up! But Jesus promised a victory to them—eternal life. The symbol of this is the Book of Life and Jesus’ **claim** that these people belong to me.

VERSE 3:12.

¹² *“I will make those who win the victory pillars in the temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem,*

that comes down out of heaven from my God. I will also write on them my new name.”

Jesus had only words of praise for this church in Philadelphia. It was a church with an open door. God was ready to take this church to great places. The believers in Philadelphia will also win a victory. They have the promise of eternal life. Jesus said, “I will also write on them my new name.” This shows that these people belonged fully and completely to Jesus. They proudly wore His name.

What reward did Jesus promise to give to those who paid attention to His words?

2. Promise of Purpose (Revelation 2:26-29; 3:21)

VERSES 2:26-29.

²⁶ *“I will give power over the nations to everyone who wins the victory and continues to be obedient to me until the end.*

²⁷ *You will rule over them with an iron rod, as when pottery is broken into pieces.*

²⁸ *This is the same power I received from my Father. I will also give him the morning star.*

²⁹ *Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Jesus praised the church in Thyatira and promised the church that it would rule with Him. Jesus also promised to give the church the morning star.

If the Christians in Thyatira continued to obey Jesus until His return, Jesus promised them they would rule over the nations. In verse 26, power over the nations is clear. In verse 27, the idea of power over the nations is stated in the quotation

from Psalm 2:9. Ruling with an iron rod and breaking pottery are symbols of ruling over the nations. It is not clear how Christians will rule the nations, but it is certain. As Jesus received power from God the Father, so shall we, believers, receive power to rule with Him.

The morning star is a little more difficult to understand. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus said He is the bright and morning star. The best interpretation of this image is to say that the believers in Thyatira (and we today) will receive the Lord Jesus. We have received Him as Savior. In our eternal heavenly home, we will also receive His actual **presence** with us.

VERSE 3:21.

²¹ *“Those who win the victory will sit with me on my throne in the same way that I won the victory and sat down with my Father on His throne.”*

Jesus found nothing worthy of praise in the life of the church in Laodicea. In verse 20, we see Jesus standing outside, knocking on the door, trying to get in.

However, verse 21 promises victory to those at Laodicea who will open the door. The victory included the invitation to “sit with me on my **throne**.” It seems best to interpret this **symbol** as Christians having some kind of rule with Jesus.

This does not mean we will be little kings or little gods. It does mean that in eternity our purpose will be to do the work of God, whatever that may be. Imagine how those Christians who experienced terrible **persecution** under the rule of **Domitian** felt great encouragement when they saw that in the end, neither Domitian nor Rome would rule. Jesus will rule and we believers will rule with Him.

How would you feel if the government made it against the law to worship Jesus?

IN MY CONTEXT

Read all seven letters to the churches. These churches had many problems and many strengths.

Can you see some problems in those churches that might be in your church?

Can you see some strengths that might be in your church?

What do you think the Holy Spirit is saying to you and to your church today?

Has your church lost its first love for Jesus?

Has your church paid attention to false teachers?

Does your church have an open door of opportunity in front of you?

Perhaps the most important question is this one: Are you and your church paying attention to what Jesus is saying to you? As John said, “Do you have ears to hear?” Or as we would say in our Deaf churches, “Do you have eyes to watch?” It is very important for you and your church to obey what Jesus says to you. And then remember the promise of God to those of us who trust Him and obey Him is eternal life!

What are the main lessons that the churches needed to learn?

Why was John on the island of Patmos?

When John wrote, whose words did He write down?

Why is this important?

What does it mean in these verses to have ears that hear?

Do you think your church is paying attention to what the Lord is saying?

Why do you think this way?

What do you think it means that we will rule with Jesus?

What purpose is Jesus giving to your church today?

What purpose in life is Jesus giving to you personally?

MEMORY VERSE

“Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.” —Revelation 3:22



Session 9

SEEING THE THRONE

REVELATION 4:1-11

God alone is worthy of the worship of all creation.

FIRST THOUGHTS

Have you ever wondered what heaven looks like? According to the verses in today's lesson it is amazing beyond our wildest imagination. The Bible shows us the beauty of heaven and the amazing **beings** who live there. But far beyond the **marvels** of heaven, is the **majesty** of God. We will learn how we, and all living beings, rightly bow before Him in worship.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Our study today, from chapter 4, jumps from earth to heaven! That is a big jump! However, the letters to the churches must always be in the background as we study the Book of Revelation. What God showed about Himself and about the future was intended to **challenge** the churches. When the churches faced **persecution** or temptation they could look to this **revelation** of God and His work in the **world** and take courage. So can we.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. God's Glory (Revelation 4:1-6a)

VERSE 1.

¹*After the vision of these things I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And the same voice that spoke to me before, that sounded like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this."*

Soon after John received the letters to the seven churches, he saw an open door. This door was John's invitation to enter God's **presence**. The same voice John heard in Revelation 1:10 called John to come and see what was going to happen next on earth. In later chapters in the Book of Revelation, we will see the future of the earth. But first, we need to see God on His **throne**.

VERSES 2-3.

²*Immediately, I was in the Spirit, and before me was a throne in heaven, and someone was sitting on it.*

³*The One who sat on the throne looked like precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne was a rainbow the color of an emerald.*

Immediately, John was in the presence of God. The words do not suggest John saw God with a shape or form. John saw a throne. A throne is a large beautiful chair for kings and queens to sit on. It is a **symbol** of the king's power. God's throne represents His great power. God's appearance had a shining quality to it like precious stones. John's readers knew what jasper, carnelian, and emerald stones look like. John used the language of humans to describe the person of God. Words can never describe God perfectly.

VERSE 4.

⁴Around the throne there were twenty-four other thrones with twenty-four elders sitting on them. They were dressed in white and had golden crowns on their heads.

This verse is like stepping back to get a broader view. Twenty-four thrones were around the **throne** of God. An elder sat on each of these thrones. The twenty-four **elders** seem to represent the twelve sons of Jacob who are the people of God in the Old Testament, plus the twelve apostles who represent the people of God in the New Testament. So, the twenty-four elders represent all of God's people.

VERSE 5.

⁵Lightning flashes and noises and thunder came from the throne. Before the throne seven lamps were burning, which are the seven spirits of God.

Flashes of lightning and the roll of thunder added to the awesome nature of God's power.

The picture widened just a bit more, and John saw lampstands which were the seven spirits of God. Like so many other things we see in John's description of heaven, this one is not explained. The lampstands (the seven spirits of God) seem to represent the Holy Spirit of God.

VERSE 6a.

⁶ *Also before the throne there was something that looked like a sea of glass, clear like crystal.*

Finally there is a flat broad space in front of the throne. Many earthly kings had a special decorated space in front of their throne to add more beauty and **awe** to their throne. The space before God is so large it is like a sea except this space was made of glass. No earthly king can begin to compare to the glory, beauty, and power of God. Surely an earthly king like **Domitian** in Rome could not begin to compare to God.

What does the throne room of God make you think about God?

Can any earthly king or leader compare to God?

BIBLE SKILL: *Compare Revelation with Ezekiel and Isaiah*

Ezekiel 1:1-28 seems to have a scene from heaven. So does Isaiah 6:1-5. Compare these passages with Revelation 4:4-11. There are many differences but also many **similarities**. All of these visions show us a picture of what heaven looks like. Notice how wonderful these images are.

If the beings who live in God's presence worship God, what should we do?

2. God's Holiness (Revelation 4:6b-8)

VERSES 6b-7.

⁶*In the center and around the throne were four living creatures with eyes all over them, in front and in back.*

⁷*The first living creature was like a lion. The second was like a calf. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle.*

Around God's throne were four more living creatures. These living **beings** were not human. They might have been angels of some kind. They are certainly strange looking to our eyes.

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Creatures in Heaven*

In Isaiah 6:1-5 you will find creatures very much like these in today's Bible verses. These living creatures had six wings, and they had eyes all over their bodies. The wings gave them ability to move about and do the commands of God. The eyes gave them the ability to see everywhere. They are living, thinking creations of God. Because they have the appearance of a lion, calf, man, and eagle many Bible teachers think they represent all of the living parts of God's creation.

We do not know all the things these living creatures do, but we do know one thing they do—they give praise to God. They sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." These magnificent living beings knew they were in the presence of the one true holy God. Their song tells about the nature of God and shows their worship to God. By doing this, they give us an example of what we should know and do. God is awesome beyond compare with anything.

VERSE 8.

⁸ *Each of these four living creatures had six wings and was covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. He was, He is, and He is coming.”*

God is the only God of all the universe. He is different from us. He is absolutely perfect in every way. When we think of God or experience Him in any way, we should give ourselves back to Him in worship.

What do we learn about God from the four living creatures?

3. God’s Power (Revelation 4:9-11)

VERSE 9.

⁹ *These living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the One who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever.*

Along with the words they speak, the four living creatures give God “glory, honor, and thanks.” We understand how to give thanks. We have done that all our lives. It is more difficult for us to know how to give glory and honor. It is right for us to feel **awe** about God and give respect to Him.

VERSE 10.

¹⁰ *Then the twenty-four elders bow down before the One who sits on the throne, and they worship Him who lives forever and ever. They put their crowns down before the throne and say:*

When the living creatures began to worship God in these ways, the **elders** bowed before God. Part of their worship was to take their own crowns and lay them before God. By this action the elders showed their total submission to God.

VERSE 11.

¹¹“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, because you made all things. Everything existed and was made, because you wanted it.”

Finally the elders praise God. They announce that God is worthy of all praise, and then they give one reason why God is so worthy. God is worthy because He is the creator of all that is. There is no other creator. Everything that exists today is here because God wanted it to be. Because God made everything including the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, John, and us, we are right to worship Him.

You have seen a peek into heaven. Do you think you will enjoy being there? YES NO

IN MY CONTEXT

We can respond to our belief in God in many ways. We believe in God, so we study and learn about God. We love God, so we obey God. We know God cares for us, so we pray to God and we ask Him for help. All these are good and right ways to respond to God. But perhaps the most important way we respond to God is when we worship Him. The Bible does not tell us all the things we need to do in worship. Surely we will sing and pray and pay attention to God’s word. We can learn from our Bible study today how worship includes a deep sense of God’s **presence** and His

great **worthiness**. He is God. I am one who has been made by God. He is high and mighty. I am humble before Him. He is all powerful. I am a weak creature.

Think about heaven. Can you see it in your imagination? Look at the beauty of it. The center focus is God Himself. Look at all the mighty important living **elders** and creatures and angels bowing before God and giving Him praise.

What do you think heaven is like?

Read the verses in today's lesson. What ideas do you find about God?

Where was John when he had this vision? How could a revelation of God encourage believers who were facing persecution? Write some of the images John used to describe heaven.

Describe the living creatures and tell what they do in life.

Write what you have learned about worship from this lesson.

MEMORY VERSE

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. He was, He is, and He is coming." —Revelation 4:8



Session 10

THE WORTHY LAMB

REVELATION 5:1-14

Jesus is the only salvation for the world.

FIRST THOUGHTS

When you read the verses for today, you will see things like a **scroll** sealed up, a lamb that was killed, bowls full of incense, and thousands of angels speaking together in loud voices. This is not a **science fiction movie**. This is the Word of God. Jesus is the center of attention in all these verses. Jesus is the lamb who can open the scroll. Jesus is the only one in all the universe who can **rescue** people who are sinful and broken.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In chapter 4 we saw the **throne** room of heaven, and God was the focus of the verses. In chapter 5, there is a change in focus. We are still in the throne room, but now all eyes are on the scroll that no one can open and the lamb who appears and is able to open the scroll. The scroll has earth's future written on it. Only Jesus has the power to show us the future of the earth. He can do this because He defeated death to offer hope to humans.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Search (Revelation 5:1-4)

VERSE 1.

¹*Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. The scroll had writing on both sides and was kept closed with seven seals.*

When the Book of Revelation was written, books (like the ones we read) had not been invented. Books were scrolls. Scrolls were rare, expensive, and also **mysterious**. The average person did not own a scroll. People thought about scrolls with respect because they held history and knowledge in them. Any scroll God held must be really important. A seal was usually made of wax, and it held a scroll closed. This scroll was closed with seven seals. Seven means complete. Seven seals on the scroll mean it was completely closed.

BIBLE SKILL: *Understanding Numbers in the Bible*

Numbers are an important part of the Book of Revelation. You will see important numbers all through the book. For example: there are 4 living creatures, 24 elders, 144,000 sealed people on earth, 7 angels, and many more.

BIBLE SKILL: *Understanding Numbers in the Bible*

We also do this today. To be number 1 means to be the best. Many people think numbers 7 and 11 are lucky numbers. Some people think number 13 is unlucky.

The Jewish people put meanings to their numbers. One was used for God. It meant unity. Two was the number for division. Three meant complete. Four was often related to the earth. Six was the number for man or for what is evil. Seven represented the perfect number. Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about numbers in the Bible.

VERSES 2-3.

² *And I saw a powerful angel calling in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”*

³ *But there was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could open the scroll or look inside it.*

The **scroll** had a message from God to help John understand what had happened and what will happen. An angel called loudly to find someone who could open the scroll. But no one anywhere was good enough to take the scroll from God and open it.

VERSE 4.

⁴ *I cried bitterly because there was no one who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside it.*

John cried. He knew the scroll was important because it was God’s message. The scroll would **reveal** the future. Would the churches of Asia be able to face the problems of the future? Would they fall into sin or would they stand strong? The answers to these questions and many more were in the scroll, but no one could open the scroll. John would not know if there was hope for the future. So he wept.

2. The Discovery (Revelation 5:5-7)

VERSE 5.

⁵ *But one of the elders said to me, “Do not cry! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, David’s descendant, has won the victory so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”*

Immediately, one of the twenty-four **elders** spoke to John and told him not to cry. There was someone who could open the scroll. Who was that person? The one who can open the scroll is a lion from the tribe of Judah, David’s descendant, who has won the victory. The lion may refer to Genesis 49:9-10 where Judah is called a young lion. Judah was one of the twelve tribes of Israel. David’s descendant was a person who came from King David’s family. All of these words point to Jesus who was from the family of David and the tribe of Judah. All Bible teachers agree that the victory refers to the resurrection. So we understand that the one who can open the scroll is Jesus.

VERSES 6-7.

⁶ *Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne and in the middle of the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb looked as if he had been killed. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God that were sent into all the world.*

⁷ *The Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne.*

A lamb suddenly stood in the middle of the **throne**.

Immediately we can see that the lamb is the lion. This lamb has been killed, but he is clearly alive in this scene. These words can

only be speaking about Jesus. Jesus was like a lamb that was sacrificed. He was killed on the cross, sacrificed for our sin. Now this lamb, Jesus, takes the scroll from God. Jesus can open the scroll and reveal what is in it because Jesus is the one, who by His death and resurrection, made the way for people to come back to God.

Who was the lamb?

Why was the lamb able to take the scroll from God?

3. The Honoring (Revelation 5:8-14)

VERSES 8-10.

⁸*When He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders bowed down before the Lamb. Each one of them had a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's holy people.*

⁹*And they all sang a new song to the Lamb: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were killed, and with the blood of your death you bought people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation.*

¹⁰*You made them to be a kingdom of priests for our God, and they will rule on the earth."*

When the lamb took the **scroll** from God, the twenty-four **elders** bowed before the Lamb (Jesus) and they began to sing. Their song was full of joy because Jesus is worthy to open the scroll and **reveal** what is inside it. The song of the elders also describes why Jesus, the Lamb, is worthy. He is worthy because He was killed as a sacrifice thus saving people from all of the world.

VERSES 11-12.

¹¹ *Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels around the throne, and the four living creatures, and the elders. There were thousands and thousands of angels,*

¹² *Saying in a loud voice: “The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, and strength, honor, glory, and praise!”*

Immediately the other living **beings** in heaven started to celebrate also. They joined with the elders speaking loud praise to Jesus, the sacrificed Lamb. Some angels near the **throne** started speaking. Then the four living creatures that we saw in chapter 4 joined. The twenty-four elders were next. Finally, thousands and thousands of angels joined in speaking loudly. They all announced that because Jesus was killed (on the cross), He is worthy for everything including being worthy to open the scroll.

VERSES 13-14.

¹³ *Then I heard all creatures in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea saying: “To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever.”*

¹⁴ *The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders bowed down and worshiped.*

Finally, the creatures from everywhere join in the praise. The creatures of heaven, earth, under the earth, and in the sea join in the words of praise. All of creation knows it must speak praise to God, the One who sits on the throne, and to Jesus, the Lamb.

How did heaven and earth react to Jesus?

IN MY CONTEXT

The verses in today's lesson are an amazing picture of heaven. Perhaps this scene has filled you with **awe**. Notice how everyone reacted to Jesus, the Lamb. The only being in heaven who does not bow in worship before Jesus, the Lamb, is God the Father. All of heaven and every living creature on earth gives honor and praise to Jesus.

The death and resurrection of Jesus made Him worthy of the praise and worship of everything God has ever created. This includes you. If all of heaven and earth think of Jesus this way, you can see why it is right for you to think about Him this way too. In all of these verses, praise was given to Jesus because of His death.

All of God's creation knows the value of His death. He died to buy out of sin people who would trust Him. He died to make a new kingdom of priests to serve Him. Surely, if His death made Jesus worthy of the praise of heaven and earth, His death made Jesus worthy of owning your life. You are right and wise when you give your life to Jesus. He alone is worthy to own and lead you.

Why do you think Jesus is called the Lamb who was killed?

Can anyone other than Jesus save people from sin? Why do you think this way?

What is the location of these verses?

If Jesus opens the scroll what will we learn?

Why do you think the scroll was sealed up?

Why was Jesus worthy to take the scroll and open it?

How did it make you feel when all of heaven and earth worshiped Jesus?

John cried when he could not know God's message. Do you care that much to know God's message for your life?

Only Jesus is the Savior. Is He your Savior?

Who was the Lion of Judah?

How do you know?

MEMORY VERSES

*"There were thousands and thousands of angels, saying in a loud voice:
'The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom,
and strength, honor, glory, and praise!'" —Revelation 5:11b-12*



JESUS SAVES

Session 11

REDEEMING JUDGMENT

REVELATION 9:1-12

Jesus Christ will judge the world totally right and He will save the faithful by grace.

FIRST THOUGHTS

In Revelation 9, we learn about judgment and grace. Judgment is pictured in the release of locusts that stung people. The language is strange but the idea is easy. When people turn from God, severe judgment will come. The idea of grace is found in verse 4. When God's judgment fell on earth, the people of God were spared from that judgment. They experienced God's great grace.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In Revelation 8:13, an eagle's cry predicted three terrible troubles (**woes**) that would hit the people of earth. Revelation 9:1-12 is the first of those troubles. We are beginning to see God's judgment against the evil that was done to His people.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Locusts Unleashed (Revelation 9:1-3)

VERSE 1.

¹ *Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fall from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the deep hole that leads to the bottomless pit.*

These verses are difficult to understand. We have many questions. Who is the star? Where is the bottomless pit? What are the locusts? What does all this mean? We need to look for the meaning that John might have gotten from these words and symbols.

BIBLE SKILL: *Apocalyptic Writing*

The Book of Revelation is a special kind of writing called **apocalyptic** writing. This is a strange way to write for people today. When John lived, there were many books written in this way. Parts of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament are apocalyptic.

The word "apocalyptic" is a Greek word that means "to reveal or to show." Many of the words and symbols used in the Book of Revelation also show up in other apocalyptic books. For example in Daniel 7:1-14, you will find beasts and heads, horns and dragons, and many other things found in the Book of Revelation.

The star seems to be an angel who has fallen. He is an evil angel but not Satan. The key seems to have come from God. God is in charge of all that comes on the earth and its people. The scene is terrible, but God is always in control over what happens.

VERSE 2.

²*Then it opened up the hole that leads to the bottomless pit, and smoke came up from the hole like smoke from a big furnace. Then the sun and sky became dark because of the smoke from the hole.*

The angel opened the bottomless pit. This pit does not seem to be the same place as hell.

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Bottomless Pit*

The idea of the pit is a place where trash and garbage was thrown and burned. In the Book of Revelation, it is the place where evil things were kept. The evil stored in the pit poured out like smoke. The bottomless pit is named three other times in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 11:7. When the two witnesses have finished telling their message, the beast comes up from the bottomless pit to defeat and kill them.

Revelation 17:8. The beast will come up out of the bottomless pit and go away to be destroyed. There are people who live on earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life since the beginning of the world. They will be amazed when they see the beast, because he was once alive, is not alive now, but will come again.

Revelation 20:1-3. The angel grabbed the dragon, that old snake who is the devil and Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years. Then he threw him into the bottomless pit, closed it, and locked it over him. The angel did this so he could not trick the people of the earth anymore until the thousand years were ended. After a thousand years he must be set free for a short time.

VERSE 3.

³*Then locusts came down to the earth out of the smoke, and they were given the power to sting like scorpions.*

In that part of the world, large swarms of locusts (a kind of grasshopper) cause terrible destruction. The locusts in the Book of Revelation are even worse. They can sting like a **scorpion**. Since it was God who let the pit be opened, we know it is God's judgment on the earth.

Do you think God is in control even when terrible things happen?

2. Believers Protected (Revelation 9:4)

VERSE 4.

⁴*They were told not to harm the grass on the earth or any plant or tree. They could harm only the people who did not have the sign of God on their foreheads.*

God put limits on what the locusts could hurt. Normal locusts eat anything green. They can destroy a whole crop of grain or corn in a few hours. But these locusts could not hurt grass or trees or any plant. They were sent to harm people. However, the locusts could do no harm to people with the seal of God on their foreheads. The verse does not tell us what this seal looked like. The seal was from God (Revelation 7:3), and its purpose was to protect God's people. Even though terrible evil was loosed on the world, God's people were protected.

Christians were being persecuted by the Roman government. The future on earth for Christians looked bad. But God's **revelation** showed that the future for Christians was not bad. In fact, when God's judgment comes on the sin of **humankind**, God's people will have God's protection.

What was the purpose of the seal?

3. Death Wanted (Revelation 9:5-6)

VERSE 5.

⁵*These locusts were not given the power to kill anyone, but to cause pain to the people for five months. And the pain they felt was like the pain a scorpion gives when it stings someone.*

Locusts were a **symbol** of God's judgment. See Joel 1:1–2:25 for an example of locusts as a symbol of God's judgment. It seems best to interpret this section not as real insects attacking people but as a symbol of God's spiritual judgment.

The judgment of God against unbelievers was so heavy that it was like the sting of a **scorpion**. God's conviction can certainly feel sharp like this.

VERSE 6.

⁶*During those days people will look for a way to die, but they will not find it. They will want to die, but death will run away from them.*

Here is the great sadness of these verses. The people who felt God's judgment wanted to die because of the severity of the judgment. They would rather die than repent from their sin. However, death would not come. The only thing that limited the judgment was God's command that it continue for only five months.

Why do you think people would rather die than repent?

4. Judgment Given (Revelation 9:7-12)

VERSES 7-10.

⁷*The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore what looked like crowns of gold, and their faces looked like human faces.*

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⁸ *Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.*

⁹ *Their chests looked like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horses and chariots hurrying into battle.*

¹⁰ *The locusts had tails with stingers like scorpions, and in their tails was their power to hurt people for five months.*

John wrote more about the locusts. He described them with words of war and destruction. The locusts looked like horses ready for war. They had crowns, and human faces, women's hair, teeth like a lion, and a chest like a breastplate. These items are the locusts' tools for war. They are hurrying into battle with a weapon like a scorpion's tail.

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *The locusts had a king who was the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in the Hebrew language is Abaddon and in the Greek language is Apollyon.*

It is important for these locusts to have a leader. We do not know anything about the leader except his name in Hebrew and Greek. Both words, *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, mean "destroyer." The leader of the locust army is the destroyer. Perhaps this is Satan. The locust army was not a mindless group of insects. Instead it was the stored up evil of history released on the **world** to bring judgment against those who do not belong to God.

VERSE 12.

¹² *The first trouble is past; there are still two other troubles that will come.*

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In the Book of Revelation, the evil from the bottomless pit brought God's judgment against unbelievers. And this is a promise of more judgment in the future.

Do you ever feel God's conviction in your life like a scorpion's sting?

YES NO

IN MY CONTEXT

Many people read the Book of Revelation and then want to know what will happen in the future. They want to know details about the return of Christ and the **tribulation**. Bible teachers have many different ideas about how these things will happen. In today's lesson we do not learn when things will happen. However, we do learn how sure God's judgment is. God's judgment against sin and evil is sure and it is hard. In John's time, evil people persecuted God's church. Things did not look good for God's people. John's vision promised that God was in control, and He would send judgment on those who persecuted His people. It is very important for us to understand God's sure punishment against sin. The only way to escape His judgment is through Christ.

Do you want to escape God's judgment against sin? The way to do that is to take His seal on your life. We are using John's language here. It means you need to trust in Christ to be your Savior. When you do this, God seals you as one of His own children. The mark of God's seal on your life is God's Holy Spirit within you.

Why would we think God is in control over all these matters?

What does John mean by a seal on the forehead?

How can you experience God's grace and not His punishment?

MEMORY VERSE

“They were shouting in a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” —Revelation 7:10



Session 12

JESUS DEFEATS SATAN

REVELATION 12:1-17

Jesus Christ is the Lord of heaven and earth. He will make all things new.

FIRST THOUGHTS

In chapter 12, we will meet a queenly woman, a red dragon, a new-born baby, and a river swallowing the earth. Wow! We will see that Jesus and the dragon have a great spiritual battle. Jesus wins. That is the main idea of this chapter.

After all the symbols are described, the bottom line is this: Jesus wins! What great joy that must give to all Christians.

When we face the problems and sins of the **world**, Jesus wins.
When we face cultures that have fallen into sin, Jesus wins.
When we come to the end of life and face death, Jesus wins.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The last trumpet, the seventh, sounded in Revelation 11:15. This trumpet announced the beginning of the end. Christians had suffered under the kingdom of Rome. The seventh trumpet announced the Kingdom of Christ. This does not mean all trouble was finished. There will still be great battles between God and evil. However, we can see victory starting to come. Chapter 12 will show us Satan himself. Jesus and Satan fight. Jesus wins.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Satan Defeated (Revelation 12:1-9)

VERSES 1-6.

¹ *And then a great wonder appeared in heaven: A woman was clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars was on her head.*

² *She was pregnant and cried out with pain, because she was about to give birth.*

³ *Then another wonder appeared in heaven: There was a giant red dragon with seven heads and seven crowns on each head. He also had ten horns.*

⁴ *His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. He stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth so he could eat her baby as soon as it was born.*

⁵ *Then the woman gave birth to a son who will rule all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was taken up to God and to His throne.*

⁶ *The woman ran away into the desert to a place God prepared for her where she would be taken care of for one thousand two hundred sixty days.*

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We need to understand who the characters are, and then we need to understand what they did. When we know who the baby is, the other characters are easier. The one who rules with a rod of iron is Jesus. This is most clear from Revelation 19:15. The baby, then, is Jesus Christ.

The woman is not Mary. It is best to interpret the woman to be the church, or perhaps all the people of God including the Jewish people through whom the Messiah came and the Christian people who proclaim the living Christ.

Verse 9 tells us the dragon is Satan.

Jesus, the Messiah, came into the world through the Jewish people. That is the **symbol** of the woman giving birth. Satan was eager to kill Jesus, symbolized as the dragon ready to eat the baby. But God rescued the child. God brought Jesus out of the grave, and He is now at the right hand of God in heaven. By taking the church to a desert place, she has safety for a period of time.

You can see how all of this gave Christians great hope that God will save them.

VERSES 7-9.

⁷Then there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

⁸But the dragon was not strong enough, and he and his angels lost their place in heaven.

⁹The giant dragon was thrown down out of heaven. (He is that old snake called the devil or Satan, who tricks the whole world.) The dragon with his angels was thrown down to the earth.

John described a great war in heaven. This does not seem to have happened in the **throne** room of God. It happened some other place but not on earth. Michael, the archangel, led God's army to fight Satan and his army. The battle ended quickly. Satan lost. He and his army were thrown from heaven so they came to earth. Satan took his battle against God from heaven to earth.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Satan in the Bible*

Who is Satan, and what does he do? Satan is mentioned about fifty times in the Bible. The Book of Job mentions Satan more than any other Bible book. The Book of Revelation is second. Satan is the enemy of God and of people who believe in God. The other name of Satan is the devil. In the Book of Revelation, the snake mentioned in Genesis 3:1-6 is also identified as Satan. We do not know much of his history. He seems to be an angel who rebelled against God, and now he leads an army of evil beings who war against God and His people.

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about Satan.

2. The Lamb Praised (Revelation 12:10-12)

VERSE 10.

¹⁰ *Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: “The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have now come. The accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accused them day and night before our God, has been thrown down.*

Heaven rejoiced because of what Christ did and because Christians were faithful even to death during **persecution**. The loud voice speaking in these verses was excited because Satan was thrown down.

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *“And our brothers and sisters defeated him by the blood of the Lamb’s death and by the message they preached. They did not love their lives so much that they were afraid of death.*

Great joy came from the defeat of Satan by the death of Jesus (the blood of the Lamb) and by the message of salvation preached by Christians.

BIBLE SKILL: *Martyrs*

The first **martyr** (a person who was killed because of his faith) was Stephen. Read about him in Acts 6:8–7:60.

The Book of Hebrews tells of many who were persecuted and killed because of their faith. Read about them in Hebrews 11:36–38.

VERSE 12.

¹² *“So rejoice, you heavens and all who live there! But it will be terrible for the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you! He is filled with anger, because he knows he does not have much time.”*

All who were in heaven knew that the death and resurrection of Jesus meant the defeat of sin, Satan, and death. However, the future for earth and the people on earth was going to be terribly difficult. Yes, Jesus had won, but Satan did not give up. Satan would do all he could to bring pain and suffering to earth.

Would you be faithful to Jesus even to death? _____

3. The Dragon Continues (Revelation 12:13–17)

VERSES 13–14.

¹³ *When the dragon saw he had been thrown down to the earth, he hunted for the woman who had given birth to the son.*

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¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle so she could fly to the place prepared for her in the desert. There she would be taken care of for three and one-half years, away from the snake.

The dragon, who is Satan, did not give up even though he lost in heaven. He renewed the battle on earth. For a short time, the church was protected and hidden from Satan.

VERSES 15-16.

¹⁵ Then the snake poured water out of its mouth like a river toward the woman so the flood would carry her away.

¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that came from the mouth of the dragon.

Satan again tried to destroy the people of God. The weapon Satan used to attack the church was a river of water that flooded out of Satan's mouth. But then the earth opened up like a huge mouth and captured the river of water. Surely the people of God could feel good because even the earth was helping protect God's people.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ Then the dragon was very angry at the woman, and he went off to make war against all her other children—those who obey God's commands and who have the message Jesus taught.

But Satan did not give up. He could not destroy God's church, so Satan set out to attack the people who obeyed the commands of God and the ones who told Jesus' story of salvation.

Why didn't Satan give up his fight against God's people?

IN MY CONTEXT

In John's time, the message of the Book of Revelation was encouraging. Christians who were the first to read John's book went through terrible **persecution** against the church at the end of the **first century**. When they learned that Jesus had already won and soon the victory would be clear to everyone, they must have felt great encouragement.

How does this message apply to us today? In our country, most Christians are not persecuted heavily because of their faith. But many Christians in the world today face death if they stand faithful to Christ. Someday Christians in America may face such persecution. But life can be hard for Christians in America today. We can face persecution at work if we are faithful to Christ. We can be **discriminated** against at school or in our families. Bible teachers often stress to us that we face **spiritual warfare** all the time. The **world**, the flesh, and the devil continue to war against believers.

What can give us encouragement? This can—Jesus our Lord died for our sin and was raised to life. He defeated sin and Satan. Jesus won! Be encouraged.

What are the big ideas of chapter 12?

In what way has Jesus won in your life?

What happens when trumpets number 6 and 7 are blown?

Why does Satan fight so against God and against His people?

Who do you think the woman represents?

If you faced persecution because you followed Christ, would these verses encourage you?

Read verse 11. Would you say faith is more important than life for you?

Are you willing to tell the story of Christ even if you are persecuted?

MEMORY VERSE

“And our brothers and sisters defeated him by the blood of the Lamb’s death and by the message they preached. They did not love their lives so much that they were afraid of death.” —Revelation 12:11



Session 13

THE FINAL ACT

REVELATION 21:1-7

God began all things at creation. God will end all things as well.
God invites us to join Him.

FIRST THOUGHTS

No matter how powerful the evil of Satan has been on the earth, the victory of Christ is complete. God will finally act to make all things new. It is not enough to know evil is stopped. God, who started all things by creation, will end all things by a new act of creation. Revelation 21 shows God making a new heaven and a new earth. This new and perfect world is being prepared for all people who trust in Jesus by faith.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

At the end of chapter 20, Satan is locked away and all the people of the world are judged. That brings us to chapter 21 when God makes everything the way He wants it to be. You need to read Revelation 13-20 to see all the events between last week's study and this lesson.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. God's New Creation (Revelation 21:1-2)

VERSE 1.

¹*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and there was no sea anymore.*

Bible teachers have many different ideas about the symbols John used in the Book of Revelation. Bible teachers also have many different ideas about when the events described in the Book of Revelation will happen. Most Bible teachers agree that by the time we get to chapter 21, the verses are clearly talking about the end of time. It was future for John and it is still future for us.

BIBLE SKILL: *Bible History*

It may be best to understand chapter 21 by thinking about what has happened in Bible history. In the beginning, God made all things right. In Genesis 1:27-30 Adam and Eve lived in the perfect world that God created. But the story of humans is a story that goes deeper and deeper into sin. Yet, God always called a people to Himself. He called the Hebrew people to be His own (Genesis 12:1-3). In the New Testament, He called believers to be His own people.

BIBLE SKILL: *Bible History*

Those believers are the church (Acts 2:47). During John's time, the church was under terrible **persecution** by Domitian, the King in Rome. Thousands of Christians were killed because of their faith. Christian people needed the message of the Book of Revelation to see what God would do in the future. The events of the past had led to a terrible time for John's readers. What would God do in the future?

Chapter 21 takes place after the return of Christ when God makes all things new. Earth took the path of sin, and heaven had the rebellion of Satan. But in Revelation 21:1, John saw a new heaven and a new earth. Everything touched by sin and rebellion (the old heaven and the old earth) was gone. The sea that represented separation from God was also gone.

VERSE 2.

²And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband.

This verse has the language of a wedding. There is a bride and a husband. That is the language used in the New Testament to describe Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). God's people are perfect and beautiful like a bride. The church that John knew on earth faced terrible times. In the future, the church will only know the joy of being with her Savior, Jesus Christ.

BIBLE SKILL: *Heaven in the Bible*

The Bible uses the word "heaven" in three ways. Here are some examples. Use a Bible dictionary to find other verses.

1. The sky where the birds fly (Matthew 3:16).
2. What we call space, where the stars are (Isaiah 40:26).

3. The place where God lives (Revelation 4:1).

The Bible does not tell us where heaven is, just as it does not tell us where hell is. The Bible, however, is very clear that heaven is a real place. The best thing about heaven is that believers will spend eternity in God's presence in heaven. Heaven is so strongly identified with God that the words "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" mean the same thing. Heaven is a great place, and the Book of Revelation tells us more about heaven than any other book in the Bible.

Are you a part of God's church? YES NO

How did you become part of His church?

2. God's Presence Celebrated (Revelation 21:3-4)

VERSE 3.

³*And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Now God's presence is with people, and He will live with them, and they will be His people. God himself will be with them and will be their God."*

Verses 1 and 2 are like a wedding. Verses 3 and 4 are like the celebration that comes after a wedding. After the wedding the newlyweds start life together. After God makes all things new and the separation that has been between God and people is removed, God and His people will live together. Verse 3 says, "God Himself will be with them." That must be the greatest joy that comes for believers. In the end, we will be fully in the **presence** of God. We will know His full presence and love. That is what we believers want most.

VERSE 4.

⁴ *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain, because all the old ways are gone.”*

This verse describes one of the other great joys of heaven. When God makes all things new, there will no longer be the painful things of this life. Instead, there will only be the great joy of eternal life. John described this joy by showing how the hurtful things are removed. God wipes away our tears. He stops death. He ends sadness. He puts an end to crying. He removes pain. When the readers of John thought about their difficult lives, these words truly brought great joy. When you think about the hardship of your life, knowing these truths will bring you great joy, too.

What painful things do you want God to remove from your life?

Do you believe God can do that?

3. The Promise Fulfilled (Revelation 21:5-7)

VERSE 5.

⁵ *The One who was sitting on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted.”*

The terrible times experienced by John’s readers and our own terrible times will be finished when we get to the point in time described by these verses. We have the Word of God, the one on the **throne**, as proof that this is true. God will make everything new, and there will be no more of the evil things of the past.

Can God do this? Does God have the right or the power to put an end to the things of earth and the evil in the **world**? Yes, because He began it all and He can end it all. That is the meaning in the words **Alpha and Omega**. Those two words are the names for the first letter and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. They are like A and Z for us. God is the beginning and the end, so He alone can put an end to time as we know it.

VERSE 6.

⁶*The One on the throne said to me, “It is finished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to anyone who is thirsty.”*

Should we be afraid of the fact that God can and will put an end to time? No, we should not. Why? Because God has promised eternal life to all who want it. The end of time does not mean the end of life for believers. The readers of the Book of Revelation were thirsty for God’s eternal life just as many of us are today. We can find great peace in God’s statement, “I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to anyone who is thirsty.” This is God’s gift of eternal life. It is given to all who will come and take it (Revelation 22:17).

VERSE 7.

⁷*“Those who win the victory will receive this, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.”*

To all those who do, God gives the right to be His very own children. This is the eternal promise of a right **relationship** with God.

Who can have the eternal relationship with God promised to those who are thirsty?

IN MY CONTEXT

When you look around at the world today, do you desire to have everything new? Sometimes it seems that everything today is wrong. There is war in so many places. There are terrible diseases in many countries. Poverty and hunger happen in many nations. It is hard to find positive news. Oh, that God would change all this. The promise of the Bible is that He will. We do not know when this will happen, but we know it will.

Do you want to be there when God makes all things new? Do you hunger and thirst for God's new creation? The lesson today promises us that we can be there when God takes away the hurt and tears of this life. But the only way we can be there is if we drink from God's free water of eternal life. No, we do not drink some kind of earthly water. This is another **symbol** John uses to describe trusting in Jesus.

The message you have seen many times before is the message here. Trust in Christ Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, and these promises of the new heaven and new earth and living in God's **presence** is yours today.

Who is responsible for the beginning of all things and the end of all things?

How can people enter God's new heaven and earth?

What is happening when the seven angels empty their bowls of wrath?

What do you think is meant by the 1,000 years mentioned in chapter 20?

When do you think God will bring His new heaven and new earth?

Can anyone know when this will happen?

Does it bring joy for you to think God will wipe away your tears?

How can Jerusalem be dressed like a bride? What does this mean?

What does it mean to be thirsty for the water of life?

Do you have God as your God? Would you like Him to be your God?

MEMORY VERSE

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Now God’s presence is with people, and he will live with them, and they will be his people.

God himself will be with them and will be their God.’”

—Revelation 21:3

ETERNAL LIFE IN

VERSE

SCRIPTURE

John 3:15

“... everyone who believes in Him will have *eternal life*.”

John 5:24

“I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has *eternal life* and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.”

John 10:28

“I give them *eternal life*, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand.”

John 17:3

“This is *eternal life*: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.”



JOHN'S WRITINGS

VERSE

SCRIPTURE

1 John 2:25

“And this is the promise that He Himself made to us:
eternal life.”

1 John 5:11

“And this is the testimony: God has given us *eternal life*, and this life is in His Son.”

1 John 5:20

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true One. We are in the true One—that is, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and *eternal life.*”



WORD LIST

Alpha and Omega—The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Using the two words together suggests the beginning of all things and the end of all things.

Apocalyptic—A kind of writing using symbols and picture words.

Apostle—One of the original twelve disciples.

Atone—To pay for sins.

Awe—Reverence, honor.

Beings—Living creatures made by God who are not a human and not an animal. A living creature is something else, like an angel.

Book of Life—A book with the names of all people who believe in Christ.

Caesar—Latin word for king.

Challenge—To call to join in a competition or contest.

Claim, Claims—A statement or story that a person tells.

Confess—To admit something is true.

Confident—To feel very sure about something.

Confirm, Confirms—To show or prove something is true.

Cult—A group that teaches that Jesus is not the Son of God and / or that Jesus was not truly a man or truly God.

Darkness—In the Bible this is often a picture word for sin or separation from God.

Day of Pentecost—The Jewish festival fifty days after Passover. The day the Holy Spirit came on believers.

Demon possession—When an evil spirit from Satan lives within someone.

Deny—Refuse to admit something true.

Discriminate—When someone shows a prejudice against another person. Sometimes Deaf people feel discriminated against by hearing people.

Docetism—A false doctrine that taught Jesus was not a real person. He only seemed to be human.

Domitian—Caesar (king) of Rome at the time John wrote the Book of Revelation.

Elders—The twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation means all of God's people.

False prophet—Someone who teaches false ideas.

Fellowship—People enjoying other people. Christians enjoying God.

First century—The first one hundred years after Jesus was born, to the year A.D. 100.

Gnosticism, Gnostics—A false teaching that if people had some special knowledge they would be saved.

Humankind—The people of the world.

Inspired—Given by God. The Bible is inspired by God.

Last days—The end of time when Jesus will return to the earth.

Logic—Thinking about something by a set of rules to find a right answer.

Majesty—The overwhelming greatness of God.

Martyr—A person who is killed because of his faith

Marvel—Something amazing or awesome.

Mysterious—Something that is unusual and hard to understand, like God's ways are mysterious.

Patmos—The island where John was held prisoner.

Permanent—To continue without an end.

Persecution—When a person is treated badly, hurt or killed by others.

Presence—In the presence of God means being with God.

Propitiation—To satisfy God's anger against sin.

Relationship—How two people, or how Christians and God, get along together.

Rescue—To save from danger.

Reveal, Revelation—To show.

Science fiction movie—A movie that deals with subjects that are not true but seem real. Usually they are set in the future in an advanced scientific time.

Scorpion—A large stinging insect.

Scroll—A roll of parchment (a kind of paper) with writing, used before books were invented.

Second coming—The return of Jesus Christ at the end of the world.

Second death—Eternal separation from God.

Similarity—To be much the same.

Source—Where something comes from.

Spiritual warfare—The unseen spiritual battle that goes on all the time on earth.

Struggle—To wrestle with someone or with a problem.

Suggestion—To give someone a mild idea or thought.

┌
Summarize—To say again the same thought but in a short way.

Symbol—When a word or picture represents something else like light is a symbol for goodness.

Temporary—Continuing for only a short time.

Testify—To tell what you know about something, to give proof.

Throne—Large chair where a king sits.

Tribulation—A time of trouble, persecution.

Trinity—The doctrine that we know God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

Woes—Terrible troubles.

World—John used this word to mean the things in this life that rebel against God.

Worthiness—The value in something.



LEADER GUIDE

1,2,3 John; Revelation

Session 1

THE TRUTH PRESENTED

We can have true fellowship with God the Father and His people but we must first have a right relationship with His Son, Jesus.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Lecture, with opportunities for discussion. Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Wonderful Words of Life” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #489).

Introduce the quarter. Ask someone to be prepared to present the introduction to 1 John from the pupil material, in ASL, not signing in English.

Encourage class members to read all of 1, 2, and 3 John so they can better understand the significance of the lessons selected for each week’s study.

Dig Deeper: Who Is John?

From the Bible and historical documents, we believe these are the facts about John: The author of the three letters, the Gospel of John, and the Book of Revelation was John, the brother of James. John, James, Peter, and Andrew were partners in a fishing business prior to their calls by Jesus to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20).

John was a leader in the early churches. He became pastor of the church in Ephesus and had a special relationship with other churches in the area.

John was the last of the apostles to die. All of the other apostles met a violent death, but John died peacefully in Ephesus at an older age, about A.D. 100.

The Roman emperor, Domitian, exiled John to an island called Patmos. While there, he wrote the Book of Revelation. When he was released from exile, he returned to Ephesus until his death.

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 1:1-4)

1. Witnessed by Many (1 John 1:1)

What did John mean when he called Jesus *The Word*? (See the Bible Skill comment in the pupil material.) Ask someone to sign the first verse in the Gospel of John. Encourage discussion.

2. Revealed as Life (1 John 1:2)

Use the discussion of new life in the Key Doctrine comments in the pupil material to present the plan of salvation if you have lost people in your class.

Scripture Search: Fellowship

The word “fellowship” is used four times in 1 John, three times in today’s lesson (1:3, 1:6, 1:7). The fourth time is in the lesson for June 21, from 1 John 2:19.

“These enemies of Christ were in our fellowship, but they left us.”

Ask class members to find the following verses in their Bibles and someone volunteer to sign the verse for the class.

1 Corinthians 1:9

2 Corinthians 13:14

3. Provided True Fellowship (1 John 1:3-4)

Call attention to the first question at the end of this section in the pupil material. Encourage discussion.

How do you feel about the fellowship in our church, among the Deaf class members, and with the hearing members of the church? (Encourage discussion and possible solutions if a problem is identified.)

Ask class members if they answered the questions at the end of the lesson (In My Context). Encourage them to do this each week. Review their answers with the class.

Encourage class members to read all of 1, 2, and 3 John this week.

Session 2

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

People will know that you have fellowship with God when they see your life is holy, you confess when you sin, you trust Jesus, and you are obedient to God.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Class members as teachers. Ask three people to study the pupil and leader guide material and lead the class discussion.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Heavenly Sunlight” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #144).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 1:5–2:6)

1. Demonstrate Holiness (1 John 1:5-7)

What is *holiness*? What does it mean to be holy?

Encourage discussion of words used in the Bible to describe holiness: walking in the light, fellowship with God, etc.

Dig Deeper: Holiness and Light (1 John 1:5)

The Bible often uses the picture word “light” for the idea of holiness. When we walk in the light, we are living a life of holiness.

Ephesians 5:8–9. “In the past you were full of darkness, but now you are full of light in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth.”

1 Peter 1:14–15. “Now that you are obedient children of God do not live as you did in the past. You did not understand, so you did the evil things you wanted. But be holy in all you do, just as God, the One who called you, is holy.”

2. Confess Sin (1 John 1:8–2:2)

Encourage discussion of confessing sin before a person is saved and after salvation. When we become saved and our sins are forgiven, it is called *justification*. When we confess sin and God forgives us after we are saved it is called *sanctification*. God's forgiveness is not a license to sin.

Review the questions at the end of this first section in the pupil material. Encourage discussion. When does confession need to be public? Why? (In most cases, when others know of the sin.)

3. Seek to Obey (1 John 2:3-6)

Encourage discussion of how obedience demonstrates our holiness. A holy person is not perfect but seeks to be obedient to God. Our actions (holy living and obedience) confirm our salvation, not secure it.

In verse 4, John used the word *liar*. He could have used the word *hypocrite*.

Scripture Search: Hypocrite (1 John 2:4)

John described a hypocrite with the word "liar." Jesus often criticized the Jewish religious leaders for their hypocrisy.

Ask class members to sign these verses:

Matthew 6:2. "When you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites. They blow trumpets in the synagogues and on the streets so that people will see them and honor them." (See also Matthew 6:5 and 6:16.)

Titus 1:15-16. "To those who are pure, all things are pure, but to those who are full of sin and do not believe, nothing is pure. Both their minds and their consciences have been ruined. They say they know God, but their actions show they do not accept Him. They are hateful people, they refuse to obey, and they are useless for doing anything good."

Use the questions at the end of the pupil material for review.

Session 3

DANGERS TO AVOID

Believers will be tempted by the things of this world and by false teachers. We can stay faithful to the truth of the gospel by the power of God's Spirit.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Group Study. Divide the class into three groups. Ask them to study one section together and then report to the class what they have learned. Encourage discussion following their presentation.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, "Let Others See Jesus in You" (Let's Sign Hymnal #258).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 2:15-27)

1. Lovers of the World (1 John 2:15-17)

Remind the class that this letter discusses love in several different ways. This week, it is about loving the things of this world.

Is it possible to love a person and not love his lifestyle of sin? Encourage discussion about how to show love to someone without approving their sinful actions.

Dig Deeper: The Way of the World (1 John 2:16)

Sin is sometimes described as "worldliness." In spiritual terms the "world" means the sinful nature of people. Worldliness is the opposite of faithfulness to God. Abraham is an example of strong faith. His nephew, Lot, is an example of weak faith. Lot showed some faith, but he made worldly choices (Genesis 13:10-11). He also made the mistake of associating with worldly people (Genesis 13:12-13).

Jesus referred to the kind of life people lived in the time of Lot. He said this is the same way it will be when He comes again (Luke 17:28-32).

2. Enemies of the Gospel (1 John 2:18-23)

John issued a warning against false teachers who were trying to deceive believers about the person and work of Jesus. False teachers expose themselves when they fall away from fellowship with the church.

Whom did John call a liar in last week's lesson (1 John 2:4)?
(A person who claims to know God but does not obey Him.)

Whom does John call a liar in today's lesson (verse 22)?
(A person who says Jesus is not the Christ.)

3. Faithful to the Gospel (1 John 2:24-27)

What must a person do to become saved? (Only believe in Jesus as Savior, nothing else.)

Scripture Search: Cults (False Teachers) (1 John 2:26-27)

Groups that are led by false teachers are called "cults." A cult may have many teachings based on the Bible, but they often change what the Bible says or they add to what the Bible says. The most important way to identify a cult is what they teach about Jesus. If a group does not teach Jesus is God's Son who died and was raised again for our salvation, then you know it is a cult.

Ask class members to find these verses in their Bibles and sign the verses for the class.

Matthew 15:7-9. Jesus warned against false teachers.

1 Timothy 1:6-7. Paul warned Timothy about false teachers.

1 Timothy 6:3-5. False teachers like to argue.

2 Corinthians 11:12-15. False teachers are deceitful.

Ephesians 4:14. False teachers try to fool us.

Review class members' answers to the questions at the end of the pupil material. Encourage discussion.

Session 4

IS THIS OF GOD?

Believers must be ready to test the beliefs and way of life of others to see if they are truly from God.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Lecture, with opportunities for Scripture searching.

Ask _____ to sign the chorus, “Spirit of the Living God” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #385).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 4:1-6)

1. Choose Carefully What to Believe (1 John 4:1)

Review the discussion of false teachers in last week’s lesson. Note this week the emphasis is on the spirit that leads a false teacher or a true teacher.

Do you believe there are evil spirits at work in the world today? Encourage discussion of forces that work against the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Search: Evil Spirits (1 John 4:1)

In New Testament times, illness and disability were often thought to come from evil spirits. Ask someone to sign Mark 1:23-26. The thinking at that time was that sickness and disability were caused by some unknown power and often because of the person’s sin. Ask someone to sign John 9:1-2. When the terms “unclean spirit” and “demon” are used in this way, they seem to refer to illness and mean harmful more than sinful.

There are other uses of the term “evil spirit” that seem to refer more to satanic power than what we would consider normal illness today. “Demon possession” means the person’s personality and behavior are controlled by an evil spirit.

Ask class members to sign these verses:

Matthew 12:43-45

Luke 13:10-13

Matthew 9:32-33

Luke 10:17

Ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to tell the story of healing in Mark 5:1-17.

2. Test the Message (1 John 4:2-3)

John discussed this further in his second letter. Ask someone to sign 2 John 1:7-11.

What “tools” do we have to test what someone teaches so we know if it is true? (The Bible is our only tool. If some teaching is different from the Bible, it is not a true doctrine.).

Dig Deeper: Docetism (1 John 4:2-3)

The word “Docetism” does not appear in the Bible, but in these verses John seems to refer to this false doctrine. Docetism is the idea that because the human body is temporary and the spirit is eternal, Jesus’ earthly body was only an illusion. It only seemed to be real. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Some of the Gnostic teachers included Docetism in their beliefs.

3. Observe the Audience (1 John 4:4-6)

Will a false teacher enjoy being in the fellowship of God’s people in the church? Encourage discussion.

In verses 2-3, we learned that our best tool for knowing if a message is true is to compare it to God’s Word. In these verses, we learn to look at how the teacher feels about the church. A true believer will want to be with God’s people, studying the Bible. If someone does not want to be part of God’s church, then he is probably not a true teacher.

Ask someone to sign 3 John 1:9-10.

Use some of the questions at the end of the pupil material for review and application of this lesson.

Session 5

REAL LOVE

God is love. We can see His love in His character, what He does to save the world, and in the way His people live.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Scripture Search. Ask pupils to have their Bibles ready to look up verses.

Write the three section titles on the board or make a large poster. Help the class see the three pictures of God suggested by the Son, the Holy Spirit, and Christians.

Ask _____ to sign “Amazing Love” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #22).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 4:7-21)

Scripture Search: God’s Love (1 John 4:8)

God’s love made it possible for us to become saved. Ask someone to sign Titus 3:3-5. “In the past we also were foolish. We did not obey, we were wrong, and we were slaves to many things our bodies wanted and enjoyed. We spent our lives doing evil and being jealous. People hated us, and we hated each other. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior was shown, He saved us because of His mercy.”

Ask someone to sign Romans 8:37-39. “But in all these things we are completely victorious through God who showed His love for us. Yes, I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor ruling spirits, nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, nor anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ask someone to sign Jude 1:21. “Keep yourselves in God’s love.”

1. Seen in the Son (1 John 4:7-11)

Throughout His ministry, Jesus said He is the Son of God. He showed God's love through His death on the cross (John 3:16).

Dig Deeper: The Father and the Son (1 John 4:10)

We see God's love through His Son, Jesus.

Ask someone to sign what Jesus said to His enemies (John 10:30), "The Father and I are one." Ask someone to sign what Jesus said to His disciples (John 14: 6-11), "The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father, too. But now you do know Him, and you have seen Him.... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me".

2. Perfected by the Spirit (1 John 4:12-15)

Ask class members to report what they wrote in the Bible Skill discussion in the student material. Use this as a Scripture search experience for them.

Encourage discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit. Some class members may have incorrect understanding of what it means to have the Holy Spirit in them.

3. Defined by the Father (1 John 4:16-18)

Are you afraid of the judgment of God? Encourage discussion of how God's love takes away fear from people who believe on Him.

4. Imitated by His People (1 John 4:19-21)

Review In My Context in the pupil material. Discuss class members' answers to some of the questions.

Session 6

JESUS ALONE

We can only be free from sin and death and have eternal life with God when we trust Jesus Christ as Savior.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Student Teachers. Ask three class members to take one of the sections and lead the discussion, using this Leader Guide and the pupil material.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Jesus is Lord of All” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #230).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 JOHN 5:1-12)

1. Jesus Alone Offers Victory (1 John 5:1-5)

What is the victory in these verses? (Verse 4, victory over the sin of the world through faith.)

Dig Deeper: God’s Commands Are Not Too Difficult (1 John 5:3)

Jewish religious leaders often talked about which commandment is the most important. They identified 613 different commandments in the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament), and 365 of these commandments began with “do not.” Every morning and evening the Jewish people repeated some verses called the “Shema.” This included Numbers 15:41, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.”

It also included Deuteronomy 6:4, “The LORD our God is the only LORD.”

When they asked Jesus which was the most important commandment (Mark 12:28-29), Jesus quoted the verses from Deuteronomy. Then He added the second most important commandment from Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

When our faith leads us to love God and love other people, His commands are made easy and pleasant to us. David wrote, "I will quickly obey your commands, because you have made me happy" (Psalm 119:32).

2. Jesus Alone Is the Son of God (1 John 5:6-10)

This statement is the test of any teaching. Teachers who do not teach Jesus is the only Son of God are false teachers. A cult may call themselves Christians, but they do not teach the truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

Scripture Search: Jesus, the Son of God (1 John 5:11)

Prepare copies of this list of Bible verses and ask class members who said Jesus is the Son of God.

Matthew 4:3,6—Satan (The meaning is because you are the Son of God.); Matthew 8:29—Demons; Matthew 14:33—Disciples; Matthew 16:16—Peter; Matthew 27:54—A soldier; Mark 1:1—Mark; Mark 14:61-62—Jesus, to the high priest; Luke 1:32-35—The angel, to Mary; John 1:34—John the Baptist; John 1:49—Nathanael (a disciple); John 11:27—Martha; John 20:31—John, the disciple; Acts 8:37—The Ethiopian man, to Philip; Acts 9:20—Paul.

3. Jesus Alone Offers Eternal Life (1 John 5:11-12)

Do you think about death often? Are you afraid of death? Encourage discussion of how faith removes this fear.

If you have class members of "advanced age," ask one or two of them to tell how they look at death.

Use selected questions from In My Context to review this lesson.

Ask your class members to read the first few chapters of the Book of Revelation as they prepare for the next six lessons from that book.

Session 7

JESUS' REVELATION

Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega. He is the complete revelation of God to the whole world.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Field Trip and Lecture. Visit the church library to see books related to the Book of Revelation. Or, ask the librarian to bring several books to show to the class.

Ask _____ to sign “Jesus, Name Above All Names” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #237).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 1:1-8)

Briefly review the introduction to the Book of Revelation.

What do you know about the Book of Revelation?

Do you think it has important information for us today?

Encourage discussion to learn how familiar your class members are with this book.

John explains in Revelation 1:9 where he was when he wrote the Book of Revelation. He was on an island named Patmos.

Bible Background: The Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9)

The Isle of Patmos is a small island, less than ten miles in length or width, off the coast of Turkey. When John was there, it was rocky and of little value except for some mines and some activity along the coast. Roman prisoners were sent there and forced to work in the mines. John was sent there as a prisoner because of his Christian faith. There is no indication that John was in a prison or forced to work in the mines.

1. Revealed (Revelation 1:1-3)

The purpose of the Book of Revelation is given in verse 1. It is a revelation of Jesus. It is a revelation from Jesus and about Jesus. How do you feel when you read the Book of Revelation? Does it make you happy or sad? Do you feel anxious or do you have peace as you read it? John said we will be blessed if we read, hear (pay attention to), and obey what is written in this book.

John wrote this book to give peace to the readers (verse 4). Today, when we read the Book of Revelation, we need to look for that peace also.

2. Revered (Revelation 1:4-6)

Review the descriptions of Jesus from the pupil material. Ask class members to sign what they wrote for these six statements.

With the encouragement John gave his readers, he also reminded them of their responsibility to obey. He said believers are a kingdom of priests.

Dig Deeper: Believers as Priests (Revelation 1:6)

The priests were God's representatives as spiritual leaders of Israel. God told Moses to appoint Aaron and his four sons as priests (Exodus 28:1,41). The priests instructed the people in the law of God (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). Only a few copies of the Law were available.

The scribes copied the Law by hand onto parchment. The priests were the teachers and interpreters of the Law. This verse, then, teaches us to study God's Word and teach others His truths.

3. Returning (Revelation 1:7-8)

Encourage discussion of Jesus' return.

What do you understand about Jesus' return (the Second coming of Jesus)? Does it make you afraid? Do you think Jesus may come soon? Are you ready for His return?

Encourage class members to study chapters 2 and 3 before next week.

Session 8

LET THEM HEAR

The people who overcome by faith in Jesus Christ will live with Him forever.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Scripture Search. There are many Bible references in this lesson. Let class members locate and sign them as you teach.

Locate a map or use the map at the end of the quarterly to show the area where the seven churches are located. Identify each one when they appear in the lesson.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Where He Leads Me” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #476).

Encourage class members to read all of chapters 2 and 3 if they have not already done so. This will help them understand these selected verses. As they study, encourage them to look for the word *victory* in each section.

Scripture Search: Victory in Jesus (Revelation 2-3)

In the letters to the churches, Jesus promised victory to those who obey. This victory is described in different ways. Each time it is another way of saying eternal life. Ask all class members to find these verses and someone tell what is promised.

To the church at Ephesus (2:7), “The right to eat the fruit from the tree of life, which is in the garden of God.”

To the church at Smyrna (2:11), “Not be hurt by the second death.”

To the church at Pergamum (2:17), “A white stone with a new name written on it.”

To the church in Thyatira (2:26), "Power over the nations."

To the church at Sardis (3:5), "Not erase their names from the Book of Life."

To the church in Philadelphia (3:12), "Write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, that comes down out of heaven from my God. I will also write on them my new name."

To the church in Laodicea (3:21), "Sit with me on my throne."

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 2:7,11,17,26-29; 3:5,12,21)

1. Promise of Life (Revelation 2:7,11,17; 3:5,12)

Use a map to locate each of the churches. Note that John was on the Isle of Patmos, not far from any of these churches. He had probably visited in each of them or knew believers from these churches while he was in Ephesus.

As you study each church, ask the class: Does this describe our church? Are we obedient to Christ in our church?

2. Promise of Purpose (Revelation 2:26-29; 3:21)

The church in Thyatira was promised the Morning Star.

Dig Deeper: The Morning Star (Revelation 2:28)

In Revelation 22:16, Jesus said He is the Morning Star. In 2:28 and 3:21, Morning star may refer to the idea of ruling with Jesus. Peter spoke of the morning star rising in the heart of believers (2 Peter 1:19). This is the idea of the dawning of truth in the hearts of the people. This same idea is in the reference to Jesus as the light coming into the world (John 1:9, 8:12) and Jesus' statement that believers are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

Encourage class members to read Revelation 3–4 in preparation for next week's lesson about the rest of the seven churches.

Session 9

SEEING THE THRONE

God alone is worthy of the worship of all creation.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Guest Speaker. Ask the pastor or an experienced Bible teacher to talk for about 10-15 minutes about heaven. Give a copy of the pupil material for reference.

Ask _____ to sign “When We All Get to Heaven” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #475).

Begin with the guest speaker on the topic of heaven. Encourage class members to ask questions.

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 4:1-11)

1. God’s Glory (Revelation 4:1-6a)

What do you think heaven looks like? In these verses and throughout the Book of Revelation, John wrote about heaven.

How do we know if something in the Book of Revelation is real or a symbol? Bible teachers disagree on many of these symbols. The purpose of the book is not to paint a picture of heaven but to encourage the believers who were persecuted and to help us today to develop a deeper understanding of God’s plan for us.

2. God’s Holiness (Revelation 4:6b-8)

What does the word *holy* mean? We know God is holy, but the Bible says we should be holy also. How can we be holy if we sin?

These verses give us some picture words to understand more of God’s holiness and His great power.

Dig Deeper: God's Throne (Revelation 4:6)

In New Testament times, every nation was ruled by a king. The throne was a symbol of the king himself. The people understood the concept of the power and authority that went with the throne. Daniel pictured Christ as the eternal King (Daniel 7:14). Isaiah pictured Christ as serving on David's throne forever (Isaiah 9:7). Jeremiah prophesied Christ would come as King (Jeremiah 23:5). Pilate recognized Jesus as King (John 18:37). The Lord God almighty rules forever (Revelation 19:6).

3. God's Power (Revelation 4:9-11)

This description of the throne emphasizes that God is in control, both in heaven and on earth. The events that Christians face are part of God's plan that will lead to the end of their suffering and punishment of their persecutors.

Scripture Search: Give Glory to God (Revelation 4:9)

In verses 1-6 we looked at God's glory in heaven. In verse 9, the living creatures "give glory" to God. How can we give glory to God if He already has glory?

The Greek word translated "glory" means God's divine power and majesty. "Give Glory to God" means to honor Him.

Paul said the way to give glory to God is to live the way Christ wants us to live. Ask someone to sign 1 Corinthians 10:31.

We also glorify God through our worship and praise. Ask someone to sign Psalm 22:23.

We glorify God when we serve Him together. Ask someone to sign Romans 15:6.

Our actions tell of His glory more than our words or signs.

Encourage class members to use a concordance and find more verses that tell of God's glory.

Use the questions from In My Context to summarize.

Session 10

THE WORTHY LAMB

Jesus is the only salvation for the world.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Group Study.

Bring to class a scroll (you can make one with sheets of paper glued together and two wooden dowels) or pictures of scrolls.

Ask someone ahead of time to read about scrolls in a Bible dictionary and give a brief report to the class.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Worthy, You Are Worthy” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #492).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 5:1-14)

1. The Search (Revelation 5:1-4)

Display a scroll or picture of a scroll. Ask for the report on scrolls.

What was so important about the scroll in verse 1? (It emphasized that only Christ is able to know what will be in the future. It showed Christ’s power is equal to the power of the Father.)

Dig Deeper: Scrolls (Revelation 5:1)

A scroll was a roll of papyrus (made from plant fibers) or parchment (made from skin). A scroll was divided into pages, glued together at the edges. The scroll was unrolled so one page was exposed at a time for writing or reading, with the remaining pages rolled up to the left and right. It was unrolled from side to side, and the text was written in lines from the top to the bottom of the page. The Jewish people read Hebrew from right to left.

Some scrolls were simply rolled up pages. Others had wooden rollers on each end. Hand-copying a scroll took about 2,000 hours. That would be almost a year at 40 hours per week.

A reference to the scroll usually meant the Scriptures. Isaiah said, "Look at the LORD's scroll and read what is written there" (Isaiah 34:16). God spoke to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah dictated the words to Baruch who wrote in a scroll. The king burned the scroll, but Jeremiah rewrote it (Jeremiah 36).

2. The Discovery (Revelation 5:5-7)

In nature, what is the difference between a lamb and a lion? (A lion is powerful and a lamb is very weak.) What do these symbols tell us about Jesus? (He came to earth as a Lamb to be killed, but He is truly the all-powerful God.)

3. The Honoring (Revelation 5:8-14)

Encourage discussion of the words used in this section to describe Christ. All together, these verses present Jesus Christ as equal with God the Father, with all the power and majesty of God.

Scripture Search: Christ Is Worthy (Revelation 5:9)

The word "worthy" means qualified, or important. Several verses in the Bible tell about how Christ is worthy. Ask class members to find these verses in their Bible. What do these verses tell us about how Christ is worthy?

2 Samuel 22:4. Worthy of praise.

Psalms 18:3. Worthy of praise.

Hebrews 1:2. Worthy because He is creator.

Colossians 3:17. Worthy of obedience and thanksgiving.

Revelation 4:11. Worthy of glory and honor.

Use the questions from In My Context for review and application.

Encourage class members to read chapters 6-9 before next week.

Session 11

REDEEMING JUDGMENT

Jesus Christ will judge the world totally right and He will save the faithful by grace.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Lecture with many opportunities for Scripture search.

Locate a picture and story about grasshoppers during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Farmers told stories of the grasshoppers eating the wooden handle of a pitchfork.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “Because He Lives” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #45).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 9:1-12)

1. Locusts Unleashed (Revelation 9:1-3)

Have you ever seen the destruction caused by grasshoppers or locusts? Have you read about this from the time of the Great Depression (1930s)? Display pictures that show scenes from that period of time.

Locusts are named in the Bible as good for food, but destructive in their search for food. The word *locust* is often used as a symbol for the enemy.

Scripture Search: Locusts (Revelation 9:3)

Ask class members to locate these verses in their Bible and tell what the verses says about locusts.

1 Kings 8:37-38 (Destroy crops); 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (Destroy crops); Deuteronomy 28:38-42 (Destroy crops); Psalm 105:34-35 (Destroy crops);

Exodus 10:4-6 (Egyptian plague); Isaiah 33:4 (Symbol of enemy); Jeremiah 46:23 (Symbol of enemy); Joel 1:4 (Symbol of enemy); Nahum 3:15-17 (Symbol of enemy); Leviticus 11:21-22 (Food); Mark 1:6 (John the Baptist ate locusts.)

2. Believers Protected (Revelation 9:4)

The idea of the sign on the forehead of believers is not fully clear. It is used here and in Revelation 7:3 to indicate those who have been saved.

When people see you, do they know you are a Christian? Encourage discussion of what we do today to show others we are a Christian.

3. Death Wanted (Revelation 9:5-6)

Have you known someone suffering from cancer who said they prayed for God to take them? It is not uncommon. Some states have passed laws that permit suicide in this kind of situation. Do you think this is a good law or a bad law?

Dig Deeper: Wanting to Die to Escape Judgment (Revelation 9:5)

There are several verses in the Bible that tell of people wanting to die to escape punishment or judgment. Some verses tell about terrible fear (Luke 23:30, Revelation 6:16) or pain (Joel 2:6). Jonah wanted to die because he disobeyed God (Jonah 4:8). Job described his suffering and desire for death (Job 3:20-22). The Gospels report how much control demons had over their victims (Mark 9:20-22, Luke 8:27-29).

The mercy of God, in wanting all people to be saved, leads Him not to allow people to die because death takes the hope of salvation from them. Often, suffering causes people to be more open to their need for salvation.

4. Judgment Given (Revelation 9:7-12)

Refer to the discussion in the pupil material about the judgment. Note the different picture words to describe this punishment.

Encourage class members to study chapters 10-12 before next week.

Session 12

JESUS DEFEATS SATAN

Jesus Christ is the Lord of heaven and earth. He will make all things new.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Lecture, with many opportunities for Scripture search.

Prepare some headlines from the sport pages that show the score—who won, who lost (baseball, auto racing, possibly horse racing).

Ask _____ to sign “Victory in Jesus” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #448).

Ask someone to sign First Thoughts from the pupil material.

Display the sports pages. Major league baseball is in the news often. Who is your favorite baseball team? Are they winning this year?

Note that all of us like to be on the side of the winning team. In today’s lesson we learn a great truth: Jesus Wins!

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 12:1-17)

1. Satan Defeated (Revelation 12:1-9)

Encourage discussion of the picture words used here to discuss the war between Jesus and Satan.

Dig Deeper: Satan’s Names in the Bible (Revelation 12:9)

Satan (the devil) is called by several names in the Bible. Ask class members to find these verses and someone tell what Satan is called:

Revelation 9:11. Abaddon (in Hebrew) or Apollyon (in Greek); 1 Peter 5:8. He is the enemy of Christ and of believers; Luke 11:15. Beelzebub (prince of devils); Isaiah 14:12. King of Babylon; John 8:44. The father of lies; Colossians 1:13. The power of darkness; Ephesians 2:1-2. The ruler of evil powers; Ephesians 6:12. The ruler of darkness; Genesis 3:1. A snake; 2 Corinthians 11:3. A snake; Matthew 4:3. The tempter; John 10:9-10. A thief.

Many images or symbols in the Book of Revelation are difficult for us to understand fully, but the message is clear: Jesus will have victory over Satan!

Scripture Search: Victory in Jesus (Revelation 12:10)

Many verses in the New Testament tell of Jesus' victory, and the victory of those who receive Him as Savior. Ask class members to find these verses and sign them for the class.

1 Corinthians 15:57; Matthew 12:20; John 16:25; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 5:4; Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:26; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 3:12; Revelation 3:21; Revelation 15:2; Revelation 21:7.

2. The Lamb Praised (Revelation 12:10-12)

Are you, as a Christian, an important part of Jesus' victory over Satan? Encourage discussion of verse 11. This verse suggests that Jesus won the victory through those who believe in Him as Savior. The idea is our victory over sin and Satan because of our faith in Jesus as God's Son who died on the cross and then rose again.

Review the information in the pupil material about martyrs. Find some information about recent Christians in other nations who have been killed because of their faith.

3. The Dragon Continues (Revelation 12:13-17)

Review the comments from In My Context in the pupil material.

Encourage class members to study chapters 13-22 before next week's lesson.

Session 13

THE FINAL ACT

God began all things at creation. God will end all things as well. God invites us to join Him.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Lecture. Seek to draw pupils out about what they have learned from this study of the Book of Revelation.

Ask _____ to sign the hymn, “What If It Were Today?” (Let’s Sign Hymnal #468).

EXPLORE THE TEXT (REVELATION 21:1-7)

1. God’s New Creation (Revelation 21:1-2)

This is the final lesson from the Book of Revelation. Do you feel you understand this book better than you did a few weeks ago? What questions do you still have about this book?

This chapter is about the end of time as we now know it. It is the time when Jesus returns—the second coming of Christ.

Bible teachers do not agree about the meaning of many of the symbols, but they do agree that Jesus will return and God will make all things new.

2. God’s Presence Celebrated (Revelation 21:3-4)

Do you ever feel especially close to God? Maybe it is when you are reading His Word or in a worship service. We talk about His presence with us now, but at the end, we will all be in His presence.

Dig Deeper: God's Presence (Revelation 21:3)

Ask class members to find these verses and tell who was in God's presence:

Genesis 1:27-30. Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; Genesis 5:22-24. Enoch; Genesis 6:9. Noah; Genesis 32:30. Jacob; Exodus 3:1-5. Moses.

The pillar of fire in the desert (Exodus 13:21-22) showed God's presence and later His presence filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:35). David sang of the assurance of being in God's presence, "You support me and will let me be with you forever" (Psalm 41:12).

In the New Testament, John said Jesus was God present on earth (John 1:14). Acts 2:1-4 tells of God's presence coming to the early believers.

God promises His presence to those who obey Him. Today, we have God's presence (the Holy Spirit) in us.

3. The Promise Fulfilled (Revelation 21:5-7)

This is the dramatic ending of the Book of Revelation. After all of the struggle with evil on the earth, God will end this earth with His new creation. The symbol for everything good that God can give us is living water.

Scripture Search: Living Water (Revelation 21:6)

Water is a familiar picture of God's power and love in the Bible. Ask class members to find these verses in their Bibles and ask for volunteers to sign the verses for the class.

Isaiah 55:1; Ezekiel 47:1; Zechariah 14:8; John 4:10-14; Revelation 7:17; Revelation 22:1-2,17.

Encourage discussion of how this study of Revelation has helped the class understand this book of prophecy better.

Ask the class to read the first few chapters of Genesis in preparation for next quarter's lessons from that book.

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YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

How do you like this new format? We would like to hear from you and your class members. Send an e-mail to Stephanie Johnson or George Joslin to tell us what you think of it. Our e-mail address is ETBDeaf@lifeway.com. For additional teaching helps visit: www.lifeway.com/ETBDeaf

Churches of the Revelation



1,2,3 John; Revelation

He loved to fish. He, along with his father and brother, made a living doing what they loved. A good living. Then one day Jesus of Nazareth stepped onto the shores of Lake Galilee and into the life of John Ben Zebedee. Jesus called out, "Come! Follow Me!" John leaped from the boat, splashed ashore, and was never the same again. He still fished. But now he cast the gospel net, drawing people to Jesus Christ, where they could find eternal life in Him.

John gave the remainder of his long life to proclaiming the gospel, building up churches in the truth, and writing Holy Scripture. In addition to the Fourth Gospel, he wrote three epistles, or letters, warning believers about false teachers. Then while exiled for the faith on a small, barren island, John wrote Revelation, a vision of Christ's return and complete victory over evil.



Let the Word dwell in you.

and ro-
him that sa-
he had-
and four-
are the Lamb.
harps, and golden
are the prayers of
And they sung a
are worthy to take
the seals thereof
and "last redeemed us
of every kindred, and
nation;
10 And hast made us
priests; and we shall
worthy is the Lamb!
11 And I beheld, and I
angels, "round
beasts and the elders;
was ten thousand
thousands of thousan-
12 Saying with a loud y
that was slain to
sages, and wisdom, and
let and glory; and blessin-
13 And "every creature
ed on the earth, and un-
what are in the sea, and
ward I saying, "Blessing
of the scroll is a, the
the rest of the Apocalyp-
the 21:3-14
14 Believers' prayers are des-
it be the throne of God. The
being able to God. On said
15-16 The new song sung in
is a redemptive work, a
The target group
nated a nation, a
with the same truth are
one group that stand out
from all (Rev. 14:1). The
the phar- kings and pri-
are settled in heaven
the first on the earth is fo-
beasts, sea re-
The scene took
and the
the scene in a court-
the scene
of the scroll (5:11)
and whoever, the s-