

# News From Jesus



# Thirteenth Sabbath Offering Overflow

June 29, 1974—FAR EASTERN DIVISION

Five hundred years ago the wealthy and powerful rulers of Spain and Portugal heard stories of jungle-covered islands set in warm oceans far to the east of India. Rumor said that these islands abounded with the spices so much coveted by wealthy society people of Europe.

When in 1512 Ferdinand Magellan discovered the spice islands, he also planted the seeds of Christianity. There has been a noble harvest. Missionaries of several denominations have worked in this territory. Today we have over a quarter million Seventh-day Adventists in the Far Eastern Division.

All four of the projects to benefit from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering overflow this quarter are located in the islands discovered by Magellan.

1. *Philippine Union College, Naga View Campus, Building Expansion.* With more than 1,700 college students, this college is our largest outside the United States. To ease congestion, the college has had to take over a former academy located in a beautiful mountainside setting not far from the city of Naga. With its ideal surroundings, this extension campus will meet many needs. A fine master plan has been developed which will eventually provide adequate classrooms, dormitories, cafeteria, library, and chapel.

2. *North Sulawesi Academy, Classrooms and Faculty Homes.* Located on the northern tip of the island of Celebes, this academy has a fine record of producing excellent workers. However, the campus was in the direct line of fighting during a bitter revolution in the late 1950's. School had to be suspended as the buildings were occupied by the insurgent forces. Partial rehabilitation was accomplished. New classrooms and faculty homes are needed.

3. *Waiame Academy, Classrooms and Faculty Homes.* This academy is located on Ambon, another of the spice islands visited by Magellan in 1512. The faculty and students are looking to the Sabbath School family to assist them in providing classrooms and faculty homes.

4. *Jungle Chapels.* Simple jungle chapels are needed in areas where we have many church members among the tribal people.

The workers and members of the Far Eastern Division thank you for the worldwide Sabbath School support provided for our work in the past. The needs continue to be great, and have been made ever more critical by the dollar devaluation. Please give generously during this quarter for these four projects and for the work around the world.

P. H. Eldridge  
President  
Far Eastern Division

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See page 112 for outlines of the first two lessons of the third quarter 1974.

# NEWS FROM JESUS

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Some sixty years had passed since John last saw Jesus. He was the only one left of the twelve men chosen by Jesus to be His disciples. The last apostle had fallen on hard times. He had been arrested, boiled in oil and miraculously delivered, and eventually banished to the penal colony on Patmos. There, on a Sabbath day, he saw Jesus, and Jesus spoke to him. What He told John, and also revealed by an angel, was not merely a message to the beloved disciple, but news from the risen Lord for the churches in the vicinity of John's home. It was the last time that word could come from Jesus through one who had personally walked and talked with Him. John in turn wrote the news to those who knew him. Today we read that news in the book of Revelation.

The news was that Jesus would assuredly conquer the powers of evil, which had not seemed to diminish during John's long life. He unveiled the strategy of the evil power and revealed the way in which victory would come. That news is still news today. Evil still appears entrenched. But the passing of centuries has brought the collapse of evil power structures in the way that Jesus told John they would fall. This encourages us that the present and future entrenchments of evil will also fall and Jesus will be unconditionally victorious as He told John on Patmos.

This news is not limited to the scene of international politics. The news is also for the individual. He can personally conquer evil and join in Christ's victory. "When we as a people understand what this book [of Revelation] means to us; there will be seen among us a great revival."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 113.

Ellen G. White has given some pertinent counsel on the study of Revelation:

"Many have entertained the idea that the book of Revelation is a sealed book, and they will not devote time and study to its mysteries. They say that they are to keep looking to the glories of salvation, and that the mysteries revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos are worthy of less consideration than these. But God does not so regard this book. . . .

"It should be studied with reverential awe."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 954.

"We are living in a time when men who are not under the teaching of the Holy Spirit will bring in false theories. These men . . . have ambitious projects to carry out. They seek to exalt themselves, and to revolutionize . . . things. God has given us special instruction to guard us against such ones. He bade John write in a book that which should take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 954.

"This book [Revelation] demands close, prayerful study, lest it be interpreted according to the ideas of men, and false construction be given to the sacred work of the Lord, which in its symbols and figure means so much to us. There is so much that we positively must understand in order that we may shape our course of action so that we shall not receive the plagues which are coming upon the world.

"In the Revelation the deep things of God are portrayed. Those whose hearts are wholly sanctified to God will be brought light to see priceless gems through the telescope of faith. And as they apply the truth to practice, the still deeper mysteries are stamped on the soul. These thus honored are to communicate to others that which they have received. And as they do this, angels make the impression upon hearts.

"Let none think, because they cannot explain the meaning of every symbol in the Revelation, that it is of no use for them to search this book with deep, earnest

longing and intense desire to know the meaning of the truths it contains. The One who revealed these mysteries to John can and will give the diligent searcher for truth a foretaste of heavenly things, hereafter to be realized. Rich blessings will come to him who reads and hears the words of this prophecy, and keeps the things which are written therein."—Ellen G. White, *Letter 16, Jan. 28, 1900*.

Exciting discoveries await the diligent student of Revelation. "Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared. . . . 'Blessed is he that readeth.'"—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 116.

Determine that your personal morning and evening sacrifice will center on the study of the book of Revelation during this quarter. Seek the truth that can spark a revival in the church.

## The Blessing of Daily Study

"Every day some portion of time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons, not merely in learning to mechanically repeat the words, while the mind does not comprehend the meaning; but to go to the very foundation, and become familiar with what is brought out in the lesson."—"Counsels on Sabbath School Work," page 53.

## My Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

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(signed)

The regular adult Sabbath School lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal inkprint. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accidents, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal inkprint publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506.

## Lesson Titles for the Quarter

- Lesson 1 The Author Identified
- Lesson 2 Letters From Jesus I
- Lesson 3 Letters From Jesus II
- Lesson 4 Letters From Jesus III
- Lesson 5 Letters From Jesus IV
- Lesson 6 In Praise of God
- Lesson 7 In Praise of Jesus
- Lesson 8 A Preview of Judgment
- Lesson 9 To Survive or Not
- Lesson 10 Trumpets of War
- Lesson 11 The Source of the Adventist Message
- Lesson 12 The Two Witnesses
- Lesson 13 The Trumpet of Victory

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## LESSON 1

March 31  
to April 6

# The Author Identified

**"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last." Rev. 1:17.**

How much attention you give to a personal letter that is delivered to your home is determined by at least two considerations: (1) Who wrote it? and (2) Did he write anything that you are interested in?

The book of Revelation may be viewed as a letter. It has some features of a first-century epistle. The first chapter begins with an explanation given of the two points we noted above about letters:

1. *Who wrote it?* It may appear that John did, but the Author turns out to be several links removed from the reader in a communication chain that is invisible to people. So John explains the origin of his book. When the Christian discovers that Jesus is the Author, he should eagerly seek to see what message Jesus had for him in Revelation.

2. *Did He give any message that is of interest to us in 1974?* If our interests are identified with the interests of Jesus, then Revelation is as relevant as can be. In the very first chapter the reader sees the divine, glorified Jesus. He is confronted by the various media through which Jesus works in the world—His gospel, the church, and the ministry—and is shown that these apparently human instruments are intimately related to our glorified Lord.

If you are looking for word from Jesus, Revelation has it, bright and clear.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. Source of the Book, Rev. 1:1-3
2. The Salutation, Rev. 1:4-5, first part
3. The Doxology, Rev. 1:5-7
4. Identifications, Rev. 1:8-11
5. The Divine Exalted Jesus, Rev. 1:12-16
6. The Living Jesus, Rev. 1:17-20



**Part 1**  
**SOURCE OF**  
**THE BOOK**

**Who revealed the message contained in John's book? To whom is it addressed?**

**"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Rev. 1:1-3.**

John, at the beginning of his book states clearly the origin of its contents. He is not expressing his own ideas. The Revelation originates with God; but John emphasizes it as Christ's revelation. Jesus is the head of the channel of communication by which the book of Revelation came to earth. "Jesus Christ is the great trustee of divine revelation. It is through Him that we have a knowledge of what we are to look for in the closing scenes of this earth's history."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 953.

Jesus is the one essential link in this chain of divine communication. Without Him there would be no word from God.

The letter is sent to Christ's servants. All of the other steps mentioned, while important, are incidental to Christ's supreme purpose of reaching His people with a message.

**By what steps was the message relayed from Jesus to His servants?**

The first part of verse 3 in the RSV reads: "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy." The book of Revelation was intended to be read aloud in the churches to which it was addressed. Every copy had to be made by hand, and thus it would not be readily available to individual members as it is today.

**What was the subject of Christ's revelation? Verse 1.**

Revelation is a book that points to many events. Jesus opened these events to the church before they took place from the viewpoint of John's time. Some of the events are still future for us today.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Is the book of Revelation primarily a revelation BY Jesus, or ABOUT Jesus?**

"John, the beloved disciple, was the one chosen to receive this revelation. He was the last survivor of the first chosen disciples."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 953.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 112-119.



**Part 2**  
**THE SALUTATION**

**To whom was the book of Revelation originally addressed?**

**"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." Rev. 1:4, 5, first part.**

This is not the introduction to the epistles to the seven churches. It is the salutation at the beginning of the whole book. It was in these seven churches that Revelation was to be read aloud to the congregations.

**From what three persons does John convey greetings to the churches?**

The greeting "Grace to you and peace" was frequently used in New Testament letters. It is probably "a combination of the ordinary Greek salutation *chairein*, 'greeting!' (as in James 1:1), and the Hebrew greeting *shalom*."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 1:4. John had been in communication with heaven and could bring to man from the Godhead a greeting in the form used in everyday life.

**What is the meaning of each phrase used to describe those who sent greetings?**

Jesus is here called a "faithful witness." His whole life was a witness without fault. His sacrificial death was His ultimate witness to the value and immutability of God's character, and the offensive nature of sin. His faithful witnessing was followed by resurrection from the dead. John refers to Him as the "first begotten of [or from] the dead." Not first in point of time, but of importance, for without Jesus' resurrection there would be no one resurrected. The result of His earthly life, death, and resurrection is that He is restored to His rightful position as ruler of the whole world.

John presents Jesus at the start of this book in the setting of the gospel—His victory through life, death, and resurrection.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is the significance to me of the faithful witnessing of Jesus?**

"As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 24.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 19-21.

**Part 3**  
**THE DOXOLOGY**

**For what three benefits does John ascribe praise to Jesus?**

**"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Rev. 1:5-7.**

In the preceding verses John introduced the gospel. Here he praises the Saviour for what the gospel means to the believer.

**What event does John say every person will see? Verse 7.**

In verse 5 John speaks of the spiritual victory of Jesus by which the physical defeat of the powers of this world became certain. Here John presents the actual moment of revelation of the defeat of His enemies before the whole world. Other events must transpire during and after the millenium before Jesus' actual coronation, but at the second advent His victory will be demonstrated.

In verse 5 John speaks of Jesus as the "ruler of the kings on earth." RSV. This rulership was not clearly visible in John's day, nor is it today. Earth's rulers do not recognize Jesus as a ruler over them. Here in verse 7 John calls attention to the moment when the rulership of Jesus will be demonstrated to His foes, even those who condemned and executed Him. Not only will Jesus then claim victory, as He did at the resurrection, but His enemies by their wailing will admit defeat.

In this passage (last of verse 5 to verse 7), there is a summary of the content of Revelation. It deals with the kingdom of the redeemed, the church, under the leadership of Jesus in the context of the victory of Jesus over His foes.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**For what can I praise Jesus today?**

Here is a vivid description of reactions to Christ's coming: "With awful distinctness do priests and rulers recall the events of Calvary. . . .

"And now there rises a cry of mortal agony. Louder than the shout, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him,' which rang through the streets of Jerusalem, swells the awful, despairing wail, 'He is the Son of God! He is the true Messiah!' They seek to flee from the presence of the King of kings. . . .

"Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them. In the midst of their terror they hear the voices of the saints in joyful strains exclaiming: 'Lo, this is our God. . . .'"—*The Great Controversy*, pages 643, 644.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 739, 740.

**Part 4**  
**IDENTIFICATIONS**

**What attributes of God are used in verse 8 to identify the Speaker?**

**"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8.**

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Thus the expression has the same meaning as the English "A to Z." It conveys the idea given by the second phrase of verse 8, "the beginning and the ending."

Here is the second time (see verse 4) that the expression "which is, and which was, and which is to come," is used in this chapter. Note that the time sequence in Revelation is the present, the past, and the future. See verses 4, 8, 19, for example. What significance do you see in this sequence?

This "oral signature" follows the statement of Jesus' return to earth as an assurance that the Eternal and All-powerful God is the One behind the statement.

**Who is the writer, and what were his circumstances? Verse 9.**

John was exiled to Patmos, probably by Damitian in about A.D. 95. Patmos is located in the Aegean Sea about 50 miles from Ephesus. The island was used by the Romans for a prison colony that did forced labor in the quarries.

**Read verses 10 and 11.**

"The Sabbath, which God had instituted in Eden, was as precious to John on the lonely isle as when he was with his companions in the cities and towns. The precious promises that Christ had given regarding this day he repeated and claimed as his own. It was the sign to him that God was his. . . . On the Sabbath day the risen Saviour made His presence known to John."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 955.

The book of Revelation is John's report of a Sabbath-day vision. The entire report was to be sent to the seven churches named in verse 11. John also recorded some things that he heard, and sometimes he participated in the events and reported what he did.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**John's exile was turned into a blessing. What experiences in my life have turned trouble into blessing?**

"In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plottings of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 574.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 568-571.

**Part 5**  
**THE DIVINE**  
**EXALTED JESUS**

**Read Revelation 1:12-16.**

**Who is the person described in this passage? Verse 18.**

The view of Jesus presented here is at least in part a symbolic representation of Jesus, as is indicated by the sword coming out of His mouth. The question here is not if Jesus really looks like this, but, What is Jesus trying to communicate to us about Himself by this vision?

John was evidently searching for the ultimate earthly comparisons to communicate the appearance of this view of Jesus, because this passage contains five superlatives: (1) white as wool and snow—whitest; (2) polished bronze—shiniest; (3) the roar of water—loudest; (4) the brightness of the sun—brightest; (5) two-edged sword—sharpest.

**What is the meaning of this description of Jesus? See Daniel 7:9, 10; 10:5, 6; Ezekiel 1:26-28.**

“The persecution of John became a means of grace. Patmos was made resplendent with the glory of a risen Saviour. John had seen Christ in human form, with the marks of the nails, which will ever be His glory, in His hands and His feet. Now he was permitted again to behold his risen Lord, clothed with as much glory as a human being could behold, and live. What a Sabbath was that to the lonely exile, always precious in the sight of Christ, but now more than ever exalted! Never had he learned so much of Jesus. Never had he heard such exalted truth.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 955.

The candlesticks mentioned in verse 12 were not the heavenly counterpart of the seven candlesticks that were an article of furniture in the earthly tabernacle. A more accurate translation is “lampstands.” These lampstands were seven separate lamps, because “the son of man” walked among them.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is my view of who Jesus is? Do I believe in Him as an eternal, self-existing, member of the Godhead?**

“The heavenly host prostrate themselves before Him, and raise their song of triumph and joy. Glory encircles the King of heaven, and was beheld by all the heavenly intelligences. No words can describe the scene which took place as the Son of God was publicly reinstated in the place of honor and glory which He voluntarily left when He became a man.

“And today Christ, glorified, and yet our brother, is our Advocate in the courts of heaven.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1146.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 582, 583.

**Part 6**  
**THE LIVING JESUS**

**What was John's reaction to the vision of Jesus? See also Daniel 10:8, 9.**

**"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1:17, 18.**

**What does the statement "I am the first and the last" teach about Jesus? Verse 17. Compare Isaiah 44:6.**

In this vision Jesus next called attention to His death and resurrection. It is this combination of the divinity, death, resurrection, and continuous living of Jesus that is at the root of everything that is unveiled to John in the Revelation. The gospel is its foundation. The startling symbols in Revelation that so readily stir our curiosity must be seen always in the context of the gospel. These symbols never depict merely political events. In every instance where political powers are introduced it is the implication for the gospel that is the point of the communication.

**After Jesus declared His personal death and resurrection, what did He say He had power to do? Verse 18.**

"Satan cannot hold the dead in his grasp when the Son of God bids them live."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 320.

"The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life. . . . [John 11:25, 26 quoted.] Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 530.

Put together the interpreted features of this vision, and the thrust of the vision becomes vivid. The Divine Person is Jesus. The lamps are the seven churches, which in turn represent the church up to the second advent. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 585. The stars are angels, in the sense of messengers and not of heavenly beings. They are the elders of the churches. See *Gospel Workers*, page 13. Jesus is walking among the churches of all ages and holding the elders in His right hand. This vision is a visual representation of His promise given as part of the gospel commission: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I increase my awareness of Jesus' presence with His people?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 586, 587.

# INTRODUCTION TO LETTERS FROM JESUS

## LESSONS 2-5

Chapters two and three of Revelation contain letters to seven selected churches of Asia Minor. The author of the letters is always identified as Jesus. The cities in which these churches were located were all cities in the Roman province of Asia. The sequence in which they are listed by John in Revelation is a circuit which a messenger would take from Patmos. Thus these letters were originally sent to seven literal congregations and contained messages for them. These congregations also stood for seven historical periods of the Christian Church from the time of Jesus to the time of the second advent. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 585.

Near the close of each letter an appeal is included: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 2:7, 11, et cetera. Since the command is to *all* to note the letters to the churches, it must be concluded that there are messages in the letters which are applicable to anyone who will listen at any time. In our study of the seven churches we will note the meaning for the congregation, and for the historical period, but especially the meaning for believers today.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

### Form of the Letters

It would be helpful if each one studying these lessons would read carefully several times, chapters two and three. Thus each one would be able to see for himself the way the letters are arranged.

Each letter has approximately the same form. If we identify the parts of this form, it can provide a convenient outline for the study of each letter.

The letter usually has seven parts:

1. Each letter begins with the instruction, "Unto [or to] the angel of the church of [or in] \_\_\_\_\_ write." The only major variation from letter to letter is the name of the city.

2. The second feature in each letter is introduced by "these things saith \_\_\_\_\_," or in the RSV "the words of \_\_\_\_\_." There follows an identification of the dictator of the letter, Jesus, by symbols usually taken from chapter one. This identification fits some special circumstance in each letter.

3. Each letter next contains the words "I know," followed by a statement of the knowledge Jesus has about the congregation He is writing to.

4. In three letters the words "against thee" come next, followed by reproof that Jesus presents to the church. Where the words "against thee" do not appear there is no commendation given after "I know," and the "I know" sequence contains the reproof.

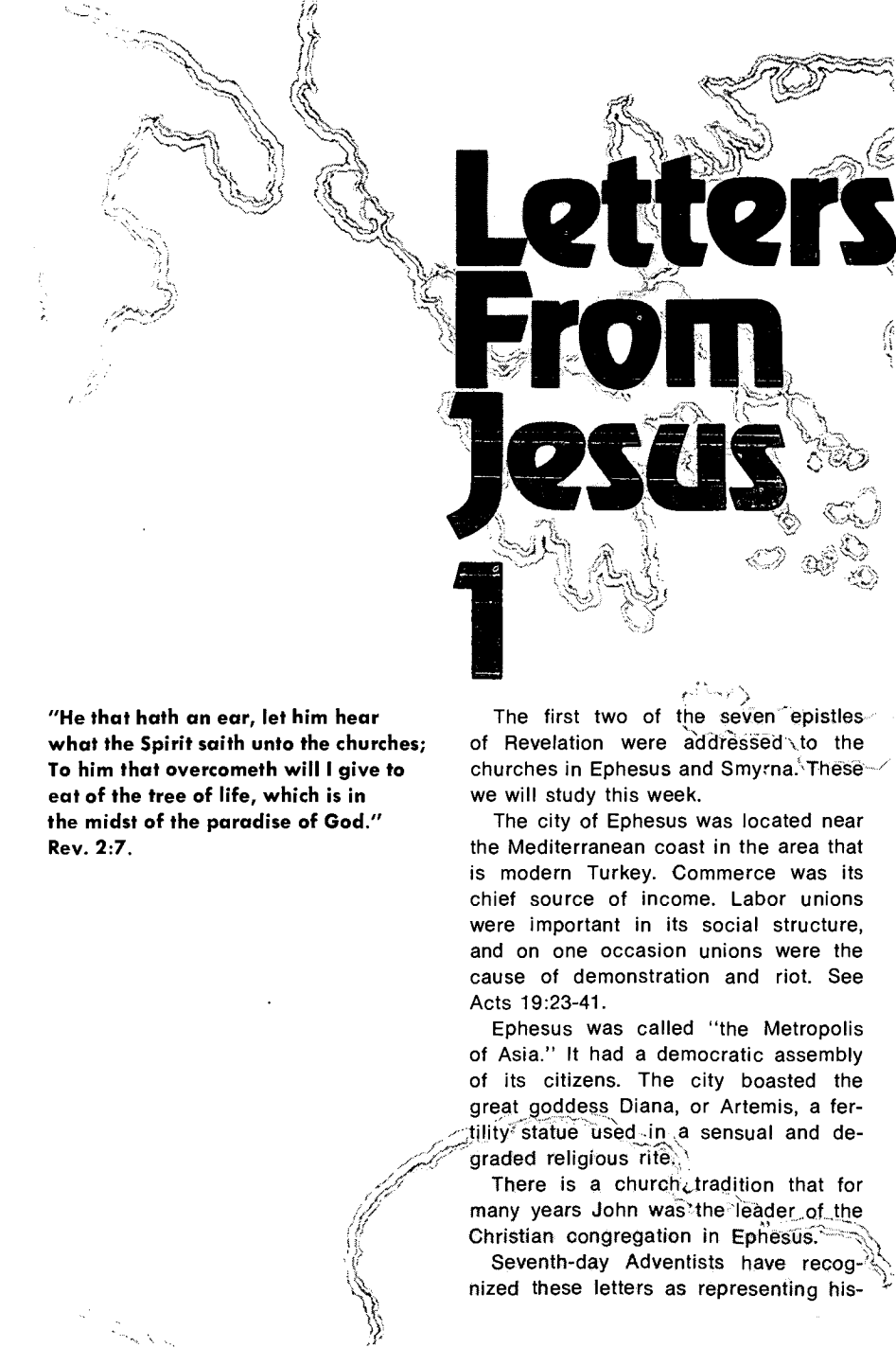
5. Every church is given a command following the reproof, such as "repent," or "hold fast." There is no special word or phrase to identify the command, but it is recognizable by the imperative form of the verb.

6. In every letter the appeal is given, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." In the first three letters this appeal precedes the promise; in the last four letters the appeal is given in the final sentence.

7. The words "He that overcometh," or in the RSV "to him who conquers," introduce a promise by Jesus. The promise follows the appeal in the first three letters, and precedes the appeal in the last four letters. The promise matches some circumstance in each epistle.

These seven parts will be used as an outline by which to study each epistle and will be identified by the following captions: Instruction, Identification, Knowledge, Reproof, Counsel, Appeal, Promise.

The Sabbath School Lessons for the next four weeks will be about these letters. Before studying the material in the lesson each week, the student will find it helpful to read the passage in Revelation that the lesson covers. In this way he will see the unity and continuity of the passage. For convenience and clarity the statements in each letter that correspond to the seven parts of the letter are printed in the lesson under the appropriate heading. If the student reads only these separated segments of the letters in the lesson, it will be difficult for him to grasp the impact of the letter as a whole.



# Letters From Jesus

## 1

**"He that hath an ear, let him hear  
what the Spirit saith unto the churches;  
To him that overcometh will I give to  
eat of the tree of life, which is in  
the midst of the paradise of God."  
Rev. 2:7.**

The first two of the seven epistles of Revelation were addressed to the churches in Ephesus and Smyrna. These we will study this week.

The city of Ephesus was located near the Mediterranean coast in the area that is modern Turkey. Commerce was its chief source of income. Labor unions were important in its social structure, and on one occasion unions were the cause of demonstration and riot. See Acts 19:23-41.

Ephesus was called "the Metropolis of Asia." It had a democratic assembly of its citizens. The city boasted the great goddess Diana, or Artemis, a fertility statue used in a sensual and degraded religious rite.

There is a church tradition that for many years John was the leader of the Christian congregation in Ephesus.

Seventh-day Adventists have recognized these letters as representing his-





Ephesus



Smyrna



Pergamos



Laodicea

historical periods in the Christian church. The letter to Ephesus represents the apostolic age and spans the period A.D. 31-100.

The city of Smyrna was just 35 miles to the north of Ephesus. It stood at the end of a lovely valley and was an outstandingly beautiful city. Its spacious streets ran from one end of the city to the other; the most famous of these was called the "Golden Street." Politically, Smyrna was an honored city, for it had chosen the side of the Romans in all its civil wars, and it became one of the great centers of Caesar worship. The emperor became the visible symbol and the embodiment of the Spirit of Rome. Worship of this national spirit which began in gratitude soon became compulsory. Every year citizens had to burn a pinch of incense to declare their loyalty to the state. Refusal resulted in pressures, poverty, and government action.

Nevertheless, the church was rich in moral worth and received the commendation of Christ. See William Barclay, *Letters to Seven Churches*, pages 26-32.

A date around A.D. 100 marks the beginning of the historical period represented by Smyrna. The close of this period came in A.D. 313 when the Edict of Milan "decreed equal rights for all religions throughout the empire and restored confiscated Christian property." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 753.

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Ephesus I, Rev. 2:1-3
2. Ephesus II, Rev. 2:4
3. Ephesus III, Rev. 2:5, 6
4. Ephesus IV, Rev. 2:7
5. Smyrna I, Rev. 2:8-10
6. Smyrna II, Rev. 2:11

**Part 1**      **Instruction: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write."**  
**EPHESUS I**   **Rev. 2:1, first part.**

**Identification: What message to the church is contained in the symbolic identification of Jesus in verse one?**

**"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Verse 1, last part.**

**Why does Jesus identify Himself in this way to the Ephesus congregation? See verse 5.**

**Knowledge: What was the nature of the evil that the Ephesian Christians opposed?**

**"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." Verses 2, 3.**

The works for which the Ephesians were commended by Jesus were the opposition to false apostles and their teachings, and the patient endurance of the conflict that their opposition to these impostors caused.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I know with certainty which teachings are true and which are false?**

"There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded. 'You must have charity,' is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors.

"The apostle teaches that while we should manifest Christian courtesy we are authorized to deal in plain terms with sin and sinners; that this is not inconsistent with true charity."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 554, 555.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 116, 117.

**Part 2**  
**EPHESUS II**      **Reproof: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Rev. 2:4.**

The Ephesians had worked hard for orthodoxy—correct doctrine, but somewhere along the way they lost love.

The zealous stand for orthodoxy and the staunch stand against heretics have the inherent risk of running out of love. But the two attitudes—orthodoxy and love—are compatible, and the ideal is a blending of zeal for correct doctrine with fervent love for God and man. The believing saint must also be a loving saint.

The particular way that loss of love affected the Ephesians, and will affect every other believer, was a lack of labor for the salvation of souls.

"But after a time the zeal of the believers [in Ephesus], their love for God and for one another, began to wane. Coldness crept into the church. Differences sprang up, and the eyes of many were turned from beholding Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith. The masses that might have been convicted and converted by a faithful practice of the truth, were left unwarned. Then it was that the message was addressed to the Ephesian church by the True Witness. Their lack of interest in the salvation of souls showed that they had lost their first love; for none can love God with the whole heart, mind, soul, and strength without loving those for whom Christ died. . . .

"Is not this experience of the Ephesian church repeated in the experience of the church of this generation?"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 422.

An important lesson from the experience of the Ephesian congregation is that love cannot be replaced by some other virtue. The lack of love leaves the virtue that replaces it a hollow, empty thing. See 1 Corinthians 13.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What can I do in my life to perfect the blend of correct belief and love to God and people?**

"Where is the kindling of soul you once felt at the mention of the name of Jesus? In the freshness of your early dedication, how fervent was your love for souls! how earnestly you sought to represent to them the Saviour's love! The absence of that love has made you cold, critical, exacting. Seek to win it back, and then labor to bring souls to Christ. If you refuse to do this, others who have had less light and experience and fewer opportunities will come up and take your place and do that which you have neglected; for the work must be done to save the tempted, the tried, the perishing. Christ offers the service to His church; who will accept it?"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 611.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, pp. 421-424.

**Part 3**  
**EPHESUS III**

**Counsel: What three actions did Jesus call for by Ephesian Christians?**

**"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Rev. 2:5, 6.**

"The believers did not sense their spiritual fall. They knew not that a change had taken place in their hearts, and that they would have to repent because of the noncontinuance of their first works. But God in His mercy called for repentance, for a return to their first love and to the works that are always the result of true, Christlike love."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 957.

**What would be the result if they did not repent? Verse 5. What does this mean in human experience?**

Jesus is present with His people for strengthening, assisting, and comforting them. When they turn from Him, He is present also in judgment.

In verse 6 the Ephesians are commended for rejecting the Nicolaitan doctrine. This was the teaching that the gospel has done away with law and "we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 957. It was true that the Ephesians had ceased to be doers of the word, but they still believed in being doers. Opposition to the doctrine of release from obedience to the law left them with a foundation belief upon which to build their reformation by the grace of Jesus. This was a plus in their fallen state. If they had believed the Nicolaitan doctrine the call to do the first works would have contradicted the belief they held.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways do I need to repent?**

"God will accept nothing less than the whole heart. Happy are they who from the commencement of their religious life have been true to their first love, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sure result of their intercourse and fellowship with their beloved Lord will be to increase their piety, their purity, their fervor. They are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of fervor, of diligence and zeal. . . .

"It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual febleness, and quenched our first love."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 956, 957.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Steps to Christ*, "Repentance," pages 23-25.

**Part 4**  
**EPHESUS IV**

**Appeal: What is the significance of this appeal to hear? Compare Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 14:35.**

**"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 2:7, first part.**

The purpose of Revelation is to communicate a message to those who will listen; and the purpose of hearing is to act upon the message heard. Hearing Jesus' message without acting upon it is foolish; hearing and doing the message of Jesus is wise. See Matthew 7:24-27. In the Old Testament the idea of hearing took on a strong connotation of obedience. See 1 Samuel 15:22.

"If you 'hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,' and meditate upon the instruction given to them, your ears will be closed to the folly and nonsense which surround you. You will neither hear and repeat these things, nor will you ever hanker after them. When Christ satisfies the soul hunger, these trivialities are to you distasteful and disgusting. You have no desire to feast upon them, but choose instead the bread of heaven."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 957.

**Promise: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Verse 7, last part.**

The promise is made to those who overcome, or are victorious. The verse does not state what this victory is; it simply says "to him that overcometh." The special victory that was needed in Ephesus was pointed out by Jesus in the reproof. They must recapture their first love.

**What is the promise to victorious Ephesian Christians?**

This promise will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. It is an assurance of being where Jesus is.

The promise of access to the tree of life conveys (1) the assurance of restoration to the believer of what was lost in Eden when man sinned; (2) assurance of being in Paradise; and (3) the gift, not merely of the fruit of a tree, but of the endless life conferred through the tree.

**What are the points in my life on which I need to seek victory?**

"The power of God, combined with human effort, has wrought out a glorious victory for us. Shall we not appreciate this? All the riches of heaven were given to us in Jesus. . . . If we will rise to the emergency, and arm ourselves like men who wait for their Lord; if we will work to overcome every defect in our characters, God will give us increased light and strength and help."—*Messages to Young People*, page 106.

*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, "Not Judging, But Doing," pages 141, 142.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**FURTHER STUDY**

**Part 5**  
**SMYRNA I**

**Instructions:** "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write." Rev. 2:8, first part.

**Identification:** What is the significance of the way Jesus identified Himself to the Smyrna church? Verse 10.

"These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." Verse 8, last part.

Jesus is seen here both as the eternal God, and the crucified and risen Saviour.

**Knowledge:** What three adverse conditions were the lot of the Smyrna congregation?

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Verse 9.

The Smyrna believers experienced hard times. Troubles appear to have come from both the Romans and the Jews. Their poverty was not the poverty of an ordinary workingman. The Greek word used here indicates destitution.

**What was Jesus' evaluation of their condition? Verse 9.**

**Reproof:** Jesus gave no reproof to Smyrna. Trouble due to one's religious faith often leads to a closer relationship to God than is found among people living under more favorable and pleasant conditions.

**Counsel:** What were the two counsels given to Smyrna believers?

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Verse 10.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways am I prepared or unprepared to witness in a nonretaliatory spirit, without malice or bitterness?**

We are God's witnesses. "If ever we needed to manifest kindness and true courtesy, it is now. We may have to plead most earnestly before legislative councils for the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Thus in His providence God has designed that the claims of His law shall be brought before men in positions of highest authority. But as we stand before these men, we are to show no bitterness of feeling."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 375.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 492-495.

**Part 6**  
**SMYRNA II**

**Appeal:** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 2:11, first part.

**What can we "hear" from the Smyrna message today?**

**Promise:** "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Verse 11, last part.

Twice a promise is stated for this church, but it is really the same promise. In verse 10, in the counsel to faithfulness unto death, it is the promise of life; and in verse 11 the promise is escape from the second death.

**What did it mean for the Smyrnan to overcome? Verse 10.**

The promises of Christ are personal encouragements. His authority is His own resurrection. Death is just a sleep (John 11:11-14) while it is the second death that is total extinction (Rev. 20:14, Mal. 4:1), a death the righteous need not fear. Victory lies ahead, and a crown is promised, in this instance, not a crown of jewels (*diadēma*) but a laurel crown of victory (*stephanos*).

The final victory is simply the culmination point of victories daily achieved. "I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place—a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act, they must take hold of the work themselves and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of themselves. The scenes which are passing before us are of sufficient magnitude to cause us to arouse."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 261.

"Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God's law should be the motto of every Christian."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 147.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How do I feel about the motto: Death before sin?**

"The word is: Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 71.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 587-589.

“The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus. With God there is no respect of persons.”

—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 259.



# LETTERS FROM JESUS - TWO

**"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."**  
Rev. 2:17.

Because Pergamos stood on an eminence overlooking the area, the inhabitants had a commanding view of the surrounding country. It was the seat of Roman government in Asia. It was a city of temples, the most important being the temple of Zeus with its great altar 90 feet square and 40 feet high.

"Inspiration has characterized the Pergamos period as a time of compromise, apostasy, and popularity, the time during which the Church of Rome was consolidating its power and authority. Accordingly, the close of the Pergamos period should find imperial Rome out of the way and the papacy fully formed and ready to embark on its career as ruler of Western Christendom."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, additional note on Rev. 2.

Thus the approximate Pergamos period is the years between A.D. 313 and 538.

The letter to Thyatira is the longest of the seven, and the city the least sig-

nificant of the seven. Pliny speaks of "Thyatira and other unimportant communities."

"No city has been given by nature less of the look or strength of a fortress," says Professor Ramsay. "It possesses no proper Acropolis, and the whole impression which the situation gives is of weakness, subjection and dependence." "The history of Thyatira is a blank."—W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pages 318, 323.

"The Thyatira period is characterized as the era of papal supremacy. The importance of the 1,260-year period in Bible prophecy (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 12:6) suggests that 1798 might well be selected as the terminal date for Thyatira. But in view of the importance of the Reformation in breaking papal supremacy, the date 1517 would also be an appropriate terminal date."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 753, 754.

Thus the usually accepted dates for the Thyatira period are 538-1517.

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Pergamos I, Rev. 2:13-15
2. Pergamos II, Rev. 2:14-16
3. Pergamos III, Rev. 2:14-17
4. Thyatira I, Rev. 2:18-23
5. Thyatira II, Rev. 2:24, 25
6. Thyatira III, Rev. 2:26-29

**Part 1**  
**PERGAMOS I**

**Identification:** Rev. 2:12. What is the meaning of the two-edged sword? See Hebrews 4:12.

**Knowledge:** "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." Rev. 2:13.

The religious life of the people of the city Pergamos was so perverted that Jesus refers to it as the place where Satan himself was enthroned. This designation fits the fervent emperor worship and eastern mystery religions that centered in Pergamos.

**In spite of the adverse surroundings, what was the relation of the Pergamos Christians to Jesus? Verse 13.**

**Reproof:** What two charges did Jesus bring against the Pergamos Christians?

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Verses 14, 15.

Note the specific nature of this reproof. The church is not charged with holding these two false doctrines, but with tolerating those who believe them. Here is revealed the problem of the Pergamos church. It is a divided church. The believers have swung over to the other extreme from Ephesus. Where Ephesus zealously resisted the false teachers and their doctrines and lost their love, the believers of Pergamos have tolerated those who held these false doctrines and have thus divided the church. Their tolerance for wrong may have appeared to be loving, but Jesus revealed it as contrary to the Christian faith, and thus unloving.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is the duty of the church today regarding teachers of false doctrine?**

"To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. . . . There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 503, 504.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Steps to Christ*, "Consecration," pages 45-48.

**Part 2      Reproof continued: Reread Rev. 2:14, 15.**

**PERGAMOS II**

In Pergamos it was not a problem of braving scorn or being ostracized for participating in the actions for which Jesus reproofed them. It was a question of entertainment and immoral sexual relations allowed by law and custom; for there one could participate in these unchristian activities and remain a respectable citizen.

Invitations to dinner might read: "I invite you to dine with me at the temple of our Lord Serapis.' Most family parties were in fact organized in this way. . . . Dare the Christian compromise? Dare he give even this much approval to a religion which was the reverse of all he cherished and believed? The lax and false teachers said Yes. They declared it to be quite unnecessary for the Christians to cut themselves off from all social fellowship in this way."—William Barclay, *Letters to Seven Churches*, page 51.

On the question of morality the attitude of compromise was quite the same as on other social issues. Relationships outside marriage were entirely accepted and produced no stigma whatsoever.

While the issues are not precisely the same, there are similarities here to the permissive society of today.

**Counsel: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Rev. 2:16.**

Note that the counsel to repent given here is not to the heretics and sinners, but to those who have tolerated them. Jesus is calling for repentance from those who, while faithfully holding fast to His name, have nonetheless been lax in opposing wrong. Repentance includes taking up the neglected work as indicated by the threat made by Jesus to come to the church with a sword and Himself fight against the heretics, unless you, the faithful ones, repent. The work of separating the believers of false doctrine from the faithful ones would be accomplished; if not by the believers, then by Jesus Himself.

The false teachers of the church were constantly urging the members "to conform to the accepted standards of the world and to stop being different. The early church was in constant danger of being tainted by and relapsing into the standards of the world."—William Barclay, *Letters to Seven Churches*, page 52.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways do I see my life influenced by the permissive attitudes of society? What shall I do about it?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Gospel Workers*, pages 498-503.

**Part 3**  
**PERGAMOS III**

**Appeal:** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 2:17, first part.

**Promise:** What is the significance of overcoming in the Pergamos church? Rev. 2:14-16.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Verse 17, last part.

**How does the promise of the hidden manna relate to the circumstances in the Pergamos church? See Revelation 2:14, 15; John 6:31-34.**

The hidden manna probably has reference to the manna that was placed in a vessel and kept in the ark of the covenant. The believers were not promised merely a new "fall" of manna on the ground, but the promise is that they will eat manna that comes from the "golden pot" that was beneath the Shekinah, that is, directly from the divine Presence.

There are three points that may be helpful in understanding the meaning of the new name written on a white stone.

1. The names of the tribes of Israel were engraved on stones that were part of the high priest's garb.

2. "Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 481.

3. "One of the more common ancient customs was that of the use of a white and a black stone by jurors to determine acquittal or conviction."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 2:17.

These yield the significance of (1) permanence, (2) character, and (3) acquittal.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can the Word be reasonably symbolized as both a sword and manna?**

"God has not only revealed to us the doctrine of the atonement, holding out the hope of eternal life, but His words are the manna from heaven for the soul to feed upon and receive spiritual strength. The Bible is the great standard of right and wrong, clearly defining sin and holiness. Its living principles, running through our lives like threads of gold, are our only safeguard in trial and temptation."—*Counsels to Teachers*, page 422.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 385, 386.

**Part 4**  
**THYATIRA I**

**Identification:** "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." Rev. 2:18, last part.

**What is the significance of the description "eyes like unto a flame of fire"? Verse 23.**

**What is the symbolic meaning of feet? Heb. 2:8. See Rev. 2:27.**

**Knowledge: What were the works of Thyatira?**

**"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." Rev. 2:19.**

This is the only church where Jesus notes an improvement in the believers' works. In this regard it is the opposite of the message to Ephesus where they were called upon to do the first works.

**Reproof: Rev. 2:20-23.**

The teachings of Jezebel are the same as the teachings of Balaam (compare verses 14 and 20).

"The manner of punishment to be meted out to the false prophetess will be appropriate to her crime. This expression seems to be of Semitic origin, and is used with respect to falling ill. . . . Compare the English expression 'to take to one's bed.'"—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 2:22.

The problems in Thyatira were the same problems that existed in Pergamos, but intensified. The division in the church was deep. Jesus addressed the three preceding churches as a unit. The message to Thyatira contains two messages—one for each faction of the church. See verse 24.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I improve my work of faith and love and put them in the proper place in my Christian experience?**

"The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls.

"The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life's burden light. He who walks in the way of God's commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 331.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Steps to Christ*, "The Work and the Life," pages 77-80.

**Part 5**  
**THYATIRA II**

**Reproof continued: What is the charge against Jezebel?**  
Rev. 2:21.

Eating food sacrificed to idols gave the appearance of loyalty to the deity to whom the sacrifice had been offered. Sexual immorality by any person was a relationship with another that was condemned by God. For the married person it was also a relationship contrary to the Christian marriage vows. In both instances, with God and the spouse, the believers had committed themselves to loyalty and fidelity. Jezebel taught that these virtues were dispensable and undesirable. What lessons for today are there in the indictment of Jezebel?

"The fornication of this Jezebel was habitual and of long standing, for she had children. Figuratively, this should probably be understood in the sense that she had won committed adherents. Judgment was to descend not only upon the mother but also upon the offspring, who were contaminated by her evil character. Compare the destruction of the children of Ahab (2 Kings 10:7)."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 2:23.

**Counsel: "But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay upon you any other burden; only hold fast what you have, until I come."**  
Rev. 2:24, 25, RSV.

The phrase "deep things of Satan" points to Gnosticism as the heresy propagated by Jezebel and her followers. The Gnostics claimed to know the "deep things." Jesus identifies the source of these "deep things" by adding "of Satan."

The Thyatirians were to hold on to what they had. What did they have? They had an improving and growing experience (see verse 19). Their current works were better than those in the past. They were moving forward under extremely difficult circumstances. Jesus asks of every person his best service, and he will be judged in the light of the opportunities to render it.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways am I failing to grow in my Christian experience?**

"God designs that Christians shall grow continually, grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ. All who do not grow stronger, and become more firmly rooted and grounded in the truth, are continually retrograding."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 556.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "First the Blade, Then the Ear," pages 66-69.

**Part 6**  
**THYATIRA III**

**Promise: What is promised to the Thyatirians who overcome?**

**"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." Rev. 2:26-28.**

The overcomers will develop the opposition to sin that the believers of Thyatira had neglected. They are pictured here as breaking sinners like earthen pots.

"The tables will turn, and the saints who have been persecuted pilgrims and strangers in this rebel world will inherit and rule over the earth as was God's purpose in the beginning when He gave the dominion to Adam. The royal power and authority of Christ will be shared with His victorious saints, who constitute His bride and queen. . . .

"The new order of things must be preceded by the breaking up of the old. The Master Potter breaks the old so He can reconstruct the new. Christ breaks in pieces all the wicked nations so that He might restore the dominion of Adam and the kingdom of David with Himself as the King of kings and Lord of lords."—Taylor G. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ*, pages 174, 175.

**What was the special meaning of "overcome" for believers in Thyatira? Verse 20.**

**What is the meaning of the "morning star"? 2 Peter 1:19; Num. 24:17. Note Job 38:7.**

"In the hour of our deepest trial, Jesus will be our 'bright and morning star.'"—*Historical Sketches*, page 129.

**Appeal: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 2:29.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways am I "soft" on sin?**

"His [Christ's] power awaits the demand of those who would overcome. The reprover is to animate his hearers so that they shall strive for the mastery. He is to encourage them to struggle for deliverance from every sinful practice, to be free from every corrupt habit, even if his denial of self is like taking the right eye, or separating the right arm from the body. No concession or compromise is to be made to evil habits or sinful practices."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 380.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 380-382.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:5.





# Letters from Jesus 3

"Thirty miles southeast of Thyatira lay Sardis, one of the oldest and most storied cities in Asia Minor. . . . Sardis' greatest advantage was that it was the center of a knot of five different roads. One road led northwest to Thyatira and then on to Pergamos; another ran west to Smyrna, fifty-four miles away; another ran east and out to Phrygia; another ran southeast to Philadelphia and then on to the towns of the Maeander Valley; another led southwest to Ephesus, sixty-three miles away. . . .

"Sardis had been the ancient capital of the kingdom of Lydia, and away back in 560 B.C. Croesus, whose name has become a proverb for wealth, was its king. It is of interest to note that the first coinage ever to be minted in Asia Minor was minted in Sardis in the days of Croesus. . . . Sardis was the place where modern money was born."—William Barclay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pages 68, 69.

"Philadelphia commanded one of the greatest highways in the world, the highway which led from Europe to the East. Philadelphia was the gateway from one continent to another. . . .

"Further, it was an area rich in hot springs; and Philadelphia was, and still is, a center to which the infirm came to bathe in the medicinal waters. The products of Philadelphia's prosperity went out to the ends of the earth, and into it there came people from many a land in the search for health and healing."—

William Barclay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pages 79-81.

The congregation in Philadelphia was in a most advantageous position to spread the message of the free grace of Jesus Christ to men of all nations. The counsel to these members was that they needed to be wide-awake to their opportunities of witness and particularly to the opening providences of God.

The Sardis church represents the church in Reformation times. The Reformation is usually regarded as beginning in 1517. The closing date of the period would then be determined by the appropriate date to assign to the beginning of the Philadelphia period. The second advent awakening stands as the mark of the Philadelphia period. A precise date to divide these two periods is quite elusive, but 1798 has the advantage of marking the close of a period of Biblical prophecy and also of being near to the beginning of the nineteenth century during which the advent awakening occurred. Thus the approximate dates for the two churches are: Sardis, 1517-1798; Philadelphia, 1798-1844.

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Sardis I, Rev. 3:1
2. Sardis II, Rev. 3:2, 3
3. Sardis III, Rev. 3:4-6
4. Philadelphia I, Rev. 3:7, 8
5. Philadelphia II, Rev. 3:9-13
6. Philadelphia III

**Part 1**  
**SARDIS I**

**Instructions:** "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write." Rev. 3:1, first part.

**Identification:** What are the meanings of the two symbols by which Jesus identified Himself in the Sardis letter? See Revelation 1:4, 20.

"These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." Rev. 3:1, second part.

**Knowledge:** What did Jesus call attention to about their works?

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Verse 1, last part.

The church in Sardis lived on its reputation, but this no longer accorded with reality. This church was the opposite of Smyrna. Jesus lodged no reproof against Smyrna, and no commendation for Sardis. Everything was against Sardis. What virtue does death hold? and Sardis was dead.

What caused their death? In the identification Jesus hinted at the reasons. Jesus had the Spirit and the messengers. These they needed. Their religion had no living content. All religion dies without the Spirit and the human communicator. The religion of Sardis had become a form without the Spirit or the message. Only the shell remained.

"With God outward show weighs nothing. The outward forms of religion, without the love of God in the soul, are utterly worthless."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 p. 958.

"No amount of past experience will suffice for the present nor strengthen us to overcome the difficulties in our path. We must have new grace and fresh strength daily in order to be victorious."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 541.

"When the Saviour pointed out to His followers the signs of His return, He foretold the state of backsliding that would exist just prior to His second advent. . . .

"The condition of the church at this time is pointed out in the Saviour's words in the Revelation: 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.'"—*The Great Controversy*, pages 309, 310.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What do I personally need in order to be alive spiritually?**

"One may go through the whole round of religious activity, and yet, unless Christ is woven into all that he says and does, he will work for his own glory."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 958.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 508-510.

**Part 2** **Counsel: What five counsels did Jesus give to the Sardis church?**  
**SARDIS II**

**"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Rev. 3:2, 3.**

Sardis Christians were dead, but not hopeless. The "seven Spirits" and one of the seven angels Jesus would send for their spiritual resurrection. The counsel to watch points to the reason for their spiritual death. They fell asleep, and sleep became death.

"Those who have been born again remember with what joy and gladness they received the light of heaven, and how eager they were to tell everybody of their happiness. . . .

"'Hold fast.' This does not mean, Hold fast to your sins; but, Hold fast to the comfort, the faith, the hope, that God has given you in His Word. Never be discouraged. . . .

"We are to 'hold fast' and live up to all the light we receive from heaven. Why? Because God wants us to grasp the eternal truth, and act as His helping hand by communicating the light to those who are not acquainted with His love for them. . . .

"'And repent.' The life we live is to be one of continual repentance and humility. We need to repent constantly, that we may be constantly victorious. When we have true humility, we have victory. The enemy never can take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus!"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 959.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is my level of watchfulness?**

"I have a message from God to the sinners in Zion, the ones whom Christ addressed: 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.' You need to offer always the sacred fire; for then Christ's works, His love, His mercy, His righteousness, will ascend before God, as a cloud of holy, fragrant incense, wholly acceptable."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 357.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 610, 611.

**Part 3**      **Promise: What is the threefold promise to overcomers in**  
**SARDIS III**      **Sardis?**

**"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:4, 5.**

"Because of their faith this honor [to walk with Jesus in white] is bestowed on them. In this life they did not boast, nor lift up their souls unto vanity. With intensity of desire, with a pure, holy faith, they grasped the promise of eternal riches. Their one desire was to be like Christ. Ever they kept the standard of righteousness uplifted. To them is given an eternal weight of glory, because on the earth they walked with God, keeping themselves unspotted from the world, revealing to their fellow beings the righteousness of Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 960.

"How wonderful to know that even if our names are blotted from the record books of man and for the sake of the gospel we are disowned by friends and family, yet in heaven our High Priest claims us as His own and confesses our names before His Father! Honor and security are ours, and we can look confidently into the future, knowing that soon our Lord will come and receive us unto Himself."—R. A. Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, page 36.

**Appeal: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Verse 6.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

"Who is so favored as to be numbered among these few in Sardis? Are you? Am I? Who are among this number? Is it not best for us to inquire into this matter, in order that we may learn to whom the Lord refers when He says that a few have not stained their white robes of character?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 959.

"While they stay their mind upon Him who is their sun and their shield, the blackness and darkness that surround them will not leave one spot or stain upon their garments. They will walk with Christ. They will pray and believe and work to save the souls that are ready to perish. These are trying to break the bands that Satan has fastened upon them, and they will not be put to shame if by faith they will make Christ their companion."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 960.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 472.

**Part 4**  
**PHILADELPHIA I**

**Instruction:** "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write." Rev. 3:7, first part.

**Identification:** What are the three identifying marks of the Author of the letter to Philadelphia?

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." Verse 7, last part.

"He that is holy. This title is equivalent to 'the Holy One,' used of God in the OT (Isa. 40:25; Hab. 3:3). . . .

"Key of David. . . . Christ's possession of the 'key' represents His jurisdiction over the church and over the divine purpose to be achieved through it (see Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22). Compare Rev. 5:5; 22:16. . . .

"He that openeth. That is, with 'the key of David.' Christ has full authority to open and to shut, to carry the plan of redemption forward to success."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 3:7.

**Knowledge:** What commendable works did Jesus attribute to the Philadelphia Christians?

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Verse 8.

Philadelphia and Smyrna received only commendation from Jesus. The other five were rebuked. The Philadelphians had been faithful in spite of the opposition from the "synagogue of Satan."

**What is meant by the "open door" in verse eight?**

Verses seven and eight have a special historical significance to Seventh-day Adventists. Additional reading on this point is found in *Early Writings*, pages 42-45 and *Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 62-64.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways do I take advantage, or fail to take advantage, of the open door of communication with Jesus?**

"Let us thank God with heart and soul and voice; and let us learn to approach unto Him as through an open door, believing that we may come freely with our petitions, and that He will hear and answer. It is by a living faith in His power to help, that we shall receive strength to fight the battles of the Lord with the confident assurance of victory."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 961.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 428-430.

**Part 5**  
**PHILADELPHIA II**

**Knowledge, continued: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:9, 10.**

"Satan has a large confederacy, his church. Christ calls them the synagogue of Satan because the members are the children of sin. The members of Satan's church have been constantly working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil. Satan is working with great power in and through the children of disobedience to exalt treason and apostasy as truth and loyalty. And at this time the power of his satanic inspiration is moving the living agencies to carry out the great rebellion against God that commenced in heaven."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 16.

**Counsel: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Verse 11.**

**What did these believers have to hold fast to? Verse 8, last part.**

**Promise: What are the four parts of the promise? What do you think they mean?**

**"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Verse 12.**

"All who enter [the New Jerusalem] will have on the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the name of God will be seen in their foreheads. This name is the symbol which the apostle saw in vision, and signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God's commandments."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 370.

"The indelible mark of God is upon them [the sealed saints]. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed—'GOD, NEW JERUSALEM.' They are God's property, His possession."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 446.

**Appeal: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Verse 13.**

**THINK IT THROUGH  
FURTHER STUDY**

**With whom am I identified in my thoughts and attitudes?**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 549-551.

Part 6  
PHILADELPHIA III

The beginnings of the advent movement reach back into the period of church history represented by the Philadelphia church. Thus the Philadelphia period, along with Laodicea, has significance for Seventh-day Adventists in a way that the other five churches have not.

"Philadelphia represents that period in church history which was ushered in by the evangelical preaching of the Wesleys, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and a multitude of others. 'The world is my parish,' declared John Wesley, whose message of 'free grace' challenged the Calvinistic theology of 'election.' This evangelical movement became the prelude to the era of modern missions. . . .

"The Philadelphia period culminated in the great second-advent awakening of the nineteenth century. Through the study of Daniel and the Revelation, and the interpretation of Christ's own prophecy, a profound conviction came to Christendom that the return of Christ was at hand. . . . The prophetic periods of the 1260 days, as relating to the antichrist, and the 2300 days, which relate to the message of the judgment, received particular attention. Prophetic conferences convened, and these gave impetus to one of the greatest eras of preaching since the days of the apostles."—R. A. Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, pages 38, 39.

The Philadelphia period led up to the time when our Lord entered upon the closing phase of His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary. In the earthly sanctuary there was a daily service, and also a yearly service—the Day of Atonement. This was regarded as a day of judgment when the high priest climaxed his mediatorial work for Israel. That service was a type of Christ's priestly work in heaven. Having entered the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, He is now our Judge in the pre-advent judgment. From our earliest days, Seventh-day Adventists have believed that this work began in 1844. When our High Priest finishes His work of intercession, the door of mercy will close forever. But today it is an "open door" for all who will accept His grace and be saved. Soon it will be too late.

THINK IT THROUGH

**What meaning do the early days of the advent movement have for me?**

"In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."—*Life Sketches*, page 196.

FURTHER STUDY

*Early Writings*, pages 240-250.

# letters from Jesus 4



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



## LESSON 5

April 28 to May 4

"The town of Laodicea lay forty-three miles southeast of Philadelphia and about a hundred miles from Ephesus. . . . To add to its importance, there came three great roads to center upon Laodicea. . . . Laodicea was founded by Antiochus the Second. . . . [of] the royal house of kings known as the Seleucids. . . . Now, wherever these Seleucids founded a city, it was their regular policy to offer free citizenship to all Jews who cared to accept it, for the Jews were useful citizens and brought money and trade to every city in which they settled. . . .

"Laodicea was a notably wealthy city. It was the center of the banking arrangements of Asia Minor. When Cicero was traveling in the East in 51 B.C., it was in Laodicea that he cashed his letter of credit. . . . A very considerable part of the wealth of Laodicea came from the cloth and the clothing industry. . . .

"In Laodicea was a famous medical school, and in particular it was famous for two kinds of medicine . . . to cure sore ears. But above all it was famous for a certain eye powder. . . .

"The Laodiceans were the people who put their trust in material prosperity, in outward luxury, and in physical health. . . .

"The church of Laodicea stands as a warning to those who remember intensely that man has a body and forget completely that man has a soul! It stands as a warning to those who put their trust in material things and who leave out God."—William Barclay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pages 90-95.

The Laodicea period began in 1844—the last of the seven churches. This message of Christ partakes of the keynote of the entire book of Revelation: *victory!* "And I saw . . . them that had gotten the victory." Rev. 15:2. The instructions given by Christ are personal directives. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Rev. 3:20. This message of victory and personal heart appeal becomes strongly focused in this message. This is the last church to which Christ speaks, and its importance deserves at least one week of our full attention.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. Laodicea, Rev. 3:14
2. Laodicea, Rev. 3:15, 16.
3. Laodicea, Rev. 3:17
4. Laodicea, Rev. 3:18
5. Laodicea, Rev. 3:19
6. Laodicea, Rev. 3:20-22

**Part 1**  
**LAODICEA**

**Instructions:** "And unto the angel of the church of the laodiceans write." Rev. 3:14, first part.

**Identification:** By what three appellations does Jesus identify Himself to the believers of Laodicea?

**"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Verse 14, last part.**

Both Hebrews and Christians have used "amen" as an acclamation, to give confirmation to the words spoken by another in worship. Amen as a name for Jesus points to Him as the One who has confirmed God's word in human life. He was the faithful and true Witness, and thus the message in His letter to Laodicea was trustworthy. He knew the truth and stated it.

**"Beginning.** Gr. *archē*, a word that has both a passive and an active sense. Taken passively, it refers to that which is acted upon at the beginning. So interpreted here, it would mean that Christ was the first creature created. But this obviously could not be the correct translation, for Christ is not a created being. Taken actively, *archē* refers to that which initiates an action, a first cause, a prime mover. So understood here, it declares Christ to be the Creator. Such is plainly the meaning of the present passage, for Christ is portrayed repeatedly in this same role elsewhere in the NT."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 3:14.

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. . . . In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him. . . .

"He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son."—*Evangelism*, page 615.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways does my life fail of sounding an "Amen" to the "Amen" of Jesus?**

"By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, 'I have declared unto them Thy name,'—'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,'—'that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 19.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 22, 23.

**Part 2** Knowledge: What is Jesus' description of the Laodicean's works?  
**LAODICEA**

**"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Rev. 3:15, 16.**

Jesus here described the relationship of the church to Himself. He judged them on a scale of three points: (1) hot, (2) cold, or (3) lukewarm, listed in order of preference.

"The word for cold is *psuchros*; and it can mean cold to the point of freezing. . . . The word for hot is *zestos*; and it means hot to the boiling point. The word for tepid is *chliaros* . . . a nauseating effect."—William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, p. 178.

"The message to the Laodicean church applies most decidedly to those whose religious experience is insipid, who do not bear decided witness in favor of the truth."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 962.

"Were you cold, there would be some hope that you would be converted; but where self-righteousness girds one about, instead of the righteousness of Christ, the deception is so difficult to be seen, and the self-righteousness so hard to be put away, that the case is the most difficult to reach. An unconverted, godless sinner stands in a more favorable condition than such."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 176.

**THINK IT THROUGH****Where do I fit on the "warmth scale" of Christian living?**

"The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. . . . They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. *They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith.*

"The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease. They are neither cold nor hot; they occupy a neutral position, and at the same time flatter themselves that they are in need of nothing. The True Witness hates this lukewarmness. He loathes the indifference of this class of persons. Said He: 'I would thou wert cold or hot.' Like lukewarm water, they are nauseous to His taste. They are neither unconcerned nor selfishly stubborn. They do not engage thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests; but they hold aloof and are ready to leave their posts when their worldly personal interests demand it. The internal work of grace is wanting in their hearts."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, pp. 87, 88. (Emphasis supplied.)

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, pp. 83-87.

**Part 3**  
**LAODICEA**

**Knowledge, continued: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3:17.**

The message to Laodicea is the opposite of the message to Smyrna. In spite of Smyrna's poverty Jesus declares her to be rich. In spite of Laodicea's wealth Jesus declares her to be impoverished.

While Jesus finds nothing to commend in Laodicea, He lovingly points out their need and tenderly appeals to them to repent.

Laodicean believers imagine themselves wealthy in Christian graces, and fancy themselves well-off. They know not their true poverty.

"The Laodicean message is applicable to the church at this time. Do you believe this message? Have you hearts that feel? Or are you constantly saying, We are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing? . . .

"The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. We are not to be selfish in anything. Every phase of the Christian life is to be a representation of the life of Christ. If it is not, we shall hear the terrible words, 'I know you not.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 961, 962.

**THINK IT THROUGH****How can I discover the ways in which I am self-deceived?**

"It is when the vital principles of the kingdom of God are lost sight of, that ceremonies become multitudinous and extravagant. It is when the character building is neglected, when the adornment of the soul is lacking, when the simplicity of godliness is despised, that pride and love of display demand magnificent church edifices, splendid adornings, and imposing ceremonials. But in all this God is not honored. He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ's representatives.

"A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attractions of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 565, 566.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 252-254.

**Part 4** **Counsel: What three counsels did Jesus give to Laodicea?**  
**LAODICEA**

**"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."**  
**Rev. 3:18.**

In verse 17 Jesus identifies the lukewarm condition of the Laodicean believers as self-satisfaction—they felt no need. These counsels correspond to the poverty, nakedness, and blindness in verse 17.

The description of a Laodicean condition begins: "I know thy works."

**What elements of the Christian life form the base of works? See Paul's answer in Galatians 5:6.**

"The gold mentioned by Christ, the True Witness, which all must have, has been shown me to be faith and love combined, and love takes the precedence of faith."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 36.

"The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ that may be wrought into the character. Purity of heart, purity of motive, will characterize every one who is washing his robe, and making it white in the blood of the Lamb.

"The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. The 'eyesalve,' the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application; for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 965.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is my true spiritual condition? How shall I know whether or not I am "blind"?**

"Brethren and sisters, are your thoughts after this order? 'These sharp, decided words do not mean me; I am in a fairly good condition spiritually, though I may not have all the fervor and zeal that some have. I believe the truth. Those to whom this message belongs may take it. I think some need it.' You who think and reason thus, be assured that you are the very ones to whom this message belongs. While the costly wares of heaven are open before you, draw nigh and buy that which you have lost—the gold of love and faith, and the white raiment which is the righteousness of Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 964, 965.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 214-216.

**Part 5**  
**LAODICEA**

**Counsel, continued: How does the Christian “buy” (Rev. 3:18) the spiritual wares of the heavenly Merchant? Are there any other elements in buying besides paying? See Isaiah 55:1.**

“Make some effort. These precious treasures will not drop upon us without some exertion on our part. We must buy—‘be zealous and repent’ of our lukewarm state. We must be awake to see our wrongs, to search for our sins, and to zealously repent of them.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 142.

**What encouragement to zeal and repentance did Jesus give? Rev. 3:19.**

The Greek for “zealous” is related to “hot” in verse 15.

“It is evident that the Laodiceans are not a rejected and cast-off people as some contend. ‘Sharp has been His rebuke to this lukewarm church. But it does not mean that He had turned away and abandoned them, or was about to do so. It means *just the reverse*. For He was standing near, and ready to supply their need, and to enrich them with all His treasure; and His rebuke was a proof of His unchanging love.’ (Philip Mauro, *Of Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass*, page 135.) . . .

“How different is the attitude of Christ toward His remnant people from that of their enemies, whose rebuke is the rebuke of hate; whose motive is to tear down and destroy. It is Christ who reproves His people, and He alone is qualified, because of His unchanging love. He has never delegated this work to enemies or disgruntled apostates, whose purpose is to scatter those whom Christ has gathered within His fold and to tear down what He has built up. Those who receive the Laodicean message as coming from Christ because of His love will never join those who denounce the church as being rejected by Him and unworthy of His love. . . .

“The genuine Christian will make a personal application of the Laodicean message to his own life rather than use it to denounce and discourage others.”—Taylor G. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ*, pages 244, 245.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What lesson for the human relationships of the Christian is found in the appeal of Jesus to the Laodiceans in verse 19?**

“I saw that this call to the Laodicean church will affect souls. A becoming zeal is called for by God on our part. We must repent, throw away our whole feelings, feel our destitution, buy gold that we may be rich, eyesalve that we may see, white raiment that we may be clothed.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 966.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 141-143.

**Part 6**      **Counsel, continued: What is the door in verse 20? Who**  
**LAODICEA**      **knocks, and who opens?**

**"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20.**

"The form of the Greek verb implies that Christ has taken His stand at the door and remains there. He never tires of offering His blessed presence to all who will receive Him."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 3:20.

"A door is either the means of entrance or a barrier against it. It either lets a person in or keeps him out, according to the will of the householder. The locks and bars are on the inside. The door that keeps the Saviour out is barred by the sinner, and He cannot enter till the barriers are removed."—Taylor G. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ*, page 248.

**Promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:21.**

The victory to be gained by the believer is the same victory Jesus gained, and it must be gained in the same spirit of submission. He chose the will of the Father in preference to His own will. He conquered by the Spirit's power. The believer who shares Jesus' victory will share also His reward.

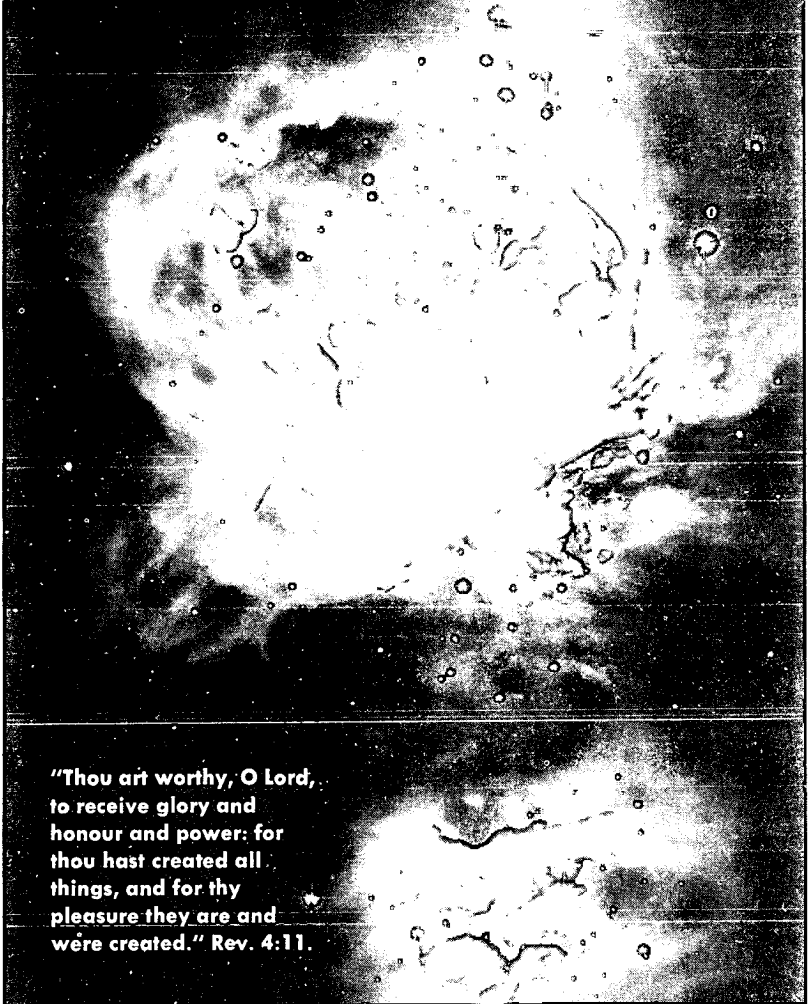
**Appeal: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 3:22.**

The message to Laodicea, and to the other six churches as well, was the gospel message presented according to the needs of each church. Each message was presented through symbols that were appropriate to each city. The Spirit, who spoke in each letter, still illuminates the gospel for our personal circumstances if only we will listen.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **What is meant in experience by the words of Jesus "sit with me in my throne"?**

"The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 324.

**FURTHER STUDY**      *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Two Worshipers," pages 158-163.



**"Thou art worthy, O Lord,  
to receive glory and  
honour and power: for  
thou hast created all  
things, and for thy  
pleasure they are and  
were created." Rev. 4:11.**

# IN PRAISE OF GOD

Suddenly the reader of Revelation finds his attention shifted from the seven churches in Asia to the center of the universe. He has read of human believers and their problems in the battle with Satan. Now his thoughts are directed to the throne of the universe and the nature of the One who occupies it. It is a strong contrast, from viewing poor, weak, mortals to beholding the





holy and eternal God. John does not emphasize the contrast. Rather he sees in chapter five that God fights the same foe that the believers of Asia Minor fought. But that is going ahead of this week's lesson.

The scenes and songs of chapter four establish the basis of the praise and worship of God. Why is this necessary? Because an assumption of a controversy underlies Revelation. First hinted at in chapter 1:5 where John refers to Jesus as having freed us from sin by His blood, it surfaces every time a promise is made to the overcomer throughout the seven letters.

Further, in the letters the controversy shows up in the opposition to:

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The Nicolaitanes        | 5. The soiled garments of believers |
| 2. The synagogue of Satan  | 6. Again the synagogue of Satan     |
| 3. The teachings of Balaam | 7. The lukewarmness of believers    |
| 4. Jezebel                 |                                     |

The information revealed in chapter four not only describes the essential characteristic of God, but also vindicates Him from accusations that He is unworthy to stand at the head of the universe.

The statement in verse 1, "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," should warn us that this vision of God on His throne serves to introduce the vision and does not stand alone.

Ezekiel saw a vision of God similar to the vision John reports in Revelation 4. Ellen G. White wrote of Ezekiel's vision:

"While nations have rejected God's principles, and in this rejection have wrought their own ruin, yet a divine, overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages. It was this that the prophet Ezekiel saw in the wonderful representation given him during his exile in the land of the Chaldeans, when before his astonished gaze were portrayed the symbols that revealed an overruling Power that has to do with the affairs of earthly rulers."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 535.

The scope of Revelation exceeds that of Ezekiel, for it deals specifically with the controversy with Satan (see chapter 12). Ellen White, when speaking of the rainbow above the throne, stated that "it testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His people in their struggle with evil."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 493. The vision of the throne assures the reader that God is in charge of the universe because He has the right to be in charge, and He will not forsake the battle against sin.

## **LESSON OUTLINE**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>The Throne, Rev. 4:1, 2</b>           | 4. <b>The Living Creatures' Song, Rev. 4:8</b>        |
| 2. <b>Around the Throne I, Rev. 4:4, 5</b>  | 5. <b>Worship by Twenty-four Elders, Rev. 4:9, 10</b> |
| 3. <b>Around the Throne II, Rev. 4:5, 6</b> | 6. <b>The Twenty-four Elders' Song, Rev. 4:11</b>     |

**Part 1**  
**THE THRONE**

**Who was the speaker noted in verse 1? Compare Rev. 1:10-13.**

**"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Rev. 4:1.**

In vision John is taken to heaven. However, everything that he sees in heaven is not actually there. For instance, Mrs. White said, "Satan *appeared* to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God." She later explained this comment: "Neither did I ever think that any mortal could suppose that I believed that Satan was actually in the New Jerusalem. But did not John see the great red dragon in heaven?"—*Early Writings*, page 92. The mention of a lamb in John's report confirms the symbolic nature of this vision.

**What first attracted John's attention? Rev. 4:2.**

Throughout chapter 4 the throne holds the center of attention. John uses the word 12 times. The persons and objects that John saw were oriented to the throne, and the activity recorded here focused on it. A throne denotes sovereignty. It is the official chair for the ruler of the realm.

**What was John's description of the King? Rev. 4:3.**

The rainbow connects this scene with the Flood story, where the bow symbolizes God's promise never to flood the world again.

"As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; man could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God.

"It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation full and complete."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 1071, 1072.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"God's appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit. The throne of grace itself is occupied by One who permits us to call Him Father."—Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 177.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 832-835.

**Part 2**  
**AROUND THE**  
**THRONE I**

**Whom did John see around the throne?**

**"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." Rev. 4:4.**

There has been much speculation about the identity of the twenty-four elders. The speculation has not generally aided in understanding the book of Revelation. In today's lesson we will note the place they hold in the picture John has described in chapter 4, but let us forego the effort at positive identification.

The vision of the throne is a symbolic one. The elders have meaning, and we shall seek meaning rather than identity.

In Israel the word "elder" designated a person holding an "official rank and position among their brethren. . . . God directed Moses to choose 70 elders to aid him in his great responsibility of governing Israel."—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, page 301. In the Christian church the word "elder" referred to a church leader. In both the Old and New Testaments there was a responsibility of service delegated to an elder.

These twenty-four elders serve at the throne of God. Seated on thrones, they apparently participate in the administration of the universe.

**What proceeded out of the throne? Rev. 4:5.**

These evidences of storm contrast with the rainbow about the throne. Thunder and lightning accompanied the giving of the law on Sinai. The bow declared God's mercy. The thunder and lightning declared His justice.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Summarize the meanings of the symbols in verses 1-5. What is the message?**

"It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation full and complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world's Redeemer and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.' We know that the gospel is a perfect and complete system, revealing the immutability of the law of God. It inspires the heart with hope, and with love for God. Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is sacrificed to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1072.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 414, 415.

**Part 3**  
**AROUND THE**  
**THRONE II**

**What was the meaning of the seven lamps?**

**"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Rev. 4:5.**

The seven lamps spoken of here (*lampas*) are not the same seven candlesticks spoken of in Revelation 1:13 (*luchnos*). The seven lamps are equated with one Spirit (Zech. 4:2-6) which is the Spirit of God (Rev. 3:1). They symbolize not only the continual presence of God, as did the lamps in the earthly sanctuary (Ex. 37:23), but also the sevenfold fullness of the Spirit given to the church. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 37, 38.

**What beings did John see on each side of the throne? Verses 6, 7, RSV.**

These symbolic creatures resemble those seen by Ezekiel. Ellen G. White interpreted them simply as "heavenly beings." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 751.

If we interpret the meaning of these four faces according to the characteristics of each we can find the following Biblical definitions:

Lion—strength. Rev. 5:5; Gen. 49:9.

Calf (ox)—loyalty and sacrifice. Isa. 1:3; see *Gospel Workers*, page 294.

Man—intelligence and choice. Gen. 1:27; Joshua 24: 14, 15.

Eagle—swiftness. Deut. 28:49.

John described these four creatures as "full of eyes." Eyes are used in Revelation 5:6 to represent the fullness of the Spirit. The angels are full of God's Spirit and are channels to disseminate His blessings, watchcare, and concern.

"The seraphim before the throne are so filled with reverential awe in beholding the glory of God that they do not for an instant look upon themselves with self-complacency, or in admiration of themselves or one another. Their praise and glory are for the Lord of Hosts. . . . They are fully satisfied to glorify God; and in His presence, beneath His smile of approbation, they wish for nothing more. In bearing His image, in doing His service and worshiping Him, their highest ambition is fully reached."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1140.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What lessons can I learn for my own experience from the service of the seraphim?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 39, 40.

**Part 4**  
**THE LIVING**  
**CREATURES' SONG**

**What was the song that the living creatures constantly sang?**

**"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Rev. 4:8.**

The description of the throne and its surroundings in the first part of chapter 4 have been given by John to provide the setting for this song. Other songs follow throughout Revelation. These songs present the basic message of the Apocalypse. Therefore special attention will be given to these songs as we come to them in our study of Revelation.

**What three attributes of God are included in this song?**

The holiness of God can also be expressed in positive terms, but in a sinful world God's holiness can be most readily grasped as opposition to sin as expressed in His law. In the book of Revelation the starting point of the entire message is God's unalterable opposition to sin. Without this there is no controversy, and the existence of controversy is a basic assumption in Revelation.

This brief song expresses what God is like in His (1) character (holy), (2) position (Lord God Almighty), and (3) existence (was, is, is to come). These three attributes are the root of (1) morality, (2) order, and (3) life. The God of morality, order, and life is the source from whom the universe springs.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I grow in reverence for the Almighty, while growing in love for Him as my Heavenly Father?**

"To the omnipotence of the King of kings our covenant-keeping God unites the gentleness and care of the tender shepherd. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to all who trust in Him. He has means for the removal of every difficulty, that those who serve Him and respect the means He employs may be sustained. His love is as far above all other love as the heavens are above the earth. He watches over His children with a love that is measureless and everlasting."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 481, 482.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 252.

**Part 5**  
**WORSHIP BY**  
**24 ELDERS**

In the scene of chapter 4 what happened when the living creatures sang?

**“And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.” Rev. 4:9, 10.**

The purpose of chapter four is to reveal God the Father and the ways in which He is related to the living universe. The song of the living creatures revealed the attributes that God possesses in Himself. The elders then had a message to add to that of the creatures. That message we will study tomorrow. Today we will note the acts of worship by the elders.

In the act of worship, the elders fell down before God. The utmost reverence is the only appropriate approach to God. A flippant approach to God in the worship service does not correspond to His majesty. “Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? . . . As I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, ‘Get down upon your knees.’ This is the proper position always.”—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 311.

They also cast down their crowns before the throne. This was a spontaneous gesture, expressive of their inmost attitudes. No stoic unresponsiveness here. This can come only when there is a living, loving relationship with Him who is altogether lovely. “The evil of formal worship cannot be too strongly depicted, but no words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When human beings sing with the spirit and the understanding, heavenly musicians take up the strain.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 143.

“To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ’s representatives, are God’s appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 491.

“The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God’s instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 493.

**THINK IT THROUGH**  
**FURTHER STUDY**

**Why should man be reverent to God?**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 491-494.

**Part 6**  
**THE 24 ELDERS'**  
**SONG**

**Why is God worthy to be worshiped?**

**"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11.**

"The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. 'All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.' Psalm 96:5. 'To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.' 'Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else.' Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: 'Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.' 'O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.' Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things.' Revelation 4:11." —*The Great Controversy*, pages 436, 437.

The message of the song of the living creatures centered on what God is in character, position, and existence. The message of the song of the 24 elders centered on what God has done. Because God created all things, then it is appropriate that every intelligent being shall voluntarily praise God for giving to them their existence.

The two songs are the important parts of chapter 4. They convey important information about God that could not be known by seeing Him and His surroundings. Even in God's presence these vital truths take the form of a verbal message.

These two messages prepare the reader for the scenes presented in chapter 5.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What or whom do I regard supremely, judging by the course of my life?**

"Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the source and sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 56.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 33, 34.

# **in praise**

"The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. Henceforth the Saviour was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens."

—"The Desire of Ages," page 757.



**"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. 5:13.**

# of Jesus

Ellen G. White comments: "The fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days. There are some who are deceived. They do not realize what is coming on the earth. Those who have permitted their minds to become beclouded in regard to what constitutes sin are fearfully deceived. Unless they make a decided change they will be found wanting when God pronounces judgment upon the children of men. They have transgressed the law and broken the everlasting covenant, and they will receive according to their works."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 267.

In the fifth chapter the action centers around God, who holds a book; the Lamb, Jesus, who takes the book in His own hand; and the response of created beings to the Lamb's action. Thus is presented symbolically the entrusting of a special work to Jesus Christ that leads to universal acclamation.

There is much to think about in this chapter, and the lesson for this week does not exhaust the topic. The lesson presents a point of beginning, but there is much that lies beyond. To think through the meaning of this chapter is to center the thoughts on Jesus and His relation to the Father and to the created beings of the universe. Note the symbols, the action, and the songs, and seek the meaning of this vision that unfolds the work that is placed in Jesus' hands.

## **LESSON OUTLINE**

- 1. The Angel's Question,**  
Rev. 5:1-4
- 2. The Elder's Answer,**  
Rev. 5:5
- 3. The Lamb, Rev. 5:6**
- 4. Creatures' and Elders' Song,**  
Rev. 5:9, 10
- 5. The Angels' Song, Rev. 5:11, 12**
- 6. Universal Song, Rev. 5:13, 14**

**Part 1**  
**THE ANGEL'S**  
**QUESTION**

**Who held the sealed scroll? Rev. 5:1.**

He whom the attendants about the throne acclaimed holy, mighty, eternal, and worthy of worship because He created all things, John saw holding a sealed scroll. It was perfectly sealed—7 seals—and all writing space was filled. Who wrote the scroll? Who sealed it? The record states only that the Creator held the scroll in His hand.

Ellen G. White wrote the following very revealing remark about the scroll:

"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 294.

**What question did the "strong angel" ask? What response did he receive?**

**"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." Rev. 5:2, 3.**

By implication the above quotation from *Christ's Object Lessons* can lead us to view the record of Lucifer's rebellion as the "sealed book." Lucifer disguised himself in such a way that his true purposes could not immediately be revealed to created beings. "Until fully developed it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was; . . . [on the other hand] God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 41, 42.

"Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 764.

How would Satan and other rebels ever be brought to judgment? The sealed scroll posed this basic question.

**In vision, what was John's reaction to the unavailability of a man to open the scroll? Rev. 5:4.**

What circumstance ever came to the hand of God that would cause one to weep? "The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. . . . Angels ceased their songs of praise. Throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin that sin had wrought."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 63.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 761-764.

**Part 2**  
**THE ELDER'S**  
**ANSWER**

**Who was found to open the sealed scroll?**

**"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Rev. 5:5.**

These two names are Messianic symbols. See Genesis 49:9, 10 and Isaiah 11:1, 10. Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah, the family of David. A promise of rulership accompanied the designation of Judah as a lion, and a promise of the Spirit and wisdom accompanied the prophecy of the Root. This is to say that Jesus was another David—not just another king but one led by the Spirit and successful in kingship.

**Why could Jesus open the scroll? Verse 5, last part.**

The ability to open the scroll resided in Jesus, not because He bore the symbolic names, but because He lived up to His names—He conquered. Whom had He conquered?

"Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, 'It is finished.' John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 758.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I be a conquerer over Satan and self as Jesus was?**

"Lessons need to be learned by all who shall step into places where they are to be proved and tested by God, to see whether they shall be registered day by day as faithful and true stewards of God's entrusted talents. Have they shown that they have the fear of God before them, whether they are dealing with superiors, inferiors, or equals? They need to cherish the truth as an abiding principle, that it may sanctify the soul. The creating, transforming power of God's Holy Spirit will make them copartners with Jesus Christ. Yoked up with Christ, they can be more than conquerors through Him."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 328.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 758, 759.

**Part 3**  
**THE LAMB**

**What was the condition of the Lamb as John saw Him?**

**"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Rev. 5:6.**

The One whom John now saw as a Lamb had been named a Lion by one of the elders. The Lion was a Lamb.

"These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejecters of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 589.

When John later saw symbols of Satan and earthly powers, he saw beasts of prey. When he saw a symbol of Jesus, he saw a Lamb. The kingdom of Jesus stands on truth proclaimed in love. The world's kingdoms stand on coercion and force. The lamblike quality of Jesus describes the method of His kingdom. The lionlike quality describes the results.

The Lamb John saw was a dying Lamb, wounded by the sacrificial knife. This weak creature took the scroll because He could open it. At the center of the prophecy of the seven seals was the death of Jesus. Without this the scroll would remain perfectly sealed.

"As Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, 'It is finished' (John 19:30), a shout of triumph rang through every world and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror. His death had answered the question whether the Father and the Son had sufficient love for man to exercise self-denial and a spirit of sacrifice. Satan had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he had ruled the children of men who were under his power, he would have manifested if permitted to control the intelligences of heaven. With one voice the loyal universe united in extolling the divine administration."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 69, 70.

"The Lamb of God is represented before us as in the midst of the throne of God. He is the great ordinance by which man and God are united and commune together. Thus men are represented as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the appointed place of meeting between God and humanity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 967.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 63-65.

**Part 4**  
**CREATURES' AND**  
**ELDERS' SONG**

**In the "new song" what elements combined to define "worthy"?**

**"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. 5:9, 10.**

In Revelation 4:11 God is proclaimed as worthy of worship because He created all things. In Revelation 5:9, 10 the Lamb, Jesus, is pronounced worthy because He died to redeem men. The song is new because the experience is new.

"Holy angels will join in the song of the redeemed. Though they cannot sing from experimental knowledge, 'He hath washed us in His own blood, and redeemed us unto God,' yet they understand the great peril from which the people of God have been saved. Were they not sent to lift up for them a standard against the enemy? They can fully sympathize with the glowing ecstasy of those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 922.

The one who would open the scroll needed not merely the ability to open it, but also the worth to open it.

Observe that redemption is not included in the scroll. Because Jesus provided redemption, He can open the scroll. Besides redemption the only other relation of men to Jesus is judgment. Jesus provided redemption. He is qualified to bring the rebellion to judgment. See Further Study reference.

Beginning with this song both the meaning of the songs and the composition of the choir escalate, reaching a peak in verse 13.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I develop a greater appreciation for Jesus?**

"The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, 'Our Father.'"—*The Great Controversy*, page 652.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 266, 267.

**Part 5**  
**THE ANGELS' SONG**

**What group next joined in singing praise to the Lamb?**

**"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:11, 12.**

The previous song ascribed worthiness to Jesus to open the sealed scroll, that is to judge the rebellion. This song states that Jesus is worthy to receive worship. His worthiness to receive worship accompanies the statement of His death. The death of Jesus unmasked Satan's character and vindicated the character of God. The angels were unprepared to grasp the true nature of Lucifer's rebellion when he was cast out of heaven. Now both issues have been clarified to their satisfaction, but final resolution of the problem must await the fuller revelation of the issues before the people of earth.

In regard to the ascension of Jesus, Ellen White wrote:

"With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' Rev. 5:12."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 834.

**What specific gifts was Jesus worthy to receive? Verse 12.**

**How many were there? What is the implication?**

"All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. All these armies are in the service of the Prince of heaven, exalting the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. They are working for Christ under His commission, to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him. These heavenly intelligences are speeding on their mission, doing for Christ that which Herod and Pilate did against Him. They confederate together to uphold the honor and glory of God. They are united in a holy alliance, in a grand and sublime unity of purpose, to show forth the power and compassion and love and glory of the crucified and risen Saviour."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 968.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"In their service, these armies of heaven illustrate what the church of God should be."—Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 968.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pages 832-835.

**Part 6**      **What additional singers joined with the angel choir? Rev.**  
**UNIVERSAL SONG**      **5:13, 14.**

"From the standpoint of ancient cosmology, heaven, earth, under the earth, and sea constitute the entire universe."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 5:13.

**To whom was this song addressed? Verse 13.**

The singers addressed previous songs to only one divine person. The universal choir linked God and the Lamb together, giving both the same praise in the same song. In writing about events just before the destruction of sin, Ellen G. White states:

"Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man's behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named."—*The Great Controversy*, page 671.

Then after the destruction of sin:

"As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. [Rev. 5:13 quoted.]"—*The Great Controversy*, page 678.

**Who said "Amen"? Verse 14. Who sang the first song? Rev. 4:8.**

Note the crescendo that builds up in chapters four and five, and the return to the beings in the immediate presence of God.

By "Amen," and the falling down in worship, these beings who had previously affirmed the reasons for worship of God now confirm and assent to the worship of God and the Lamb jointly for eternity.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Reread Revelation 4 and 5.**

"The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. . . . That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe."—*The Great Controversy*, page 651.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 670, 671, 678.

At the beginning of our study of the opening of the seals we quote again the significant statement by Ellen G. White:

"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 294.

Seventh-day Adventists have usually interpreted the seven seals as historical periods in the Christian dispensation. This view will

# A Preview of Judgment



be presented in this week's lesson. However, in the light of the spirit of prophecy statement above it is clear that the opening of the sealed scroll is still future and has to do with the time of judgment. However the seals are interpreted, it must not be thought that the scroll itself, or any portion of it is being opened at the time of the historical period represented by each seal. The events described give "flashback" pictures that will be presented in the judgment to give evidence that will condemn those on trial.

The material presented in Revelation 6 must be regarded as a preview of a flashback—which is another way of saying that in the seals are presented, usually symbolically, the events in history that will be of particular significance in the judgment of the wicked.

In *The Great Controversy*, pages 666-669, Ellen White described the scene when "the books of record are opened" after the millennium. This description includes the "flashback" pictures of events in the great controversy which are presented before the lost, and then a description of Satan's recall of all he did to thwart God's plan. Thus the evidence includes what God has done for men as well as what Satan and his followers have done against God and other beings.

There is the further consideration that "like the messages to the seven churches, the scenes revealed when the seals are opened may be regarded as having both a specific and a general application. . . . The scenes may be viewed as particularly significant of successive phases in the history of the church on earth."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 775.

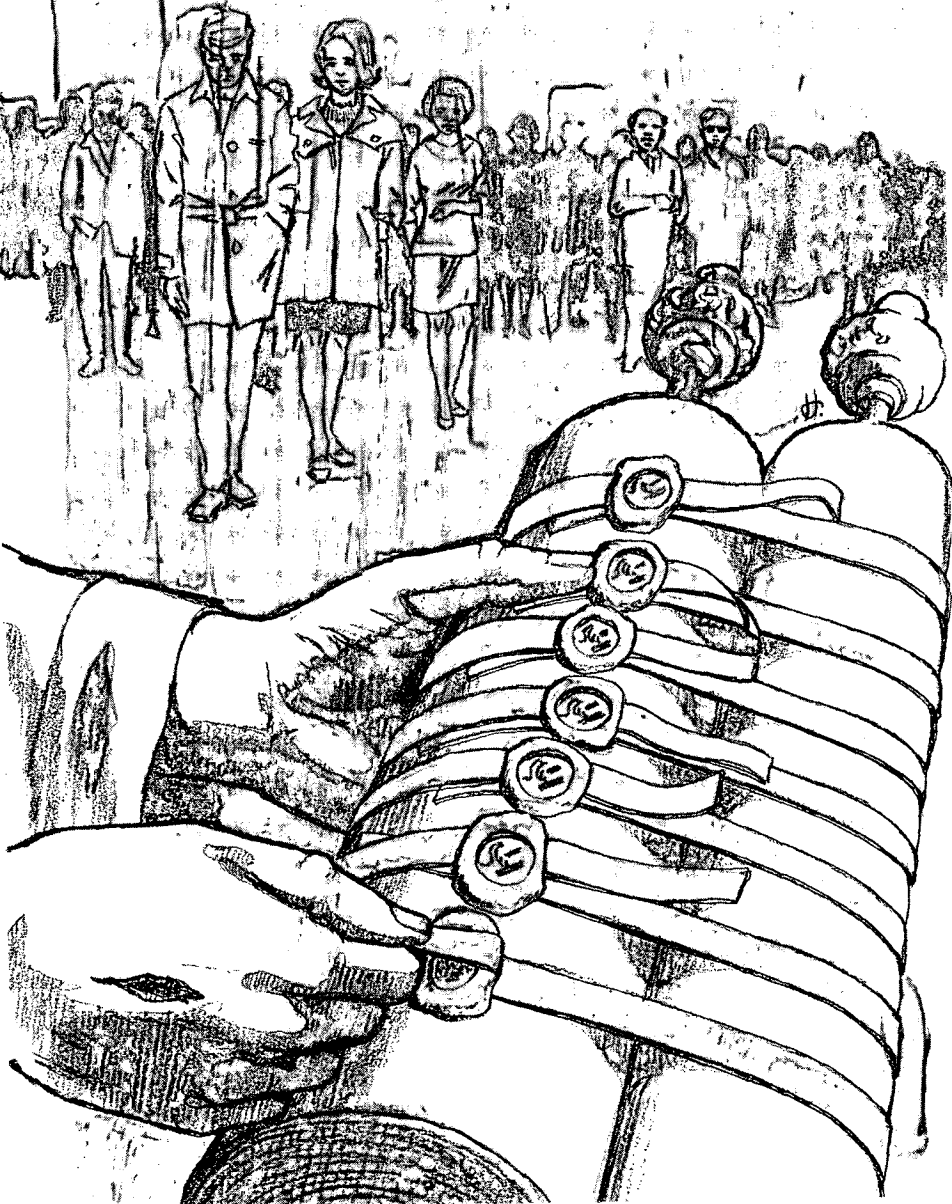
For each seal we will note its corresponding historical period and the general application of its meaning.

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. The White Horse, Rev. 6:1, 2
2. The Red Horse, Rev. 6:3, 4
3. The Black Horse, Rev. 6:5, 6
4. The Pale Horse, Rev. 6:7, 8
5. The Martyrs, Rev. 6:9-11
6. The Coming of Jesus, Rev. 6:12-17



"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Rev. 6:12, 13.



**Part 1**  
**THE WHITE HORSE**

**What scene came to John's view when the first seal was broken?**

**"Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say, as with a voice of thunder, 'Come!' And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." Rev. 6:1, 2, RSV.**

*Historical:* Biblically the horse represents war (Joel 2:1, 4, 5; Rev. 19:11, 12), and the equipment of the rider identifies him as a warrior. The horses of Revelation ought not to be compared with the horses of Zechariah 6:2, 3; for though there are some similarities, the order of the horses is different, and those in Zechariah draw chariots and bear no riders. See *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 776.

White is the symbol of both purity and victory. And the rider being crowned and bearing a bow is an impressive symbol of the pure church during the first century of the Christian era going forth "conquering and to conquer."

**What was Paul's statement to the believers in Rome? Rom. 1:8.**

"What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. . . . The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 48.

*General:* Jesus is the conqueror (Rev. 5:5), both personally, and as above, through His church. The success of the gospel is assured. The victory of Jesus at Calvary will be presented before the hosts of the lost in the last judgment. See Further Study reference below.

"Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. . . . The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan."—*The Great Controversy*, page 510.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways should I more fully join in Jesus' conquest of the rebellion of sin?**

"But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 471.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 666, 667.

Part 2  
THE RED HORSE

What was the action of the rider of the red horse?

**"When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, 'Come!' And out came another horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that men should slay one another; and he was given a great sword." Rev. 6:3, 4, RSV.**

*Historical:* This period of church history corresponds to the church of Smyrna or the period of pagan persecution (about A.D. 100-313).

The overall attitude of Rome toward Christ and His followers, though punctuated by tolerance, can be best summed up by the persecution under Diocletian (A.D. 284-305). "He, like Decius and Aurelius before him, felt that Christianity was a menace and that the State must either destroy or yield to it, and in consequence instituted the most ruthless persecution."—*SDA Bible Student's Source Book*, page 729.

"In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. . . . 'The blood of Christians is seed.'"—*The Story of Redemption*, page 321.

*General:* "Satan was 'a murderer from the beginning' (John 8:44); and as soon as he had obtained power over the human race, he not only prompted them to hate and slay one another, but, the more boldly to defy the authority of God, he made the violation of the sixth commandment a part of their religion."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 337.

"While men are ignorant of his devices, this vigilant foe [Satan] is upon their track every moment. He is intruding his presence in every department of the household, in every street of our cities, in the churches, in the national councils, in the courts of justice, perplexing, deceiving, seducing, everywhere ruining the souls and bodies of men, women, and children, breaking up families, sowing hatred, emulation, strife, sedition, murder. And the Christian world seem to regard these things as though God had appointed them and they must exist."—*The Great Controversy*, page 508.

"Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God."—*Counsels on Health*, page 460.

THINK IT THROUGH

**"A single vindictive feeling indulged may open the way to a train of feelings which will end in murder."—Testimonies, Vol. 4, p. 578.**

FURTHER STUDY

*The Great Controversy*, pages 507-509.

**Part 3**  
**THE BLACK HORSE**

**What did the third rider hold in his hand?**

**"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Rev. 6:5, 6.**

*Historical:* "This symbol may be thought of as characterizing the spiritual condition within the church after the legalization of Christianity in the 4th century, when church and state were united. Following this union much of the concern of the church was with secular matters, and in many instances a dearth of spirituality ensued."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 6:5.

The period usually considered to be represented by the black horse is A.D. 313-538.

*General:* "These balances may also be interpreted as a symbol of undue concern for the material necessities of life. No longer does warfare result in victory, as with the first horseman . . . , or represent largely bloodshed, as with the second . . . , but now an even more dreaded result has followed—famine."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 6:5.

"He [Satan] sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous."—*The Great Controversy*, page 590.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Each son and daughter of Adam chooses either Christ or Barabbas as his general. And all who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are standing under Satan's black banner, and are charged with rejecting and despitefully using Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 5, p. 1107.**

**Part 4**  
**THE PALE HORSE****What was the name of the rider of the fourth horse?**

**"When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, 'Come!' And I saw, and behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him; and they were given power over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth." Rev. 6:7, 8, RSV.**

*Historical:* Compromise by the church with heathen practices and philosophies led to such ambitions as changing the law of God and usurping God's very sovereignty. Once these ambitions were defended by church fathers such as Augustine, many of the popes used them to execute judgment upon both men and nations. Popery had become the world's despot—not only a church but a political machine. See *The Great Controversy*, pages 55-60. What Satan did not achieve by force, he appears to have achieved by stealth. He had planted his seat in the church. See Rev. 13:2. Paleness is the result of those that have erred both in spirit and in doctrine. See Isa. 29:22-24. The thousand years of this era are a mute but undeniable testimony to a Christianity alien to the Spirit of Christ and to the corruption of doctrine by a multitude of priestly inventions and political expediencies. See *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 25-39.

This period extended from about 538-1517, the period of the church of Thyatira.

*General:* "Evil, sin, and death were not created by God; they are the result of disobedience, which originated in Satan."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 503.

"God is the life-giver. From the beginning all His laws were ordained to life. But sin broke in upon the order that God had established, and discord followed. So long as sin exists, suffering and death are inevitable. It is only because the Redeemer has borne the curse of sin in our behalf that man can hope to escape, in his own person, its dire results."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 522.

"Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows."—*Counsels on Health*, page 460.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What is my attitude toward death? Is it in harmony with faith in Christ's victory over death?**

"In death He [Jesus] gained the victory over its power; in rising again, He opened the gates of the grave to all His followers."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 702.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 54-60.

**Part 5**  
**THE MARTYRS**

**What persons were central to the picture that appeared when the sixth seal was opened?**

**“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” Rev. 6:9.**

*Historical:* “It appears that the symbolization of the fifth seal was presented to encourage those who faced martyrdom and death, with the assurance that despite the seeming triumph of the enemy, vindication would ultimately come. Such an encouragement would be particularly heartening for those living in the time of the terrible persecutions of the later Middle Ages, but more especially during the time of the Reformation and after. . . . To them, it must have seemed that the long period of oppression would never end. The message of the fifth seal was a reassurance that the cause of God would ultimately triumph. The same encouragement will come to those passing through the last great conflict (see 5T 451).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 6:9.

*General:* The crying souls are symbolic of man’s injustice and his inhumanity to man. “And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.” Gen. 4:9, 10. “The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 59, 60. God does hear, and there is a limit to divine patience. See Ex. 3:7, 8.

The little season continues until the end of time. Others must join the cry of distress before God’s forbearance with the world is ended. “The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob’s trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 451.

“The cruelties heaped upon the follower of Jesus are instigated by Satan and his hosts because they cannot force him to submit to their control. It is the rage of a vanquished foe. Every martyr of Jesus has died a conqueror.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 77.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How do I react to suffering for Christ’s sake?**

“Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. . . .

“Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, . . . the children of God are amply recompensed.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 179, 180.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 74, 77, 78.

**Part 6**  
**THE COMING**  
**OF JESUS**

**Enumerate the events disclosed at the opening of the sixth seal. Rev. 6:12-17.**

The language here changes from symbolic to literal.

"In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe."—*The Great Controversy*, page 304.

The period covered by the events of the sixth seal is from 1755 to the second advent of Jesus.

The text makes no reference to the conduct of the righteous at the second advent; reference is made only to the wicked. Under the fifth seal martyrs did not ask anything about their own reward, but they asked when justice would be carried out in relation to those who killed them. This emphasis on the lost harmonizes with the overall purpose of the seals—the presentation of evidence to convict the lost and to vindicate God in dealing with them.

In the context of the seals the presentation of the signs of earthquake, darkness, and falling stars is really to say that in the judgment the wicked will see that they had opportunity to know that Jesus was coming soon, and that then they will see how they reacted in fear and consternation at His advent.

Ellen White describes Satan's experience in the last judgment:

"Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. . . .

"He reviews his work among men and its results—the enmity of man toward his fellow man, the terrible destruction of life, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the overturning of thrones, the long succession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions. He recalls his constant efforts to oppose the work of Christ and to sink man lower and lower. He sees that his hellish plots have been powerless to destroy those who have put their trust in Jesus. As Satan looks upon his kingdom, the fruit of his toil, he sees only failure and ruin."—*The Great Controversy*, page 669.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What am I doing to vindicate God before the world now?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 304-306, 333.

# TO SUR- VIVE

"We need not wait till we are translated to follow Christ. God's people may do this here below. We shall follow the Lamb of God in the courts above only if we follow Him here. . . .

"His life practice must be our life practice. And as we thus seek to be like Him, and to bring our wills into conformity to His will, we shall reveal Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 7, p. 978.



## LESSON 9

*May 26 to June 1*

**"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.  
And he said to me,  
These are they which came out of great  
tribulation, and have washed their robes,  
and made them white  
in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14.**

In the opening of the six seals John viewed the evidence that will condemn the lost sinners. In verse 16 of chapter 6 the lost sinners appeal to be hid from the Lamb's presence. By their own admission they do not belong where the Lamb is.

When the lost ask, "Who shall be able to stand?" the question carries a note of despair. When Jesus appears, the lost sinners will be overwhelmed, and the question indicates that this event surpasses anything that they would expect a human being to survive.

In chapter seven the curtain that hides the activities of heavenly agencies from the people of this world is drawn aside, and we see God's protection over the whole world and His selection of the living persons who will be inducted into His kingdom of glory.

In the strictest interpretation, chapter seven should be seen as a view of past events portrayed before the wicked in the judgment, this passage being in the context of the seven seals. Seen in this way, it serves to show the wicked what God has done in their behalf; it shows them the opportunity that they had to be sealed in the time of the sealing work. To us who read the passage before completion of the sealing, it has the effect of prophecy. When the sealing is completed, this passage will continue to be a prophecy of what God will reveal to Satan and the lost as evidence that He has dealt fairly with them.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Four Angels, Rev. 7:1**
2. **The Sealing Angel, Rev. 7:2, 3**
3. **The 144,000, Rev. 7:4**
4. **The Great Multitude, Rev. 7:9-12**
5. **Elder's Song, Rev. 7:13, 14**
6. **Silence, Rev. 8:1**

**OR  
NOT**

**Part 1**  
**THE FOUR ANGELS**

**What did John see angels doing?**

**"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Rev. 7:1.**

These first verses are part of God's answer to the question of the wicked host concerning who could survive. God has protected them during their life on earth. Survival in a wicked world was due only to God's intervention, and human survival of the advent will also be His act. His protection of the world has been extended in time so that more persons could be ready for the advent, and now those who ask the question have spurned the added opportunity to prepare for it.

**What is a Biblical interpretation of wind? Jer. 25:31-34; 51:1, 2, 11.**

"John sees the elements of nature—earthquake, tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church. The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. . . . It is the voice of this highest angel that had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed, and until he should give the summons to let them loose."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 444, 445.

"Oh, how few know the time of the visitation! How few, even among those who claim to believe present truth, understand the signs of the times or what we are to experience before the end! We are today under divine forbearance; but how long will the angels of God continue to hold the winds, that they shall not blow?"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 426.

"Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. . . . But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 968.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways that I can see is God restraining the forces of evil in the world?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 36-38.

**Part 2**  
**THE SEALING ANGEL**

**What was the message of the sealing angel to the four angels?**

**"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Rev. 7:2, 3.**

It is for a spiritual reason, the sealing, that the powers of evil are restrained in this world.

Today signatures have largely replaced seals. When one signs a letter, he identifies himself as the writer of the letter. When he signs a document, he gives approval to its contents. When God's seal is placed on a person, it may be viewed as representing both authorship and approval. God has remade the person, and He is satisfied with the work.

"The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God's property. So the children of God in this age will bear the signature God has appointed. They will place themselves in harmony with God's holy law."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 968, 969.

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1161.

"Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This is what distinguishes them from the disloyal, who have accepted a man-made institution in the place of the true Sabbath. . . .

"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 970.

The seal of God is to be placed in the forehead, indicating approval of the mind of the saved person. The frontal lobe of the brain is man's seat of intelligence, and his brain nerves are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate. See *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 347.

**"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 970.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 212-214.

**Part 3**  
**THE 144,000**

**"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." Rev. 7:4.**

"When men pick up this theory and that theory, when they are curious to know something that it is not necessary for them to know, God is not leading them. It is not His plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the Word. It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand. This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 978.

The 144,000 have three outstanding characteristics which can be determined from the Bible without speculation.

1. They are totally committed to Christ. Rev. 14:1; Gal. 2:20.
2. They strive wholly to reveal Him. Rev. 14:5; Phil. 3:13, 14.
3. They have achieved victory. Rev. 14:3; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 970.

"These Israelites thus sealed are then to be understood as belonging to spiritual Israel, the Christian church (see Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7; Gal. 3:28, 29; 6:16; cf. Gal. 4:28; 1 Peter 1:1; . . . ). Spiritual Israel, in Bible figure, is represented as also being divided into 12 tribes, for the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem have engraved upon them the names of the 12 tribes of Israel."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 7:4.

**What type of prayer-life characterizes those to be sealed? Ezek. 9:4-6.**

"Are we seeking for his fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of his character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1118.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"While we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ."—Selected Messages, Bk. 2, p. 32.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 14-20.

**Part 4**  
**THE GREAT**  
**MULTITUDE**

There have been several views of how the 144,000 are related to the great multitude. Seventh-day Adventists have generally held that they are two distinct groups. It is also possible to see the entire chapter as a description of the 144,000. See *Counsels to Teachers*, page 532, where those who are "sealed" (the 144,000) are equated with the great multitude. However, the main purpose of the passage presenting the great multitude is given in the shout of the group in verse 10. Precise identification of the multitude is not necessary to understanding the message in its bold features.

**What were the descriptive marks of the multitude as John saw them? Rev. 7:9.**

"The psalms signify that they have gained the victory, and the white robes that they have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Thank God that a fountain has been opened to wash our robes of character, and make them as white as snow."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 970.

**What message did the multitude shout? Verse 10.**

**Contrast this shout with the shout of the lost in Revelation 6:16. What is the lesson?**

"In these scriptures [Rev. 6:12-17 and Rev. 7:9-17] two parties are brought to view. One party permitted themselves to be deceived and took sides with those with whom the Lord has a controversy. They misinterpreted the messages sent them and clothed themselves in robes of self-righteousness. Sin was not sinful in their eyes. They taught falsehood as truth, and by them many souls were led astray.

"We need now to take heed to ourselves. . . . Probation still lingers, and it is our privilege to lay hold of the hope set before us in the gospel. Let us repent and be converted and forsake our sins, that they may be blotted out."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 268.

**What was the response of the angels to the shout in verse 10? Verses 11, 12.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What lesson is there in verse 10 for me in this present life?**

"So by sin, man lost his connection with God. Of himself he has no means of salvation. But in Christ we are brought nigh unto the Father. The elect of God are dear to His heart. They are those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, to show forth His praise, to shine as lights amid the darkness of the world."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 165, 166.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 383-385.

**Part 5**  
**ELDER'S SONG**

**What two additional marks of identity of the multitude were given by an elder?**

**"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:13, 14.**

"The white-robed ones who surround the throne of God are not composed of that company who were lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and who choose to drift with the current rather than to breast the waves of opposition. All who remain pure and uncorrupted from the spirit and influence prevailing at this time will have stern conflicts. They will come through great tribulation; they will wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. These will sing the song of triumph in the kingdom of glory."—*My Life Today*, page 321.

"This is our washing and ironing time—the time when we are to cleanse our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. John says, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' . . . Shall we not let Him take them away? Shall we not let our sins go?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1131.

**Why was the great multitude before the throne of God? Verses 14, 15. (Note "therefore.")**

"The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven, as the redeemed stand around the throne of God. All take up the joyful strain, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain' and hath redeemed us to God. . . . [Rev. 7:9, 10, 14-17; 21:4 quoted.]

"We need to keep ever before us this vision of things unseen. It is thus that we shall be able to set a right value on the things of eternity and the things of time. It is this that will give us power to influence others for the higher life."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 506-508.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father's house?"—The Ministry of Healing, page 251.**

"You may have the overcomer's reward and stand before the throne of Christ to sing His praises in the day when He assembles His saints; but your robes must be cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, and charity must cover you as a garment, and you be found spotless and without blemish."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 125.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, pp. 42-45.

**Part 6**  
**SILENCE**

**What happened when the seventh seal was opened?**

**"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Rev. 8:1.**

In John's vision of chapters 4 to 7 heaven reverberated with sound. This medley of sound was followed by silence. John had seen the advent when the sixth seal was opened. He also had seen the redeemed in God's presence. The next events were covered by silence.

Ellen White wrote of a time of silence in heaven when Jesus suffered in Gethsemane.

"God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 693.

Jesus experienced the anguish of the lost sinner. It is reasonable to infer that there would again be silence in heaven when lost sinners shall suffer the consequences of their lives of sin.

The rest of the universe cannot appropriately sing and praise at a time that the wicked struggle with the recognition of their guilt and succumb to oblivion.

The wicked host themselves will also be silent, just as the man without a wedding garment was speechless.

"The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them."—*The Great Controversy*, page 668.

"Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced."—*The Great Controversy*, page 670.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I more fully understand the true nature of sin and learn to hate it?**

"That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour's glory, there 'the hiding of His power.' 'Mighty to save,' through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God's mercy."—*The Great Controversy*, page 674.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 670-673.

# Trumpets

A black and white woodcut-style illustration. At the bottom center is a golden altar with a censer on top, emitting a plume of smoke that rises towards the top of the frame. Several trumpets are positioned around the altar, some pointing upwards and others downwards. The background consists of vertical and diagonal lines, suggesting a temple interior. The word "Trumpets" is written in large, bold, black letters across the top of the image.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Rev. 8:3.





# of WAR

Adventists have recorded views of the trumpets in various publications. However, there has been quite a general feeling that the prophecy of the trumpets was still not well understood; it is felt that even if these symbols have been correctly interpreted, these interpretations do not seem to hold much relevancy for the twentieth century.

It is therefore with some hesitancy that we provide lessons on the trumpets. This hesitancy is increased by the complete lack of spirit of prophecy comment on verses 5-13 in Revelation 8 and a single reference to chapter 9. Considerations of certainty of interpretation and relevancy to the present have been guides in the preparation of these lessons. The first six trumpets will be studied in rapid sequence, noting briefly the historical Seventh-day Adventist interpretation.

The introduction (Rev. 8:3, 4) and the seventh trumpet are clear and relevant, and it is on these two passages that most emphasis is placed in the lessons.

Seventh-day Adventists have usually viewed the prophecies of the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets as three parallel prophecies with differing emphases. This is similar to our view of three parallel prophecies in the second, seventh, and eighth chapters of Daniel.

From the earliest times the trumpet has been associated with armies and war. The trumpet signals the start of the day, gives the signal to attack, and adds a somber note when military heroes are laid in their graves.

Under the symbol of the first four trumpets we see depicted the main incursions that led to the collapse of Roman government in the western sector. The next two trumpets discuss the main forces involved in the overthrow of the eastern sector of the empire, and the last trumpet, the seventh, signals the overthrow of all earthly powers and the establishment of God's eternal empire of peace.

## **LESSON OUTLINE**

- 1. Trumpets, Rev. 8:2**
- 2. Incense, Rev. 8:3, 4**
- 3. Censer, Rev. 8:5**
- 4. Trumpets One and Two,  
Rev. 8:7-9**
- 5. Trumpets Three and Four,  
Rev. 8:10-12**
- 6. Trumpets Five and Six,  
Rev. 9:1-11**

**Part 1**  
**TRUMPETS**

**What was given to each of seven angels? How were the angels identified?**

**"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." Rev. 8:2.**

**On what occasion were seven trumpets used by Israel? Joshua 6:4, 5.**

By the plan of marching and blowing trumpets "it was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 493.

**On what other occasion were trumpets an important feature of attack on God's enemies? Judges 7:16-18.**

"The simple act of blowing a blast upon the trumpet by the army of Joshua around Jericho, and by Gideon's little band about the hosts of Midian, was made effectual, through the power of God, to overthrow the might of His enemies."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 554.

In the prophecy the heavenly trumpeters successively signaled the beginning of seven specific destructive events on earth. They are not pictured as causing the events, but as keeping them under control so that each event does not occur until the heavenly trumpeter signals it.

"In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will."—*Education*, page 173.

"Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world's great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. . . .

"While the nations rejected God's principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements."—*Education*, page 177.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I keep an awareness of God's constant intervention in affairs of this earth?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Education*, pages 173-177.

**Part 2**  
**INCENSE**

**What scene did John view before the angels blew the trumpets?**

**"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Rev. 8:3, 4.**

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of his own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned.

"Oh, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 344.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Morning and evening the heavenly universe behold every household that prays, and the angel with the incense, representing the blood of the atonement, finds access to God."—Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 971.**

"As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so, while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrongdoers. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 970.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 353.

**Part 3**  
**CENSER**

**What did the angel do with the censer?**

**"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." Rev. 8:5.**

The righteousness of Jesus contains both the mercy and the justice of God. In this symbol His righteousness is seen moving in two directions corresponding to His mercy and justice. It ascends with the prayers of the saints from earth to heaven, and descends from heaven to earth in the judgments of God. As the Lamb could open the scroll because He was slain and had redeemed men, so in this symbol of the censer there is a heavenly intervention in earth, and earthly access to heaven, as a result of the atonement. God deals graciously with the praying saints, but the earth is smitten with His judgments. See John 3:16-18. These judgments are not limited to the seven last plagues, but culminate in them.

A supernatural display of voices, thunderings, lightnings and earthquakes is connected with three awesome moments in Bible history: (1) God's visit to Sinai (Ex. 19:16-18); (2) Christ's crucifixion (Matt. 27:51; *Early Writings*, page 253); and (3) His Second Coming (Rev. 11:19; 16:18, Heb. 12:26).

Of the crucifixion Ellen White wrote: "Priests and rulers look toward Jerusalem; and lo, the dense cloud has settled upon the city, and over Judah's plains, and the fierce lightnings of God's wrath are directed against the fated city. Suddenly the gloom is lifted from the cross, and in clear trumpet tones, that seem to resound throughout creation, Jesus cries, 'It is finished;' 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like unto the sun. He then bowed his head upon his breast, and died.

"All the spectators stood paralyzed, and with bated breath gazed upon the Saviour. Again darkness settled upon the face of the earth, and a hoarse rumbling like heavy thunder was heard. This was accompanied by a violent trembling of the earth."—*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 3, p. 166.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**The atonement makes Jesus both "mighty to save" and the proclaimer of the day of vengeance. See Isa. 61:2; 63:1.**

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." Heb. 12:25.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 541-543.

**Part 4**  
**TRUMPETS**  
**ONE AND TWO**

**What did John see when the first angel blew his trumpet?**

**"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." Rev. 8:7.**

When Rome under Pilate crucified Christ, she signed her own death warrant. See *Prophets and Kings* page 535. In these pronouncements of judgment on the Roman Empire we have an overview of the years that culminated in the collapse of the empire under the onslaught of heathen hordes.

Hail symbolizes God's judgments. Job 38:22, 23; Isa. 28:16, 17; Rev. 16:21. Fire and blood typify his wrath. Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:11-13. These were cast upon the earth, meaning literal judgments on men and nations (Rev. 16:2), particularly the Roman Empire.

"The earth, with its vegetation, is shown as the particular target of this scourge (cf. ch. 16:2). The scourge is singularly descriptive of the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Visigoths under Alaric. This was the first of the Teutonic incursions into the Roman Empire that played such an important part in its final downfall. Beginning about A.D. 396, the Visigoths overran Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece in the eastern part of the empire, and then crossed the Alps and pillaged the city of Rome in A.D. 410. They also ravaged much of what is now France and ultimately settled in Spain."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 8:7.

**What scene appeared at the sounding of the second trumpet? Rev. 8:8, 9.**

"At this time [c. A.D. 365], as if trumpets were sounding the war-note throughout the whole Roman world, the most savage peoples aroused themselves and poured across the nearest frontiers."—*SDA Bible Students' Source Book*, page 836.

"The catastrophe announced by the second trumpet has been seen as describing the depredations of the Vandals. Driven from their settlements in Thrace by the incursions of the Huns from Central Asia, the Vandals migrated through Gaul (now France) and Spain into Roman North Africa and established a kingdom centering around Carthage. From there they dominated the western Mediterranean with a navy of pirates."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 8:8.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." Heb. 2:3.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, page 535.

**Part 5**  
**TRUMPETS**  
**THREE AND FOUR**

**What resulted from the third trumpet blast?**

**"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." Rev. 8:10, 11.**

"This has been interpreted as portraying the invasion and ravages of the Huns under the leadership of their king Attila, in the 5th century. Entering Europe from Central Asia about A.D. 372, the Huns first settled along the lower Danube. Three quarters of a century later they were on the move again, and for a brief period raised havoc in various regions of the tottering Roman Empire. Crossing the Rhine in A.D. 451, they were stopped by combined Roman and German troops at Chalons in northern Gaul. After a short period of marauding in Italy, Attila died in A.D. 453, and almost immediately the Huns disappeared from history. In spite of the short period of their ascendancy, so rapacious were the Huns in their devastations that their name has come down through history as synonymous with the worst slaughter and destruction."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 8:10.

**What scene appeared at the sound of the fourth trumpet? Rev. 8:12.**

**The sun.** "The sun, moon, and stars have been interpreted to represent the great luminaries of the Western Roman government—its emperors, senators, and consuls. With the extinction of western Rome in A.D. 476 . . . the last of its emperors ceased to reign. Later, its senate and consulship came to an end.

**"Shone not for a third part.** The thought seems to be that these bodies would be smitten during one third of the time of their shining, not that one third of the bodies themselves would be smitten so that they would shine with two-thirds brilliance. Thus one third of the day and one third of the night would be dark. Applied to the divisions of the Roman government, the figure may describe the successive extinction of the emperors, senators, and consuls."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 8:12.

**Part 6**  
**TRUMPETS**  
**FIVE AND SIX****Read Revelation 9:1-11.**

The fifth and sixth trumpets open two more amazing chapters of prophecy. Although Ellen White makes no reference to the first four trumpets, she does make an extended comment on the fifth and sixth, quoting the words of Josiah Litch from an edition of *Signs of the Times* in 1840. See Further Study reference.

Western Rome fell under military attack. Eastern Rome fell under the religio-military onslaught of the Moslems. The religion of Islam penetrated in the East like "the smoke of a great furnace," gaining so many converts that they are compared with a plague of grasshoppers.

Moslem influence on Christianity was as deadly as the sting of a scorpion. But, according to the prophecy these religious zealots would harass the church for a specific period. It was to be five prophetic months—150 literal years. Othman I led the invasion of Eastern Rome on July 27, 1299. The 150 years of the fifth trumpet ended on July 27, 1449.

The sixth trumpet describes the time when the Turks—allies of the Arabs—gained supremacy in the East. Just four years after the commencement of the sixth trumpet, Eastern Rome collapsed when the Turkish Sultan Mohammed II captured Constantinople. Then began a further chapter of oppression of the Christians.

The time of the sixth trumpet is designated as an hour, a day, a month, and a year. Verses 14, 15. In literal time this would be 360 years, 30 years, 1 year, and 1/24th of a year or 15 days, a total of 391 years 15 days. As the fifth trumpet ended July 27, 1449, the sixth trumpet would end August 11, 1840. If the sixth trumpet reveals the time of the *supremacy* of the Turks, then the end of the sixth trumpet would reveal the end of that supremacy. Josiah Litch and others saw this clearly and predicted that Turkey's doom would be settled on or by August 11, 1840. Ultimately the Turkish Sultan formally placed Turkey in the hands of the ambassadors of the Christian nations—England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The date of the declaration—August 11, 1840! Let Ellen White comment further:

"At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. . . . When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement."—*The Great Controversy*, page 335.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 334, 335, 691 (appendix).

# the source of the adventist message

**"The testing truth for this time is not the fabrication of any human mind. It is from God. It is genuine philosophy to those who appropriate it. Christ became incarnate in order that we, through belief of the truth, might be sanctified and redeemed. Let those who hold the truth in righteousness arouse and go forth, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, to proclaim the truth to those who know it not."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, pp. 211, 212.**



## LESSON 11

June 9-15

**"And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."**

**Rev. 10:11.**

Chapter ten is a detour in the sequence of the seven trumpets. It follows the sixth trumpet (as the interlude on the sealing followed the opening of the sixth seal). In each case the detour was delayed in the prophetic sequence as long as possible. To have delayed it until after the fulfillment of one more seal or one more trumpet would have placed the content of the interlude outside the scope of the prophecy. It has been placed precisely where it belongs. That these detours occur only after the sixth element of these prophecies indicates a special concern for events that are closely related in time and subject to the second coming of Jesus.

In the first chapter of Revelation Jesus was seen in heaven among the churches. Here in chapter ten He is seen standing on earth and communicating details about His church of the last days. The first vision emphasizes Christ's work in behalf of the churches, where this vision emphasizes the work of the church in cooperation with Jesus.

The message comes to us in these two visions that Jesus, in a very real way, is the true leader of the church. His instructions have come to the church through the testimony of Jesus.

The church, composed of human beings, is not a merely human institution. Men may do the work of the church, but these human workers are obligated to follow the directives given to the church by its divine Leader, Jesus Christ.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Mighty Angel, Rev. 10:1, 2
2. The Seven Thunders, Rev. 10:3, 4
3. The Divine Oath, Rev. 10:5, 6
4. The Seventh Angel, Rev. 10:7
5. The Little Book, Rev. 10:8-10
6. The Great Commission, Rev. 10:11

Part 1  
THE MIGHTY ANGEL

What description did John give of the angel he saw?

**"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." Rev. 10:1, 2.**

"The mighty angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971. The rainbow is symbolic of God's covenant with man (Gen. 9:13) which covenant is His glory (Ezek. 1:26-28). The description of Christ's person is similar to the descriptions of His transfiguration and His appearance to John at the beginning of the book of Revelation. "The instruction to be communicated to John was so important that Christ came from heaven to give it to His servant, telling him to send it to the churches."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 953, 954.

"Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth. The controversy has waxed stronger and more determined from age to age, and will continue to do so, to the concluding scenes when the masterly working of the powers of darkness shall reach their height. Satan, united with evil men, will deceive the whole world and the churches who receive not the love of the truth."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971.

What did the angel have in his hand? Verse 2.

This is the book of Daniel unsealed, for it is open. "The injunction comes to John as to Daniel in regard to the little book: 'Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered.' These relate to future events which will be disclosed in their order. Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels' messages to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the message in relation to time.

"The books of Daniel and the Revelation are one. One is a prophecy, the other a revelation; one a book sealed, the other a book opened."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971.

FURTHER STUDY

*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 107, 108.

**Part 2**  
**THE SEVEN**  
**THUNDERS**

**"And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." Rev. 10:3, 4.**

The angel is Christ who is not only the Lamb, but also the Lion of the tribe of Judah that prevailed.

"The mighty angel demands attention. He cries with a loud voice. He is to show the power and authority of His voice to those who have united with Satan to oppose the truth."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971.

"The special light given to John which was expressed in the seven thunders was a delineation of events which would transpire under the first and second angels' messages. It was not best for the people to know these things, for their faith must necessarily be tested. In the order of God most wonderful and advanced truths would be proclaimed."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971. This is a reference to the great disappointment in 1844 which tested the faith of the believers in God and His word.

"I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.' I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him."—*Early Writings*, page 259.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Ps. 118:8, 9.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 259-261.

**Part 3**  
**THE DIVINE OATH**

**"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer." Rev. 10:5, 6.**

The lifting up of the angel's hand was accompanied by an oath. It was irrevocable, for it was made in the name of the Creator who liveth forever and ever. There was no greater by which to confirm it. See Heb. 6:13.

"This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971.

**What was the longest time prophecy in the Bible? How long was it? Daniel 8:14-17.**

Since the culmination of Daniel's prophecy in 1844 men have been living, in a sense, on borrowed time. We cannot say that time must last for a certain number of years, for the final period of earth is not according to any time-length prophecy. "It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed."—*Evangelism*, page 696.

"God's unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay."—*Evangelism*, page 694.

"We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action. . . .

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. . . .

"It [the coming of the Lord] will not tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples."—*Evangelism*, pages 696, 697.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**If my thought patterns are in harmony with my belief that Jesus is coming soon, then my actions will show it.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Evangelism*, pages 692-701.

**Part 4**  
**THE SEVENTH ANGEL**

**"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Rev. 10:7.**

Chapter 10 is an interlude and a pause that refreshes the weary spirit of the apostle who has witnessed so much bloodshed across the centuries. Here is sketched before him a preview of the direct intervention of Christ Himself in the final actions of men and nations and the certainty of the divine culmination under the seventh trumpet. See Rev. 11:15-19. It was in 1844 that the seventh angel was to begin to sound and to carry to completion the work of God on earth. This is the last message of mercy to a dying world, a world that soon will have an end. See Matt. 28:20.

The word *mustērion*, translated mystery in verse 7, means a secret, but not in the sense that it is not told or in the modern sense that it cannot be understood. It has reference to those who are initiated into a secret rite not understood by those outside. It is the right of the initiated to know all the mysteries beginning with the day of their initiation. These heavenly secrets were given to the prophets to be passed on to those who are the heirs of salvation. See *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 740.

**What will be the final display of the mysterious power of God? 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.**

"At the birth of Jesus, Satan knew that One had come with a divine commission to dispute his dominion. He trembled at the angel's message attesting the authority of the newborn King. Satan well knew the position that Christ had held in heaven as the Beloved of the Father. That the Son of God should come to this earth as man filled him with amazement and with apprehension. He could not fathom the mystery of this great sacrifice. His selfish soul could not understand such love for the deceived race."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 115.

"Rich and poor, high and low, free and bond, are God's heritage. He who gave His life to redeem man sees in every human being a value that exceeds finite computation. By the mystery and glory of the cross we are to discern His estimate of the value of the soul. When we do this, we shall feel that human beings, however degraded, have cost too much to be treated with coldness or contempt."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 162, 163.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin."**  
—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 163.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 109-111.

**Part 5**  
**THE LITTLE BOOK**

**"And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. . . . And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." Rev. 10: 8-10.**

"In a specific sense the experience that came to John here in vision may be seen as typical of that of the advent believers in the years 1840-1844. When these believers first heard the message of the imminent second coming, it was to them 'sweet as honey.' But when Christ did not come as they expected, their experience was indeed bitter."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 10:10.

"I saw that Jesus regarded with the deepest compassion the disappointed ones who had waited for His coming; and He sent His angels to direct their minds that they might follow Him where He was. He showed them that this earth is not the sanctuary, but that He must enter the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to make an atonement for His people and to receive the kingdom from His Father, and that He would then return to the earth and take them to dwell with Him forever."—*Early Writings*, page 244.

**What confidence can we have in Christ's second coming? John 14:1-3.**

In principle, the experience of the believers in the summer of 1844 is very applicable to us today. "They were closely united and seemed to be wrapped in the light of heaven. Around this company were some who came under the influence of the light, but who were not particularly united to the company. All who cherished the light shed upon them were gazing upward with intense interest, and Jesus looked upon them with sweet approbation. They expected Him to come and longed for His appearing. They did not cast one lingering look to earth. But again a cloud settled upon the waiting ones, and I saw them turn their weary eyes downward. I inquired the cause of this change. Said my accompanying angel, 'They are again disappointed in their expectations. Jesus cannot yet come to earth. They must endure greater trials for His sake. They must give up errors and traditions received from men and turn wholly to God and His Word. They must be purified, made white, and tried. Those who endure that bitter trial will obtain an eternal victory.'"—*Early Writings*, page 243.

**THINK IT THROUGH**  
**FURTHER STUDY**

**How can I look more fervently for Jesus' return?**

*Life Sketches*, pages 54-63.

**Part 6**  
**THE GREAT**  
**COMMISSION**

**"And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Rev. 10:11.**

"Prophesy again" has reference to a task not finished. The witness must be borne until the work is finished. When this is done, Christ will come. See Matt. 24:14.

"The angel's position, with one foot on the sea, the other on the land, signifies the wide extent of the proclamation of the message. It will cross the broad waters and be proclaimed in other countries, even to all the world. The comprehension of truth, the glad reception of the message, is represented in the eating of the little book. . . .

"The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life. Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 971, 972.

**How will the work of the Lord be finally finished? Zech. 4:6.**

Our mission service has gradually extended into much of the world. In nearly 200 countries and 1,000 tongues the message of the three angels is being preached. It was not always so. Gottfried Oosterwal notes in his book, *Mission Possible*, that there have been four distinct phases of Adventist mission expansion:

1. To reach the backslidden Adventists (1844-1850's).
2. To reach the nations in North America (1850's-1860's).
3. Beyond America into all the world (1874-1950's).
4. The final phase to compass the globe (1950's-End).

"And even still some 90 percent of Adventism's new converts come from a Christian background. Only now are Seventh-day Adventists beginning to discover that their mission involves salvation first, for every person. Only now are they really beginning to discover the world—the whole world—as the true object of their mission, because the world was the object of God's love and God's own mission."—Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission Possible*, page 33.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 461-464.



"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." Rev. 11:1

The  
Two

Witnesses



## LESSON 12

*June 16-22*

The vision of the mighty angel in chapter 10, and the vision of the two witnesses in chapter 11 correspond to each other. The relationship they bear is not chronological, or chapter 11 should precede chapter 10. It is a matter of the good news preceding the bad news; the positive and most important preceding the negative and less important.

In the mighty angel vision, the message of the angel is given in a loud voice, the prophetic scroll is eaten, and John is bidden to prophesy further. In the two witnesses vision, the witnesses are in sackcloth, they are slain, remain unburied, and after a time are resurrected. Both scenes deal with God's messages to the world through the prophets. In parallel scenes the prophetic word was seen eaten and slain, shouted and silenced. In the first instance the message is brought from heaven; in the second instance the message ascends to heaven; in the first, Jesus is the person related to the message; in the second, Satan is the person related to the message. Here then are portrayed Jesus with His message and its proclamation by His true followers, and the same message opposed by Satan and earthly powers under his control.

The advent movement becomes the focal point, a last-day example of the proclamation of the word which has been going on since God first spoke to man after the entrance of sin into the world.

On the other hand, the French revolution then becomes a focal point, a last-day example of an opposition to the word that has existed in every age since the entrance of sin into the world.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Measuring Rod, Rev. 11:1, 2**
2. **The Two Witnesses Identified, Rev. 11:3, 4**
3. **Power of the Witnesses, Rev. 11:5, 6**
4. **Slaughter of the Witnesses, Rev. 11:7-10**
5. **The Witnesses Revived, Rev. 11:11, 12**
6. **End of the Second Woe, Rev. 11:13, 14**

Where  
are the  
witnesses  
today?

Part 1  
THE MEASURING  
ROD

What was John instructed to measure and not to measure?

**"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Rev. 11:1, 2.**

This rod, given to John to use for measuring, symbolizes judgment. The literal temple represents the plan of redemption. The worshipers are those who claim to have accepted God's redemption. Thus the scene here is symbolic of the judgment of people in relation to the plan of redemption. "Every case is coming in review before God; He is measuring the temple and the worshipers therein."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 219.

**What kind of lives ought God's people to be living? Romans 12:1, 2.**

In the Jewish economy a definite distinction was made between believers and unbelievers. See Ezek. 44:9. In this measuring the Gentiles are left out, and all those who ever claimed to belong to Christ come under divine scrutiny and the investigative judgment. See Rev. 3:5; 13:8; *The Great Controversy*, pages 480-483.

Forty-two months is three and one-half years of prophetic time or 1260 years of linear time spanning the era of papal supremacy from its inception in A.D. 538 to the reception of the wound, the loss of civil authority, inflicted by the French in 1798.

"The grand judgment is taking place, and has been going on for some time. Now the Lord says, Measure the temple and the worshipers thereof. Remember when you are walking the streets about your business, God is measuring you; when you are attending your household duties, when you engage in conversation, God is measuring you. Remember that your words and actions are being daguerretyped [photographed] in the books of heaven, as the face is reproduced by the artist on the polished plate. . . .

"Here is the work going on, measuring the temple and its worshipers to see who will stand in the last day."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 972.

THINK IT THROUGH

**"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:14.**

FURTHER STUDY

*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 109-111.

**Part 2**  
**THE TWO WITNESSES**  
**IDENTIFIED**

**What were the witnesses to do, and where did they come from?**

**"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." Rev. 11:3, 4.**

"The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy."—*The Great Controversy*, page 267.

The 1,260 years refer to the time of papal supremacy from its inception to its deadly wound. It corresponds to the "forty and two months" in the previous verse.

"During the greater part of this period, God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. . . . Its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it. . . . Yet they continued their testimony throughout the entire period of 1260 years."—*The Great Controversy*, page 267.

The olive trees and candlesticks are additional symbols of the sources of divine power contained in the Word. It is through His Word that we learn how Christ administers the gift of the oil of the Holy Spirit, and through this Word we come into the very presence of God. See Zech. 4:11-14. The candlesticks or lampstands are identified with the olive trees and witnesses and consequently refer to the illumination which is combined in the Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

"All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting."—*The Great Controversy*, page 268.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Ps. 119:165.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, pages 593-595.

**Part 3**  
**POWER OF**  
**THE WITNESSES**

**What powers did the witnesses possess?**

**"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." Rev. 11:5, 6.**

The reference to power to devour their enemies recalls Old Testament experiences when God's authority was vindicated by the destruction of enemies. Such an experience was that of Moses with Korah and his fellow rebels. See Num. 16:1-35; Ps. 106:16-18. Another, that of Elijah with Ahaziah. See 2 Kings 1:3-17.

In verse 6 the two allusions are clearly to the experiences of Elijah in the days of Ahab and of Moses in the time of the Exodus. The experiences of Moses and Elijah are drawn upon as men standing for and upon the authority of God and His word. It was these same two men who were sent to substantiate the authority of Christ in the eyes of the disciples on the mount of transfiguration as well as give encouragement to Jesus for the trial that lay ahead. See Luke 9:28-36; *The Desire of Ages*, pages 419-425.

**How important is the Word of God in our daily lives?**  
**Matt. 4:4; 1 Peter 1:23.**

God's word and His human witnesses are not to be slighted. The truth is not to be treated as of no consequence. The above verses are to impress upon our minds the importance of ultimate authority vested in channels of communication chosen and set aside by the God of heaven and earth. These verses also contrast with those to follow by delineating the treatment given to divine authority and heaven-sent communication.

"We should reverence God's word. For the printed volume we should show respect, never putting it to common uses, or handling it carelessly. And never should Scripture be quoted in a jest, or paraphrased to point a witty saying. 'Every word of God is pure;' 'as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' . . .

"Reverence should be shown for God's representatives—for ministers, teachers, and parents who are called to speak and act in His stead. In the respect shown to them He is honored."—*Education*, page 244.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments." Ps. 119: 10.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Counsels to Teachers*, pages 427-430.

**Part 4**  
**SLAUGHTER OF**  
**THE WITNESSES**

**What identification was given of the place of the murder of the witnesses?**

**"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Rev. 11:7, 8.**

The beast spoken of here is Satan exercising his power through the French Revolution. See Rev. 17:7, 8. He succeeded in ridding the nation for a time of the influence of the two witnesses. "The same master spirit that urged on the St. Bartholomew Massacre led also in the scenes of the Revolution."—*The Great Controversy*, page 273.

"According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. And in the land where the testimony of God's two witnesses should thus be silenced, there would be manifest the atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom.

"This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France."—*The Great Controversy*, page 269.

Prophetically, three days and a half would be equal to three and one-half calendar years and extend from 1793 to 1797 when official government action was directed to the elimination of the Christian religion.

"In the Revolution the law of God was openly set aside by the National Council."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 285, 286.

"Infidel France had silenced the reproving voice of God's two witnesses. The word of truth lay dead in her streets, and those who hated the restrictions and requirements of God's law were jubilant."—*The Great Controversy*, page 274.

**What does Scripture say that men are not free to do? 1 Peter 2:13-17; Gal. 5:13.**

"Sacriligious minds and hearts have thought they were mighty enough to change the times and laws of Jehovah; but, safe in the archives of heaven, in the ark of God, are the original commandments, written upon the two tables of stone. No potentate of earth has power to draw forth those tables from their sacred hiding place beneath the mercy seat."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 972.

**"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ps. 119:11.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 265-271.

**Part 5**  
**THE WITNESSES**  
**REVIVED**

**What events took place after the resurrection of the witnesses?**

**"And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." Rev. 11:11, 12.**

"It was in 1793 that the decrees which abolished the Christian religion and set aside the Bible passed the French Assembly. Three years and a half later a resolution rescinding these decrees, thus granting toleration to the Scriptures, was adopted by the same body. The world stood aghast at the enormity of guilt which had resulted from a rejection of the Sacred Oracles, and men recognized the necessity of faith in God and His word as the foundation of virtue and morality."  
—*The Great Controversy*, page 287.

Through the power of God and His sovereignty over men and nations the two witnesses were restored to the exalted position which they deserve as the Word of God.

"Since France made war upon God's two witnesses, they have been honored as never before. In 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized. This was followed by similar organizations, with numerous branches, upon the continent of Europe. In 1816 the American Bible Society was founded. When the British Society was formed, the Bible had been printed and circulated in fifty tongues. It has since been translated into many hundreds of languages and dialects."—*The Great Controversy*, page 287.

**What does God say concerning the indestructibility of His Word? Mark 13:31; Isa. 55:11.**

"In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose."—*Education*, page 175.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." Ps. 119:33.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 271-280.

**Part 6  
END OF  
SECOND WOE**

**"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Rev. 11:13, 14.**

The great earthquake is not to be confused with the earthquake of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12) which, anticipatory of the end of 1260 years, fell on Lisbon in 1755; but this earthquake strikes the great city and is symbolic of destruction and loss of life. (See Isa. 29:1-6 for a similar prophecy about Jerusalem.) The "great city" involves more than France—it is symbolic of the power of Babylon.

"A day of retribution at last had come. It was not now the disciples of Jesus that were thrust into dungeons and dragged to the stake. Long ago these had perished or been driven into exile. Unsparing Rome now felt the deadly power of those whom she had trained to delight in deeds of blood. The example of persecution which the clergy of France had exhibited for so many ages, was now retorted upon them with signal vigor. The scaffolds ran red with the blood of the priests. The galleys and the prisons, once crowded with Huguenots, were now filled with their persecutors. Chained to the bench and toiling at the oar, the Roman Catholic clergy experienced all those woes which their church had so freely inflicted on the gentle heretics.'"—*The Great Controversy*, page 283.

The judgments on papal Rome by atheistic powers finally culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of the pope in 1798—an event known as the "deadly wound." The Turkish power had waned, ceased to be a threat, and in the 1840's actually placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The scene now shifts from the papacy to the lamblike beast which is soon to exercise global influence.

**What Scriptural principle of judgments is applicable to our society as well as to ancient Israel? Prov. 26:2; Hosea 8:7.**

"It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 212.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 280-288.

# The Trumpet of Victory

A detailed black and white illustration of a laurel wreath, composed of several branches of leaves tied together at the bottom. The wreath is positioned behind the title text, framing it. The leaves are finely detailed with veins and shading. The entire composition is set against a background of vertical, slightly irregular lines, suggesting a page from an old book or a parchment-like texture.

The events of the seventh trumpet climax the whole series of trumpets just as the great stone formed the most important feature of Nebuchadnezzar's vision in Daniel 2. The first six trumpets have been viewed in historical perspective and raise the question: What meaning have these events for today? The answer lies not in any single trumpet but in the unit of seven climaxed by the kingdoms of earth being given into the hands of Jesus. What could have more meaning for our time than that?

Two songs of the 24 elders point out the distinction between the seals and the trumpets. In Revelation 5:12 the elders ascribe worthiness to the Lamb to receive power, while in Revelation 11:17, 18 the elders' song offers praise that the power of God is used in ruling the earth.

The recognition of worthiness to receive power is the same as the vindi-



cation of God's character, and the actual reception of power is the application of the principles of His vindicated character to the rulership of earth. The first is related to the cross; the second is related to the second advent of Jesus and the accompanying events.

"Dear brethren, the Lord is coming. Lift up your thoughts and heads and rejoice. Oh, we would think that those who hear the joyful news, who claim to love Jesus, would be filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. This is the good, the joyful news which should electrify every soul, which should be repeated in our homes and told to those whom we meet on the street. What more joyful news can be communicated! Caviling and contention with believers or unbelievers is not the work God has given us to do.

"If Christ is my Saviour, my sacrifice, my atonement, then I shall never perish. Believing on Him, I have life forevermore. Oh, that all who believe the truth would believe in Jesus as their own Saviour. I do not mean that cheap faith unsupported by works, but that earnest, living, constant, abiding faith, that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God. I want not only to be pardoned for the transgression of God's holy law, but I want to be lifted into the sunshine of God's countenance. Not simply to be admitted to heaven, but to have an abundant entrance."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 381.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1. The Third Woe, Rev. 11:15</b>              | <b>4. Call to Accountability, Rev. 11:18, last part</b> |
| <b>2. Response of the Elders, Rev. 11:16, 17</b> | <b>5. The Temple in Heaven, Rev. 11:19, first part</b>  |
| <b>3. Angry Nations, Rev. 11:18, first part</b>  | <b>6. Nature's Response, Rev. 11:19, last part</b>      |

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11:15.

**Part 1**  
**THE THIRD WOE**

**What was the message of the heavenly voices?**

**"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11:15.**

"About His coming cluster the glories of that 'restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.' Acts 3:21. Then the long-continued rule of evil shall be broken; 'the kingdoms of this world' will become 'the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.' Revelation 11:15."—*The Great Controversy*, page 301.

"Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, 'dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;' He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, 'prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people. . . .

"At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the reception of His kingdom. 'They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut.' They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to 'wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding.' Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage."—*The Great Controversy*, page 427. It is in this sense also that Christ receives His kingdom.

**What occurs between the time when Jesus symbolically receives His kingdom and the time when He receives it in actuality? Matt. 22:11-14.**

"He who is found wanting is cast out, but all who upon examination are seen to have the wedding garment on are accepted of God and accounted worthy of a share in His kingdom and a seat upon His throne. This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above."—*The Great Controversy*, page 428.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17:30.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 423-432.

Part 2  
RESPONSE OF  
THE ELDERS

What was the prayer of the elders?

**"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Rev. 11:16, 17.**

Whenever praise and glory is given to Christ, the elders participate. Following the seven churches and prior to the seven seals they echo the anthem of love to the slain Lamb. When Christ symbolically receives His kingdom, the elders once more respond in praise and glory to God and to His Christ.

The elders rejoice, for finally the prayers of the saints under the altar are being acted upon, and Christ assumes His great power to culminate His work on the earth among men and among nations. The final time has actually come, and this brings forth an anthem of praise and glory from the elders who so long have witnessed the battle between truth and error.

**What response is expected from His saints here below?  
Rev. 19:5-8.**

This response of the twenty-four elders is but one of the stanzas, as it were, of the same song that has been sung by both men and angels. At Bethlehem "earth was hushed, and heaven stooped to listen to the song,—'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' Oh that today the human family could recognize that song! The declaration then made, the note then struck, will swell to the close of time, and resound to the ends of the earth. When the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, with healing in His wings, that song will be re-echoed by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, saying, 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' Rev. 19:6. . . .

"Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 48.

THINK IT THROUGH

**"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."  
Phil. 4:4.**

FURTHER STUDY

*Steps to Christ*, pages 115-126.

**Part 3**      **What two points of identification of time were given to**  
**ANGRY NATIONS**      **John?**

**"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged." Rev. 11:18, first part.**

"At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out."—*Early Writings*, pages 85, 86.

"The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts constraint on His own attributes; but punishment is nonetheless certain. Every century of profligacy has treasured up wrath against the day of wrath; and when the time comes, and the iniquity is full, then God will do His strange work. It will be found a terrible thing to have worn out the divine patience; for the wrath of God will fall so signally and strongly that it is represented as being unmixed with mercy; and the very earth will be desolated."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 372, 373.

**In spite of the fact that time has continued longer than expected, what should be the proper attitude of the saints? Romans 13:11, 12.**

"I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other; also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out."—*Life Sketches*, page 117.

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. . . . In union with Christ they [the righteous] judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 660, 661.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." Ps. 119:2.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, page 36.

**Part 4  
CALLED TO  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

**"And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Rev. 11:18, last part.**

Verse 18 is a call to accountability. "In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people."—*The Great Controversy*, page 666.

"'The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter.' . . . Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. . . . It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men—'the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.'"—*The Great Controversy*, pages 672, 673.

**What is the description given by Joel of the judgment day of nations? Joel 3:9-12.**

"While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield. Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11. 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.' Revelation 21:1. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. . . .

"God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 673, 674.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him." Eccl. 8:11, 12.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 289-295.

**Part 5**  
**THE TEMPLE**  
**IN HEAVEN**

**"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Rev. 11:19, first part.**

The ark of God's testament is in the holy of holies, the second apartment of the sanctuary. Symbolically, "the announcement that the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of His testament was seen points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement."—*The Great Controversy*, page 433.

Thus at His second coming the ark of God with the original commandments is revealed. The following quotation points out that at the final extermination of the wicked at the end of the one thousand years, the law will be seen again.

"That holy law, God's righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth."—*The Great Controversy*, page 639.

Again, a description of the end of the millennium: "As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 668, 669.

**What did David say concerning the nature of God? Ps. 119:89. See also Mal. 3:6.**

"It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God's holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have compared their characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. . . . With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse. They chose whom they would serve and worship."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 639, 640.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Ps. 119:18.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pages 433-438.

**Part 6**  
**NATURE'S**  
**RESPONSE**

**"And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Rev. 11:19, last part.**

It is evident that the seventh trumpet encompasses all events from 1844 through the second coming and the millennium to the destruction of the wicked and the new earth. It is God's final judgment on the empires of the world as were the former trumpets on the empires of both pagan and papal Rome. Thus in capsule form the seventh trumpet presents God's final acts in the great controversy.

"It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: 'It is done.' Revelation 16:17.

"That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, 'such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.' Verses 17, 18. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. . . . Great hailstones, every one 'about the weight of a talent,' are doing their work of destruction. Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 636, 637.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What counsel is given to the saints for such a time as this? Isa. 26:20, 21.**

**"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Ps. 17:8.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Early Writings*, pages 285-288.

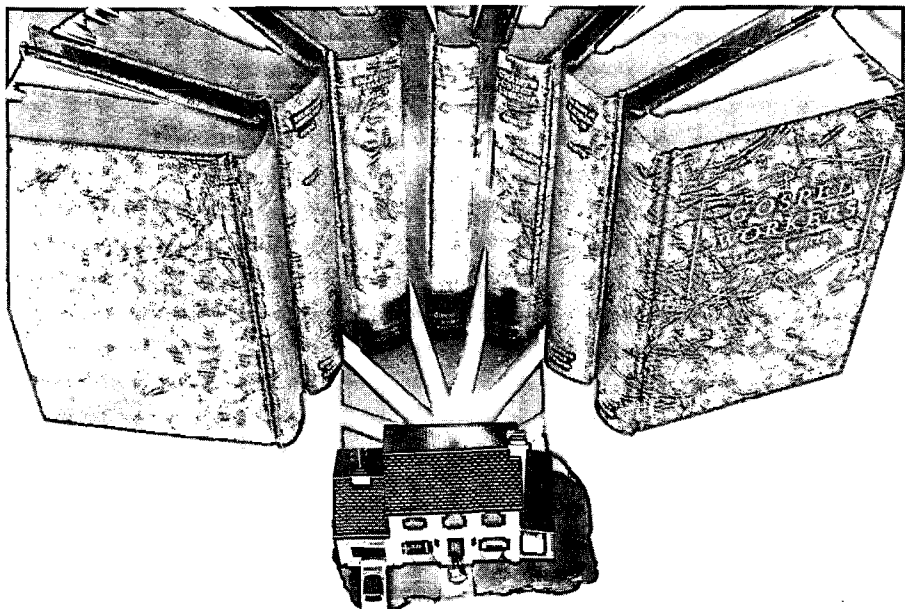
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