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LESSON FROM THE REVELATION

(TEACHER)

Written by Jo Scales

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The writer of this book, Jo Scales, is a missionary serving in Embu, Kenya. She is married and has two children, a daughter and a son.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GOD'S REVELATION

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 1:1-8

Verse in Today's Lesson: Revelation 1:1-8

Memory Verse: "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to understand how God reveals Christ to his followers.

Teaching Aids: Get a box. It does not matter how large or how small it is. If you cannot get a box, get an envelope. Put some object (a bowl, a book, a pencil or anything you like) into the box. Close the lid. Bring the box (or envelope) to class with you.

#### Background Study

The Revelation is one of the most difficult books in the Bible. It is by far the most difficult one in the New Testament. Because of its difficulty it is often misunderstood. In the sermons or lessons which, it is said, are based on the Revelation.

The Revelation is apocalyptic literature. It is literature that was written simply because the Jewish people never gave up hope. It is made up of dreams and visions of the end time. Because of this it is written in symbols and pictures. The writer was trying to convert things that man has never seen nor known into understandable human terms.

At the time of the writing of the Revelation, Christian people were being persecuted. The Roman Empire was trying to force Christians to swear allegiance to Caesar. In a special ceremony before the magistrate each person had to say, "Caesar is Lord." The Christians would not do this.

Read Revelation 1:1-3. The author begins the book by telling us this will be the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This means the Revelation will be given by Jesus Christ.

God gave the Revelation to Jesus to give to John who would give it to the world. God is the beginning and the ending of the Revelation. He is the source of all truth.

The Revelation is given to the servants of God. The servants are the Christians who were living at that time. John, the writer, is himself a servant.

The author could have been John the disciple of Jesus who would have been very old by this time. He had refused to say "Caesar is Lord" and had been exiled to the island of Patmos as punishment.

This section ends with blessings. Blessed is the man who hears, blessed is he who reads and blessed is he who obeys.

Read Revelation 1:4-6. All of Revelation is a letter. This is the beginning of the letter. It is written to the seven churches of Asia Minor. They were located in a circle on the map, so the letter could be read at one church, sent to the next, and so on until it ended up back where it had started.

John made a strong point that the letter was from Jesus Christ who has the authority to write the letter. Jesus shed his own blood to save us so he has the authority to write this letter.

Read Revelation 1:7-8. John assures his readers that Jesus is going to return from heaven to save his followers from the persecution they are suffering. He will come with clouds in the air so all men can see him. He is Christ, the beginning and the end. (Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet).

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Greet each young person as he arrives. Show the box (or envelope) to him and say, "Today I have a mystery for you." Continue until each person has arrived and you have created an air of suspense.

Ask the students: "Can you guess what is in this box (envelope)?" Give them time to guess. Give them hints (like it is round, it is small, you use it when you eat, etc.), but give only one hint at a time. Continue until the young people have guessed what is in the box.

Say: "You are good detectives. You solved the mystery of what was in the box. John wrote a mystery for us in the book of Revelation. We will be studying this mystery for the next thirteen weeks. We will see how good you are at solving John's mystery!"

##### Examination

Ask the students to open their Bibles to Revelation, chapter one. Have the first three verses read.

Say: "We need to study this book because we hear that it says many strange things. Some people frighten other people with this book. It is intended as a book of hope, not a book of fear. As we study let us remember this.

John wrote this book to reassure the people of Asia Minor that Jesus had not left them without hope. He had not left them alone. They were suffering many kinds of persecutions, and some were losing hope and faith in God. They were proclaiming the ruler of the Roman Empire, the Caesar, was Lord.

John did not want them to lay aside their faith. He wanted them to stay strong. So he assured them that very soon their trials would be over.

God gave the Revelation to Jesus to give to John who was then giving it to the churches. God is the source of all truth. What are the blessings in verse 3?" Give time for discussion.

Have verses 4-6 read. Say: "John made sure that his readers understood that the Revelation was not from him. It was from Jesus, who had the right to write. What

authority did he have? (He was the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth, he shed his blood for Christians to be saved, etc.)

Have verses 7-8 read. Ask: "How will Jesus return to the earth?" Then ask: "Why?" "What does Alpha and Omega mean?" Allow time for discussion.

#### Application

Say: "We will continue to study these lessons from Revelation. We should find them to be very helpful in our lives.

"To understand the Revelation, we need to know that it is apocalyptic literature. That means it is written in pictures and symbols. At times it may be very difficult to understand. We will ask the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to be our teacher so the Revelation will be clear to us."

Ask: "Do you have questions so far?"

Encourage the young people to read the rest of the first chapter of Revelation in preparation for the next lesson.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Ask God, through the Holy Spirit, to help each student understand the book of Revelation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A PICTURE OF JESUS

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 1:9-20; Exodus 25:31-37; Zechariah 4:2; Exodus 28:4; 29:5; Daniel 7:9; Isaiah 44:6

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 1:12-20

Memory Verse: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him..." (Revelation 1:7).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to understand how John saw Jesus, and what all the symbolism means.

Teaching Aids: If you have a picture of Jesus, bring it. If you do not have it, you will discuss this rather than show a picture.

#### Background Study

It is very important that you realize that John was seeing things in his visions that were familiar things in that they had been written about before in the Old Testament. When they were first written about they were puzzling to the people. At the time John wrote, however, the people were familiar with the terms and symbols he used. At least the Jewish people were familiar with them. The Romans under whose dominion the Jews lived did not know the Old Testament writings. This is why John felt secure in writing this way. The authorities would not know what he was saying as he wrote about the overthrow of the Roman Empire.

In Revelation 1:12-20, John gets a look at the risen Christ. It is an astonishing sight.

John saw seven golden lampstands. See Zechariah 4:2; Exodus 25:31-37; 1 Kings 7:49. The seven lampstands were the seven churches, and John saw someone standing among the churches. There is significance here that Christ loves the churches and cares for them.

This person was "one like a son of man." Read Daniel 7:13. Jesus used this term for himself when he lived upon the earth. It is a term that came to mean the Messiah.

The figure was "clothed with a long robe and golden girdle round his breast." Read Exodus 28:4; 29:5; Leviticus 16:4; 1 Samuel 18:24; 1 Samuel 24:5, 12; Ezekiel 26:16 and Daniel 10:5. Jesus here was Prophet, Priest and King. Be sure you read these verses from the Old Testament.

John uses titles for God and applies them to the risen Christ. This is to underscore the fact that Jesus Christ is God.

"His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow..." (verse 14) means that he was sinless and pure. See Daniel 7:9 and Isaiah 1:18.

"His eyes were like a flame of fire" shows that he is all-seeing. Read Daniel 10:6. Also read Mark 3:34; 10:23; 11:11; 3:5; Mark 10:21 and Luke 22:61 to know

about the eyes of Jesus when he lived on the earth. It has been said that when one had seen the eyes of Jesus, he would never forget them.

His feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace" showed his steadfastness, strength, and speed (to punish sin). Read Daniel 10:6 and Ezekiel 1:7.

"His voice was like the sound of many waters" shows that Jesus' voice contains many levels. It could be a surging thundering sound, but it can also be soft as a brook playing over stones. Read Ezekiel 43:2 and 1 Kings 19:12.

"In his right hand he held seven stars" show his power to hold up the heavens.

"From his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword" shows the power of his word. Read Isaiah 11:4; Isaiah 49:2; Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

"His face was as the sun shining in its strength" tells us that he has glory. Read Judges 5:4; Matthew 17:2.

Verses 17-20 tell us that John fell down in great fear before him, and he gently raised him up. The hand that is powerful enough to hold the heavens up can be a gentle, tender hand. Jesus identified himself to John as the first and the last (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12) and the living one who had died but is alive. He also said that he had the keys of death and Hades (Psalms 9:13; 107:18; Isaiah 38:10). Then he explained that the seven stars are the angels (pastors, guardian angels?) of the churches, and that the lampstand are the churches.

#### TEACHING THIS LESSON

##### Introduction

Show the picture of Jesus that you brought. Discuss it by asking if this is what they think Jesus looked like when he was upon the earth. Get their ideas and thoughts. If you did not have a picture, ask them to describe what they think Jesus looked like when he was here.

Continue in this way until each person in your class has said all he wants to say.

Then, say: "No one knows what Jesus looked like when he lived on the earth as a man. But we do have a picture of him after he had died and gone to heaven to live with God, his Father. We will study that picture today.

##### Examination

Tell your students to open their Bibles to Revelation 1:12-20. Tell someone to read it quickly. Then say, "John took his picture of Jesus from pictures of God that we have in the Old Testament. John knew that the Jews he was writing to would be able to understand what he was saying. He also knew that the Romans would not be able to understand. I want us to read each part of the description of Jesus, then I will ask some of you to read the Old Testament Scriptures that go with it. Sometimes we will read from the New Testament as well. Some of it had been written when John wrote the Revelation."

Follow this pattern. You read the parts of the description. Have the students find the Scriptures and read them. After each of the descriptions are read and the Scriptures for it read, ask the students what that symbolized in Christ (He

was a king, he was all-powerful, etc.) 1. Lampstands, Zechariah 4:2; Exodus 25:31-37; 1 Kings 7:49. 2. Son of man, Daniel 7:13. 3. Robe and girdle, Exodus 28:4; 29:5, 12; Ezekiel 26:16; Daniel 10:5. 4. Head and hair, Daniel 7:9; Isaiah 1:18. 5. Eyes, Daniel 10:6. 6. Feet, Daniel 10:6; Ezekiel 1:7. 7. Voice, Ezekiel 43:2; 1 Kings 19:12. 8. Mouth, Isaiah 11:4; Isaiah 49:2; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 9. Face, Judges 5:4; Matthew 17:2.

Have someone read verses 17-20. Ask: "What did John do when he saw this sight?" Allow discussion. Ask: "What did Jesus do?" Then, "What does this show us about Jesus?"

Use your background material to explain these verses further. Have the Scripture references looked up.

#### Application

Ask: "Did this picture of Jesus surprise you?" Allow discussion. Say: "We are not sure this is what Jesus looks like in heaven right now. All John had to use were descriptions from the Old Testament. He used them as best as he could. We can picture Jesus as we like, but we need to remember that he has all these qualities and characteristics that we mentioned."

#### Prayer Suggestion

1. Pray that God will continue to send the Holy Spirit to enlighten this study of the Revelation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 2, 3

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 2,3

Memory Verse: "...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10b).

Lesson Aim: I will teach my students that God knows the strengths and the weaknesses of our churches.

Teaching Aids: Look in your Bible. Is there a map there of Asia Minor? Look for Thyratira, Smyrna and Ephesus. If you do not have a map in your Bible, see if the pastor or a friend has one that you can show to the class. If you know how, enlarge the map on another paper so that your students can see it easily. You will want to show them that the churches are arranged in sort of a circle upon the map.

#### Background Study

Revelation two and three are the seven letters to the seven churches. These churches represent all churches.

These churches were enduring suppression and persecution. The Roman emperor was demanding that they pledge allegiance to him. Persons who wished to continue to worship God refused to say that Caesar was the Lord. Many Christians refused to do this. They were punished severely when they refused. Some of the punishments were very bad.

John, the writer of the book of Revelation, was one of those who had refused to say the words that the government demanded. All his property had been taken away. The government sent him into exile on the island of Patmos. John knew how troubled the little Christian churches were. He wanted to help.

In visions John received a message from Jesus himself. The message was to strengthen all the Christians who lived at that time. Jesus wanted to tell them that the Roman Empire would not last forever. It would fall one day, and the people would be free.

John saw many things in his visions, and he tried to write them down so the people could understand them. He used many things from the Old Testament so the people would understand.

Each of the churches had its own special message. But the letters all contained most of the following elements:

1. Christ identified himself as the sender.
2. Christ claimed intimate knowledge of each church.
3. He commended the church for whatever good it had done.

4. He issued his complaint against the church.
5. Christ encouraged the church to do something.
6. He made a promise to the faithful.

Not all the churches had all the elements. Two churches received no word of praise. Two received no reprimand.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

If you have a map to use, have it ready now and show it to the students as they arrive. Show them that the churches you will study today are laid out in a geographical circle. Explain that this was so the people could deliver the letter easily to the next church until finally the letter was back at the first church.

Say: "Today we will do a Scripture Search from Revelation 2 and 3. All of these churches were being persecuted. Caesar was forcing the people to say, 'Caesar is Lord.' The Christians refused to do this and were punished. John wanted to help the people resist this demand because it was giving God's place and his honor to Caesar.

"Each of these letters contain some common elements. I will ask you to find those elements as we study together."

##### Examination

Follow this plan as you study each church. First have the Scripture read. Name the church. Give a brief background of the city. Then tell the students to find the six elements listed in your Background Study. Make sure you point out that in Christ's identification of himself he used verses from Revelation 1. Let the students contribute freely to this lesson.

1. Revelation 2:1-7, Ephesus, a great and wealthy city. All kinds of people lived there, the rich and educated as well as the poor and illiterate. Life generally was corrupt. The city was located on the coast near the mouth of the Cayster River. Paul ministered in that city for a long while. John was a respected person there.

Christ was the one who held in his right hand the seven stars and the one who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Christ was with the churches and protected them with great power. The Ephesians were commended then by saying that loyalty to Christ was shown in their works. It was also present in their doctrine. False teachers had little chance to be heard in Ephesus.

Christ had a complaint. They had lost their first love. This may mean their love for one another had cooled. More probably, it meant they were losing their first love for Christ.

Christ encouraged them to remember, repent and return to him. He promised them they would eat from the tree of life when they conquered evil.

(From now on, the teacher will continue with the same study plan. All that will be contributed here is a brief description of the city where each church was

located. The students may use their Bibles and their students books to find the material.)

2. Revelation 2:8-11, Smyrna was an ancient city. It had a temple to Roman and one to Tiberius. It was prosperous.

3. Revelation 2:12-17, Pergamum was hell's headquarters as the seat of emperor worship. It was historically the greatest city in Asia. It was the capital city for 400 years and was one of the greatest religious centers in the ancient world.

4. Revelation 2:18-29, Thyratira was about 65 kilometers southeast of Pergamum near the south bank of the Lycus river. The trade guilds of the city were very influential. The city produced an expensive dye that Lydia sold. (See Acts 16:14.) Thyratira had many pagans.

5. Revelation 3:1-6, Sardis was about 48 kilometers south, southeast of Thyratira. It was a good example of the contrast between past splendor and present decay. The aristocracy there was broken down. It had five Roman roads coming into the city and dealt in the woolen industry.

6. Revelation 3:7-13, Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities. Colonists from Pergamum had founded it. Philadelphos is the Greek word for a man who loves his brother. Philadelphia was a border town and could be used as an open door by missionaries to carry the gospel to Greece.

7. Revelation 3:14-22, Laodicea was the church with the closed door. Three Roman roads passed through the city making it of commercial importance. It was famous for its raven black wool used in clothing and in carpets.

#### Application

Say: "God had messages for each of the churches because he knew them. We should never think that God does not know the condition of our church. He knows exactly where our strengths are, but he also knows where our weaknesses are. We need to pray for our church to overcome our weaknesses and to renew our strengths." If the students want to discuss this specifically and there is time to do so, allow the discussion. Perhaps you may have some suggestions to present to the church committee.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for your church. Ask God to strengthen it. Pray for your pastor and other leaders.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE HEAVENLY CHURCH

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 4

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 4:1-11

Memory Verse: "At once I was in the spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne!" (Revelation 4:2).

Lesson Aim: I will teach my students the picture of God that John had.

Teaching Aids: None

#### Background Study

John's purpose in the visions of God in chapter four and Christ in chapter five is to show the might and splendor of the God we worship. Rome had no might compared to the might of God.

Verse 1. John showed his readers a door into heaven. John saw the universe as having three levels. Hades with the bottomless pit and the lake of fire was the lowest level. Then earth, then heaven was above. Heaven was a solid vault or firmament with doors and windows. These doors and windows could be opened to allow passage between earth and heaven. Read Ezekiel 1:1; Mark 1:10; Acts 7:56; 10:11; and Psalms 78:23. This door allowed John to see into heaven. Christ's voice invited John to come up bodily or in the spirit to see all of heaven.

When John went into heaven, he was enabled to see all the events of heaven, whether they were present events, future ones or those which had already occurred. Later in the Revelation John wrote of events of the future which were occurring while he wrote, or events of the future which he wrote of as if they have already happened.

Verse 2. The throne is talked about very often in Jewish and Christian writings. In the Revelation God is shown on his throne in every chapter except chapter 15 when he is in the temple and in chapters 2, 9 and 10 where there is no reason for mentioning the throne.

Verse 3. This scene is from Ezekiel 1 and 3 and from Isaiah 6:1-5. The rainbow is a symbol of God's glory. It may also have something to do with the covenant God made with man after he destroyed the earth by floods of water in Noah's time. If so, it would show here that God intended to save his people.

It is interesting to note that John does not mention God's hands, feet, face or any bodily part. Instead he sees God in terms of light. See 1 Timothy 1:16 and Psalms 104:2.

Verse 4. Who are the elders? Read Isaiah 24:23. They are often mentioned in the Revelation. They sit around the throne, clothed in white robes and wearing crowns (Revelation 4:4; 14:3). They cast their crowns before the throne (4:10). They continuously worship and praise God (5:11, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 14:3; 19:40). They bring God the prayers of the saints in Revelation 5:6. One of them

encourages John when he is sad (5:5) and one of them acts as interpreter of one of the visions (7:13).

The elders could be a council or senate of God. See 1 Kings 19:22. Or they could be the priests and Levites. See 1 Chronicles 24:7-18. They might be twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament combined with the twelve apostles, and as such could form the joint foundation of the church.

Verses 5-6a. Lightning flashes, voices and peals of thunder from the throne recall Exodus 19:16 and Ezekiel 1:13. The seven torches of fire are the seven spirits of God in Revelation 1:4 and 3:1.

Is the crystal sea the waters above the firmament mentioned in Genesis 1:7? Also read Psalms 148:4. In Psalms 104:3, God had set his throne on a sea. Remember that this great sea has ceased to exist and men are in direct fellowship with God.

Verses 6b-8. The four living creatures in these verses are a combination of the living creatures seen by Ezekiel and the seraphim seen by Isaiah. Also see Ezekiel 1:3-25 for a reference to the eyes. These four creatures represent the four powers at the four ends of the earth. In Isaiah 6:1-7 the creatures sing the "Holy, holy, holy" as they do here.

Verse 9-11. When the living creatures sing their song of glory, honor and thanks to the ever living God, the 24 elders fall down to worship him. This song is further assurance that God can and does continue to exercise control over all creation, and will soon make his great power evident to all.

#### Introduction

Ask: "What is heaven like?" Let the young people discuss this as fully as they will.

Say: "Today we will discover what John saw when he looked through a doorway in heaven."

#### Examination

Tell the students to open their Bibles to Revelation 4. Tell them that you want them to read the whole chapter silently. Tell them that, while they read, you want them to try to picture in their minds what they are reading.

After the students finish reading, ask one of them to describe as fully as he can what John saw when he looked through the open door into heaven. Let others help describe this scene, adding what you want from your own study until you have completed this picture. Use as many of the background Scriptures as you want to use.

When you finish your picture of heaven, ask: "What was the greatest thing you saw in the picture of heaven?" (The answer should be God). Say: "John could not describe another person. God was too mighty, too great, too glorious to be described in human terms."

Continue: "God is such a glorious being. When we think that it was he who created the stars, the sun, the earth, the moon, all the plants, the water and even mankind, we begin to understand the power and the might of the being we worship as God. If we had to describe the beauty of our God I doubt that we

could have done as well as John when he used terms of light to describe this wonderful God of ours."

#### Application

Say; "In your student's book it was suggested that you try an experiment. When it is time to sing praises during our worship services, it is suggested that you think only about God as you sing. You are to forget about the people in the church with you. You are to forget about what you will do after the worship service. You are to forget about the clothing you are wearing. You are to forget about the arguments you had recently. You are to forget about the church building, the hymn books, the person next to you. You are to think only about God. You are to really praise God in your singing."

Continue: "I want us to try that during the worship service. Next time we meet tell me how you did. Let me know what you felt in your heart when you did this experiment. I shall ask for a report."

Close the meeting with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Ask God to reveal himself more and more to you and to all the class members.
2. Pray that the students will try the experiment and really worship and praise God.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE MEANING OF THE SCROLL AND SEALS

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 5, 6; Ezekiel 2:9-10; Daniel 10:21; Psalms 139:16

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 5, 6

Memory Verse: "...Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9b).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to show that they understand that God is able to know all the "secrets" of their hearts.

Teaching Aids: Take a paper. Roll it up from end to end. Take strings and tie them around the roll. You will use seven strings. When you knot each string, drop a bit of candle wax over the knot. Bring this "scroll" to class with you.

#### Background Study

Revelation 5:1-5. The scroll you have made is like the scroll described in these verses. The scroll contained the destiny of man, and so it was worthy to read the scroll. John wept when he heard that news because he, like all men, wanted to know what the future would be like.

Then, one of the elders came and said that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David would open the scroll. Only he was mighty and worthy enough to do the job.

Read Genesis 49:9 for a reference to the Lion of Judah. Also read Isaiah 11:1 and 11:10 for Scriptures about the Root of David. Both these titles are titles for the Messiah. This was Christ's confirmation that he was indeed the promised Messiah who has triumphed over death. Because of this he is able to know and to reveal the secrets of God. It is he who will preside over the working out of the purposes of God in the creation of the world and in the events of history.

Verse 6. When John looked he saw not the lion he had expected, but a lamb. This is the supreme moment in all the Revelation, the moment when the Lamb appears in the scene of heaven. Every eye was on him.

In Revelation Jesus is called the Lamb 29 times. The word used here means "slain lamb." It is used for Jesus in other places in the New Testament, but never as a slain lamb, but as a living one. Even though Jesus is pictured as a lamb, it is a mighty lamb with horns of power.

Verses 7-14. The Lamb went without hesitation and took the scroll out of God's hands. This causes great joy for those around the throne. The ones who rejoice are joined by others in ever-widening circles until all of creation is worshipping the Lamb.

Chapter six contains the opening of the first six seals from the scroll.

Behind the first seal was a white horse. This represents conquest, militarism and strength. The white horse is victory.

The second seal hid the red horse of war. The third seal was the black horse of famine. The pale horse was behind the fourth seal and signified death. This is not the end time, but it is the signs that precede the end. Only one fourth of the earth is involved in death and disaster. It is a grim picture, but not total destruction of all the world.

The fifth seal hid the martyrs under the altar who knew that judgement was coming, but could not understand why God was waiting so long. Each one was given a white robe, a symbol of victory, and told to wait a bit longer.

The sixth seal's opening signaled to the entire universe to undergo a shuddering as if it would fall apart. This shows the wrath of God that will fall upon unrepentant sinners.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Show the scroll that you have made. Explain how each seal has been made. Say: "This scroll is like the scroll that waits in heaven to be opened. That scroll contains the destiny or future of mankind. Our lesson for today is about this scroll and what is behind the first six seals."

##### Examination

Because of the length of the lesson, teach it in small segments. Have a few verses read, explain them, then go on to the next few.

Have the students open their Bibles to Revelation 5. Tell one to read the first four verses. Say: "God was seated upon his throne. In his hand he held a sealed scroll. This scroll held the future of mankind. The scroll was so filled with information that it had been written on both sides of the paper, then rolled up. When John saw the scroll he wanted to know what was in it, but a strong angel asked who was worthy to open the scroll. The angel had to be a mighty one, so his voice could be heard all over the universe."

Continue: "No one was found worthy to open the scroll. No one was good enough to take man's destiny out of the hand of God. When John heard that there was no one to open the scroll he began to cry. He wanted to know what the future held."

Tell someone to read verse 4. Say: "The elder said that the Lion of Judah, the Root of David could open the scroll. These were names for the Messiah. Let us read from the Old Testament about these titles." Have someone read Genesis 49:9 and another to read Isaiah 11:1 and still another to read Isaiah 11:10. Discuss these verses as they apply to this lesson.

Have someone read verses 6-14. Using your Background Study, discuss the term, Lamb. Say: "John must have been surprised to expect to see a lion and to see a lamb instead." Explain the terms here, and emphasize that this was the slain lamb, a lamb that had been killed but was alive.

Say: "The Lamb went and took the scroll from the hand of God. He was good enough to know God's secrets because he had died for all mankind. Then the elders began to sing a new song, and all joined in until all of creation was singing."

Have someone read Revelation 6:1-2. Say: "Jesus began to open the seals."

Now use your own Bible study and the student's book to explain the meaning of each of the horses.

Finally, tell someone to read the rest of chapter six. Say: "The fifth seal concealed an altar under which were all the martyrs. They had been killed in defense of the faith. They were weeping and wailing because they felt they had waited long enough for judgement."

Say: "When the sixth seal was opened the earth began to shake with an earthquake. This was the first judgement and was in the future. Can you find the other six judgements?" (The sun became black, the moon became blood, the stars fell, and the sky vanished, every mountain as removed and every island vanished.)

Say: "This indeed is the final judgement upon a sin-filled world."

#### Application

Ask: "How many of you really praised God and worshipped him in singing after our last lesson?" Give them time to discuss their experiences. Say: "A God who can bring such judgements as we have just read about is a God who is worthy of our worship and praise. Let us continue to worship him each day, rather than just as a one day experience."

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that the students will discover the power and might of God.
2. Pray that they will continue to worship God.

## CHAPTER SIX

### WHO WILL BE IN HEAVEN?

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 7; John 12:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9; Isaiah 49:10; Isaiah 25:8

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 7:9-17

Memory Verse: "...These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14b).

Lesson Aim: I want to give my students some time to consider whether or not they are ready to live with God in heaven.

Teaching Aids: chalk board and chalk

#### Background Study

Revelation 7:9-17 gives a picture of the multitude in white robes. It is a preview of the heavenly state of the Christians which is more fully explained in Revelation 21 and 22.

This great multitude of people is described in six ways. First of all, the number is uncountable. None of us knows what the final count of saved people will be.

The second description is that they come from every nation and tribe. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for all men in every land who live or who have ever lived.

The third description of the multitude is that they are in God's presence. They stand before the throne (God) and before the Lamb (Jesus Christ). This nearness to God and Christ is a privilege reserved only for heavenly beings up until this time. Now all Christians are there, standing beside their God. We can have no greater victory.

The multitude are clothed in white robes. White symbolizes both purity and victory. The Christians in Sardis had been promised white robes if they remained faithful. God keeps his promises.

The people in the multitude are holding palms which is another sign of victory. Palm branches were always used during the feast of Tabernacles. They were also used when Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time (John 12:13).

They were used for any royal procession. The people in the multitude carry these palm branches to show the victory of the Lamb, not to show their own victory.

The sixth and the last description of the multitude is that they praise God by using the word "salvation." John is showing his readers that their salvation, their saving, will come at the hands of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) rather than at the hands of the Roman emperor. Roman emperors were often called "saviour" by the Romans. John wants to impress his readers that no emperor is the saviour.

Only God can save us.

Verse 11 tells that the angels praised God along with the multitude. Evidently the angels formed a larger circle around the elders and the four living creatures. These angels fell prostrate before God to praise him with the same chorus of praise in Revelation 4:8; 4:11; 5:9-10 and 5:12.

Just in case John might fail to identify the multitude, an elder asked him two questions. John could not answer these questions, so the elder explained who the people were and where they had come from. He also told John what their future held.

The elder said that they came through the great tribulation. This is probably the great distress that Jesus spoke about in Mark 13 which would come before Jesus' return.

The multitude had earned the white robes they wore. At other places the robes seem to be gifts. But here the writer says that the multitude did their part in making the robes white. Read Revelation 1:5; 5:9; 1 Peter 1:2, 19; Romans 3:25 and Romans 5:9.

The future of the multitude is beautiful. God will shelter them with his presence. They will have no hunger, no thirst or scorching heat. (Read Isaiah 49:10). The Lamb will be their Shepherd. (See Psalms 23 and John 10:14). Jesus will lead them to springs of living water. God will wipe away their tears. Up to this time a God has been aloof and apart from his children. These verses show us that in heaven he will be a tender father.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Before your students arrive, write on the chalk board, "Are you ready?" After the students have arrived and you have greeted each of them, point to the question you have written. Say: "If we were to have a test on our last lesson, would you be ready for it? Would you do well?" Allow the young people to answer this question.

Say: "If I were to say that we were all going on a long trip together, could we leave right now?" Allow answers.

Say: "We usually do not stay ready for all the events that might occur in life. But I wonder if we are all ready for the biggest event of all, our trip to heaven. That is what our lesson is today. We will discuss just how ready we are to live in heaven."

##### Examination

Have the young people open their Bible to Revelation 7:9-17. Say: "Today we are going to take a look at what heaven will be like when we get there. In later chapters of Revelation we will have a more complete picture of heaven, but today we will have a glimpse of it."

Have the Scripture read. Then ask: "What will this multitude in heaven be like? Let us write at least six things on the board about this multitude." Using discussion, allow the students to name the six ways of describing the multitude. These are listed in your Background Study. Write them down in any order that the

young people name them. Add information to what they say so they will have a good picture of the multitude.

Then say: "The angels sang a song of praise to God. What was the song?" (Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.) Say: "We have read this song already. Let us read it again" Have the students find and read Revelation 4:8; 4:11; 5:9-10 and 5:12. Compare these to verse 12.

Then ask: "What two questions did the elder ask?" Let the students answer.

Say: "The elder answered the two questions and also added some information about what the future of this multitude would be. Who were these people?" Let the students answer.

Ask: "Where did they come from?" Allow them to answer. Then ask: "What was the future of these people? Let us list these on the board."

#### Application

Say: "This multitude is all the Christians who ever lived. They were found to be ready when the time came to go to heaven. How ready are you? Let us talk about some of the things we need to be doing daily to stay ready to go to heaven."

Use the rest of the time discussing these things. You will find several in the student's book. Encourage your students to say what they think. Make sure they understand the first thing anyone must do is to accept Christ as their Saviour.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for each student who is presently by name, thanking God for each and asking him to help them remember to stay ready for heaven.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE LAST TRUMPET

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 8, 9, 10

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 10

Memory Verse: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to understand what a faithful witness is.

Teaching Aids: Bring to class something that tastes bitter or sour (lemon, a lime etc.) and something that tastes sweet (sugar, honey, candy, fruit, etc.)

#### Background Study

In the Revelation, John uses the number seven in various ways. He has several series of seven visions. Each time that he has a series of seven visions he interrupts the series after the sixth vision. Then he has an interlude or rest period between the sixth and seventh visions. He did this with the seal visions, and he does it with the trumpet visions. Our lesson today comes from the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet visions.

It is very important that we understand that this interlude was to tell the churches that John as writing so that they would get on with the task of telling the Gospel to the peoples of the world. Even though the purpose of the Revelation is to encourage the people under the power of the Romans, John wants them to remember to tell the good news to their neighbors and friends.

In this part of the Revelation John's position has changed from heaven to earth. In other words he has come back down from heaven.

A strong angel appeared from heaven. This angel was not one of those who were blowing the trumpets. This was a different angel who had a mighty message to deliver. The message was for the whole world as shown by his foot being placed upon the earth while the other was placed upon the sea.

When the angel called out seven thunders answered. Each of the thunders had a message, but we will never know what the messages were because a voice said to seal up the thunders. This meant that the messages were not to be revealed. (Read 2 Corinthians 12:4 about another time when the message could not be revealed. Jesus himself was spoken to in thunder. Read John 12:27-30).

Thunder was used throughout the Revelation to warn that judgement was on the way. Read Revelation 8:5; 11:19 and 16:18. There was no time left. The end was coming and there would be no more warnings. The Antichrist was about to appear and would cause great terror upon the earth. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. The hour had come. The final contest was about to begin, and the mystery of God would finally be revealed completely.

In verse 8 the voice told John to take the scroll out of the hand of the angel who had been standing on the earth and the sea. John was to take this message to the world. The angel did not give the scroll to John. John had to take it. God's Revelation and the good news of Jesus Christ is not forced upon any person. The message must be taken by the messenger willingly.

The interesting thing is that the message must be eaten by the messenger. It becomes a part of the messenger just as food does. We would have a hard time delivering a message we did not believe. All who share the gospel must first believe the gospel.

In Ezekiel 3:1-3 we can read about another scroll that Ezekiel was asked to eat. This is just what John was asked to do. Read Psalms 119:103. It is sweet to be asked to take a message, but delivering the message of warning, of threats, of coming terror can be very unpleasant to the messenger. That is when the message becomes bitter in the stomach.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Pick up the sweet item you have brought. Say: "This \_\_\_\_\_ (sugar, candy, honey or whatever you have) is very sweet when we put it into our mouths. We cannot taste the sweetness, though, unless we put it into our mouths. This \_\_\_\_\_ (lime, lemon or whatever you have brought) is completely different from the sweet thing. This tastes sour or bitter. Again, we cannot know about its taste unless we put it into our mouths."

Continue: "Our lesson today is about something that tasted very sweet in the mouth, but it became bitter when it got to the stomach."

##### Examination

Tell the young people to open their Bibles to Revelation 10 and have the first seven verses read. Say: "John has returned to the earth from heaven. In another vision he saw an angel coming down from heaven. This is a very strong and big angel. One foot is on the land and other foot is on the sea. He is very powerful. The angel is holding a small scroll in his hand. We remember what a scroll looked like. This scroll held a message. The message was for the whole world since the angel had his feet on both the land and the sea.

Continue: "The angel spoke with his mighty voice and seven peals of thunder answered him. John got ready to write down what the thunder had told him, but God said that he must seal up what they said. We are not sure what the thunder revealed. It might have been some woes and tribulations that God had planned for the sinful world but had decided not to bring upon the earth. We just do not know."

Continue: "What was most important was that the hour had come for the duel between good and evil to end. The Antichrist was soon to appear upon the world, then God would triumph over him. Let us read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4." After this read, say: "These verses are about the Antichrist. This is what the scroll contained, the final outcome of the battle between God and the Antichrist."

Have verses 8 through 11 read. Say: "God commanded John to take the little scroll and eat it. He said that the scroll would taste like honey in the mouth,

but would become bitter in the stomach. Let us read Ezekiel 3:1-3 to see another time when someone had to eat a scroll." Have these verses read.

Ask: "What is the meaning of the sweetness and the bitterness of the scroll?" (Make sure the students say that the message is sweet to the receiver, but the warnings and the terror that is to come is difficult for the messenger to tell the people.)

Say: "All who share the gospel of Jesus Christ must first experience Jesus Christ. The good news must become a part of our lives before we can share with anyone else. Sometimes it is difficult to explain to the world what the Word of God says. Are there any questions about the lesson?"

#### Application

Say: "John had to take the message out of the hand of the angel. The angel did not give the message to him. That is the way salvation is. God will not force any of us to be saved. We must reach out ourselves and take this great prize. Have you reached out for salvation? If you have not done so, stay after class today and we will talk about it."

Close with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that each member of the class is a Christian. Ask God to use them to share the gospel with others.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 12; Isaiah 54:5; Hosea 2:19-20; Isaiah 27:1; Daniel 7:7; Psalms 2:9; Exodus 19:4

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 12

Memory Verse: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).

Lesson Aim: I want to assure my students that God has all the power and all the strength he needs to help them live pure and holy lives.

Teaching Aids: None

#### Background Study

There is another series of seven visions in chapters twelve and thirteen of Revelation. We will study the first four visions found in chapter twelve today.

Verses 1-2. The woman here is a symbol for the community of God. In the Old Testament she was called the bride of God. Read Isaiah 54:5 and Hosea 2:19-20. She is also called God's chosen people. In the New Testament the community of God is the church, the body of baptized believers. Jesus came from the lineage of the chosen people of the Old Testament or the church of the New Testament. Remember as you study that the community of God whether it is the chosen people of the Old Testament or the church of the New Testament has continually undergone terrible persecution at the hands of a hostile and evil world. Remember, also, that the community of God is protected by God and can never be completely destroyed.

Verse 3-5. The woman was in labor and was about to deliver her child. There appeared in front of her a terrible dragon ready to devour the child when it was born. The symbolism is easily understood. The community of God or God's chosen people had been in travail and was ready to produce Jesus while the evil world (the dragon) stood ready to kill the Son of God.

This great dragon was like the Leviathan in Isaiah 27:1. He had ten horns which showed his great power. See Daniel 7:7. The dragon swept a third of the stars from heaven. These may be the angels which fell from heaven who would assist the dragon in his work.

The child that was born would rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Read Psalms 2:9, Revelation 2:27 and 19:15-21. When the child was born he was taken up to God. This may be symbolic of Christ's own ascension into heaven after his death and resurrection.

Verse 6. The woman fled into the wilderness into a safe place. This flight calls to mind the flight of Mary, Joseph and Jesus into Egypt to escape wicked Herod.

The second vision begins in verse 7. Michael and his angels fought and defeated the dragon (Satan or the devil). Luke 10:18 tells us that Jesus saw Satan fall to earth like lightning and Ephesians tells us that there are wicked forces in heavenly places. You might wonder how Satan could be in heaven, but this battle took place in heaven. His fall to earth may explain why he is in control here now, and why both the world and this age are corrupt. He is the ruler of this world right now. God is allowing him to rule for this period of time.

The third vision is in verses 10-12 and is a song of woe and rejoicing. Verse 10 tells us it was the martyrs who were singing. Verse 11 tells that the martyrs preferred death to disloyalty to God, and their sacrifice helped defeat Satan. Verse 12 says that the coming events would be both sweet and bitter just like the scroll John ate. It is sweet because of the persecution that God's people must endure during the rule.

At the end of the chapter Satan calls for help from the sea. He plans to give authority to the beast that will come forth.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "In the Revelation John used many symbols and signs to stand for other things. Remember that he did this so that the Romans would not understand what he was saying, But the persecuted Christians would understand. Today's lesson is filled with symbolism which we must understand if we are to understand the lesson.

First of all, we will read about a woman in the lesson. When the chapter begins she is the community of God, or God's chosen people. Later she becomes the Christian church.

Second, the baby we will read about is Jesus himself. He was the Son of the chosen people. He was born of the house and lineage of David.

Third, the dragon is Satan, the devil, Beelzebub. He is often called the deceiver and seducer.

Keep in mind what these three beings represents so that the lesson will make sense to you."

##### Examination

Ask the students to open their Bibles to Revelation 12. Say: "In chapters 12 and 13 there is another series of seven visions. We will study the first four in today's lesson." Ask a student to read the first six verses, remembering who each of the beings represent.

After the reading, ask a student to tell you what the vision said, substituting the names of community of God for the woman, Jesus Christ for the child and Satan for the dragon. When he finishes, ask any other student who wishes to do so to add to what has been said. You add what you wish to make sure the students have a picture of what the Scripture is saying.

Ask: "What did the ten horns of the dragon mean?" If they do not know, have them read Daniel 7:7, then say: "The horns symbolize the great power that Satan has."

Go on to explain anything the students have failed to understand in these verses. Use your Background Study to help you in your teaching.

Have verses 7-9 read. Again have a student tell the vision in his own words using the symbols we have learned. Again allow others to contribute. Say: "Satan lost the war in heaven, but he was allowed to come to earth to rule."

Have the third vision in verses 10-12 read. Explain that this is a song that the martyrs sang. It is a song both sweet and bitter because it says that Satan will be allowed to rule (the bitter part), but that he will not be allowed to rule forever (the sweet part). Remind the students of the scroll John ate.

Have the fourth vision in verses 13-17 read. Again allow a student to tell the story using the other names for the personalities. Make sure they understand that the woman is now the Christian church. Explain anything they may not understand in these verses.

#### Application

Say: "The woman escaped the devil only with the strength and power of God. What does that say to us?" Allow discussion. Encourage the students to say that we can overcome all the wiles and the temptations of the devil only if we depend on God's strength.

Ask: "Will God strengthen us if we live ordinary lives?" (No, we must live like Christians if we expect God to help us.)

Ask: "What can we do to live Christian lives?" (We can pray, read God's word, share the gospel with others, help the needy, trust God, etc.)

Close the meeting with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Ask God to help each student overcome Satan in his or her life.
2. Pray for the pastor of your church.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 13-14:7

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 14:1-7

Memory Verse: "Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you" (1 Peter 5:9-10).

Lesson Aim: This lesson should bring further assurance to my students that all our trials and suffering will come to an end someday.

Teaching Aids: chalk board and chalk or a large paper.

#### Background Study

The last three visions of the series started in chapter 12 ended in chapter 13. Today's lesson contains two visions of yet another series of seven visions. The first vision of this series is in Revelation 14:1-5.

After three and one half years of reign (1260 days or a time, two times and a half time) by Satan, Christ triumphs over him. Satan was seen in Revelation 12:17 standing on the shifting sands by the sea. This represents the uneasy, insecure reign he had upon the earth. In this vision we see the Lamb and his chosen ones standing upon the firm foundation of a mountain.

(The three and one-half year period cannot be taken as a literal statement. This is symbolism again. Rather than three and one-half years, the span of time is simply perfect. It is the length of time God wants it to be. Three and one-half years is used often in the Bible, indicating a period of time.)

The 144,000 who stood with the Lamb had the Lamb's name and the name of God written on their foreheads. The voice from heaven was like the sound of many waters (Revelation 1:15) and was thunderous (Revelation 4:5) and musical.

The 144,000 sang a song that only they could sing. Only the redeemed of God will be able to sing this song.

Verses 4-5 are puzzling. They have been interpreted in many ways. Some say it means that only celibate (having no sexual relations) people will be in heaven. Because of this some churches do not allow their priests and workers to marry. But Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:21 and following; Matthew 19:12; and 1 Corinthians 7:25-40 indicate that marriage is instituted and blessed by God. So this could not be the proper interpretation.

Some others say that the verses mean that the redeemed are pure in their worship and life. Deuteronomy 31:16, Judges 2:17, Hosea 9:1 and Exodus 34:15 bear that out.

Others say that it means purity in general. That is to say, the redeemed are people who live pure lives.

Still others say that those in heaven will be those who have not engaged in fornication or adultery. And others say that they indicate that the 144,000 have left off sex so they may be prepared for battle. See Deuteronomy 20, Leviticus 15:16; 1 Samuel 21:5, Deuteronomy 23:9-10.

The 144,000 are redeemed and have followed Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to follow him, and those who did are rewarded with eternal life with the Lamb.

The second vision occurs in verses 6 and 7. This is the angelic warning that all people must worship God. This is the last call to every person on earth to repent. Read Matthew 24:14. Even at this late hour a merciful God waits to save the people.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "Our lesson today is about a very unusual and interesting event that occurred in heaven. A new song was sung by the redeemed. No one else could sing this song. It was sung in victory."

##### Examination

Have the students open their Bibles to Revelation 14. Have the first verses read. Say: "This vision begins another series of seven visions. We will study it and one other today. In this vision, what is happening?" (The Lamb and 144,000 people are standing on a mountain.) "Why are they there?" (to sing a song) "What is unusual about this song?" (Only these can sing it.) "Who is the Lamb?" (Jesus Christ.) "Who are the 144,000 people?" (They are chaste or pure.) "What does this mean?" (being sexually pure) "Does this mean that there will be no married men in heaven?" (Allow the discussion to follow as the meaning of this. Say that some churches use these verses to say that pastors and priests cannot be married. Ask if the students can see that from the Scripture. Use your Background Study to help you with the possible meanings. Lead them to conclude a reasonable meaning to these verses such as that these were pure people.)

Say: "John says that these people are the ones who follow Jesus. Let us find some Scriptures where we are told to follow Jesus." Have the students find and read John 1:43, Mark 2:14, Mark 10:21, Luke 9:59, John 21:19-22, and 1 Peter 2:21. Then say: "We are told to follow Jesus, and the reward for following him is eternal life.

"John says, too, that they are the first-fruits. Let us read Romans 16:5 and 1 Corinthians 16:15 to understand what the first fruits were.

"These were also spotless people. Let us read 1 Peter 1:19, Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, Colossians 1:22 and Philipians 2:15. (Write these on the board so that they can be read one by one.)

"Now let us read verses 6 and 7 of chapter 14." After these verses are read, say: "Even at the last moment God offers salvation to any who will reach out and take it."

##### Application

Say: "How pure are we in our daily lives? We have read that we must be pure. How can we do that?" Allow the students to discuss this at length. Write down on the chalk board all their suggestions. They may include some or all of the following:

1. Pray without ceasing.
2. Read God's Word daily.
3. Associate with Christian people.
4. Read good Christian books.
5. Avoid gossip.
6. Attend only good plays and cinemas.

Close the meeting with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that God will help the students to live pure, set-apart lives.
2. Ask that he strengthen the students so they will not lie.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE REAL BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 16

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 16:10-21

Memory Verse: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to know that they are responsible for their actions and that God expects them to follow him.

Teaching Aids: You will need a chalk board and chalk or a large paper upon which to write.

#### Background Study

Do you remember the series of visions that John had about what was under the seals of the scrolls? Do you remember the series of seven trumpet visions? The lesson for today is taken in the middle of another series of visions. John has already had four of the seven visions before the lesson begins. Be sure to read all of Revelation 16 so that you can understand the visions he has already had.

In verse 10, the fifth angel poured out his bowl of destruction. Remember as your student's book says that these visions are like the trumpet visions in that they are the same destructions, but they are different in that these visions touch all the world. The trumpet visions touched only one third of the world. The bowl plagues also are like the plagues brought upon the Egyptians before Moses led the children of Israel out into the wilderness.

When the bowl was poured out, all the people were plunged into a thick, black darkness. There was no light anywhere and the people gnawed their tongues in their terror. Read Revelation 8:12 for the parallel trumpet woe of darkness upon the land. There is also a parallel plague in Exodus 10:21-23.

The sixth angel, in verse 12, poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates. This caused the river to dry up. This would allow the enemy soldiers to drive across the Euphrates and attack.

Verse 13-15 are an interlude in the visions. This happened in the seal visions and the trumpet visions as well. The frogs in these verses symbolize unclean spirits. The false prophet is all the system of priests, magistrates and officials who promoted and enforced emperor worship. The beast is the Roman Empire with its emperor worship and the dragon, of course, is Satan. Verse 15 reminds the readers that no matter how terrible the battle Jesus Christ will be victorious.

Verse 16 says they assembled at Armageddon. In other Jewish writings Armageddon is at times called "Har-Magedon." This name has been given a great deal of attention by students of Revelation. This is unwarranted when John himself mentions it only once. The word Armageddon is a corruption of the word that means "desirable city". Some scholars think the word is simply the ancient city of Megiddo.

Megiddo was a stronghold at the head of the Plain of Esdraelon which is also called the Plain of Megiddo. It was at Megiddo that Deborah slew Sisera and the Canaanites. Read Judges 5:19-20. Historically, it was the scene of many decisive battles.

Verses 17-21 tell of the impending destruction of Babylon which is a name for Rome. The seventh bowl poured out signaled a voice to speak, saying that all was finished. Then all sorts of catastrophes happened, and Rome was split into three parts. The hailstones mentioned in verse 21 weighed as much as a hundredweight each.

The seven bowl plagues ended with the hailstones. The end is at hand.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "Our lesson today tells about the very last days. We hear so many people preach about the last days, and they have been saying that we are living in the last days for many, many years. Perhaps we are living in the last days that Christians will live upon the earth. Let us see what the Bible says the very last days upon the earth will be like."

##### Examination

Say: "The students book has some very useful information in it that will help us understand the lesson. It is so helpful that I think we will just read from our students' books. It will aid us in understanding what the background of this lesson is."

Have the first five paragraphs of the Interpretation read from a student's book. Then, say: "Let us open our Bibles now and read the lesson from Revelation 16:10-21," Have these verses read, or read them yourself.

Say: "When the fifth angel poured out his bowl, what happened?" (The world turned to darkness and the people gnawed their tongues.)

Ask: "What did the people do when this happened and why?" (They cursed God because of their great pain and sores.)

Ask: "What happened when the sixth bowl was poured out?" (The river Euphrates dried up.) Ask: "What significance did that have?" (It allowed Rome's enemies to attack.)

Say: "In verses 13-15 there is an interlude or rest period between the sixth and seventh woe. You will remember that this is common in the Revelation. I want to remind you that Satan is the dragon. The beast is the Roman empire which forced everyone to say 'Caesar is Lord.' The false prophet is the system of priests and officials who enforced emperor worship. Now I want someone to tell us what happened in the interlude, using these terms. We have done this before so it should be easy to do." Allow a student to do this. Have others help if help is needed.

Ask: "Why do you think verse 15 was put in?" (In the middle of so much terror and destruction Jesus wanted to reassure his followers that he is coming soon to take them out of all their suffering.)

Say: "In verse 16 we have the only mention of Armageddon in Revelation. It is a word we hear often, and sometimes it is given too much importance. People have tried to locate Armageddon to know where the conflict will take place. Probably Armageddon is the ancient Meggido. Let us read Judges 5:19-20 to find out what happened there." You may want to read further in that chapter.

Then say: "In verse 17 the final bowl of wrath is poured out. This signals the end. After this all kinds of things happen. What were they?" (There is lightning, noise, thunder, earthquake, Rome splits, the islands flee away, the mountains disappear and great hailstones fall from the skies.)

#### Application

Ask: "What are the last days going to be like?" Let the students discuss this.

Ask: "What will your position be in the last days? We need to stay ready to go to be with our Lord, but there are times when we allow Satan to have the upper hand in our lives. We need to remember that we are responsible for our actions. It is easy to say, 'The devil made me do it,' but before God there is just no excuse for allowing him to 'make us do it.' God expects us to choose his way every hour of every day. If we do, then the direction of our lives is heavenward."

Continue: "What changes do you need to make in your life? Remember that you are responsible for your life. Let us pray."

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for God's strength for each student.
2. Pray that each one will be able to resist the devil so that he will flee from them.
3. Pray for peace in the world.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### DEFEAT OF SATAN AND JUDGEMENT

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 17, 18, 19 and 20

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 20:7-15

Memory Verse: "For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done" (Matthew 16:27).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to realize that God will judge their deeds one day.

Teaching Aids: None

#### Background Study

The millennium, or thousand years, is discussed in the first six verses in Revelation 20. This is a period of time when Christ reigns upon the earth. This is a peaceful and happy time upon the earth.

Verses 7 signals the end of the thousand years of peace when the devil is released from his prison. His release begins events which result finally in his total elimination from any contact with saved people. His release also ends all the evil in human history.

Verse 8 and 9 tell about a strange prophecy concerning Gog and Magog which you can read about in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Gog and Magog has become Gog and Magog and symbolize the nations of the world in Revelation. Satan immediately decided to deceive the nations of the world. (Gog and Magog). Christ destroyed them with fire instead of with the sword as he had done in Revelation 19:21.

Verse 10 is the happiest verse in Revelation for those who suffer at the hands of the devil. He was thrown into the lake of fire with his two companions, the beast and the false prophet. Remember again that Satan is the dragon. The beast is the Roman Empire. The false prophet is all the system of priests and officials who enforce emperor worship. This is the last contact human beings will have with the devil.

In verse 11, God comes down from heaven sitting on a great white throne. This may be a new throne or the same one we have seen him sitting upon throughout the Revelation.

The earth and the sky disappear. This may mean that the evil and corruption that were upon the earth have vanished forever.

Verses 12 and 13 tell about the second resurrection where all the dead rise to life. This resurrection must be a bodily resurrection where the body is reunited with the soul. Both good and bad are raised to be judged from the book of life. All the dead would be judged from their deeds during their lifetimes.

In verses 14 and 15 death and Hades, the final enemies, join Satan, the Roman Empire with its emperor worship and the false prophet in the lake of fire. Those

who had worshipped the devil and had followed him during life are compelled to follow him into the lake of fire.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "Today we will study Revelation 20:7-21 to find out what the results of our labor on earth will be. At the end of time, each will be judged by his actions upon the earth. The action most seriously to be considered is whether in life the person followed the devil."

##### Examination

Say: "Because it is difficult for us to understand any lesson from the Revelation without understanding what happened before the lesson we will take time to see what happened between the last lesson and this one."

Continue: "We need to read all of Revelation 17, 18, 19 and 20 to understand the few verses which we are to study. I want us to study then share with each other what we have read."

Divide the Scriptures up between your students so that each will have a portion to read and to report on. Have them read Revelation 17, 18, 19 and 20 through verse 6. Try to be sure you give out the verses so there is a natural division between the verses. Each student will read the verses assigned to him, then later he will explain that portion of Scripture when the Scripture comes. Do not read the Scriptures. This would take far too long. Each student will simply read his verses to himself (silently). Then each will report on what he read.

When this Background Study has been done, have verses 7-15 read. Then, explain the verses as follows.

Say: "Verse 7 is the end of the thousand years of peace that we have read about. The devil is allowed to go free from the prison that has bound him for one thousand years. The end of evil upon the earth is at hand."

Continue: "In verse 8 and 9 we learn that Satan immediately began to deceive the nations of the earth. That is who Gog and Magog are. When you have time you can read about Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 where it is expressed as Gog of Magog. The writer of the book was impressed with the numbers of the nations of the world. They were too many to be counted. Fire came down from Christ and consumed them."

Continue: "In verse 10, a wonderful thing happened. The devil, the old betrayer and seducer of mankind, is thrown into the lake of fire. This shows his eternal separation from mankind. His best friends, the beast and the false prophet are there with him. Who remembers who the beast and the false prophet are?" (Let the students answer.)

Continue: "In verse 11, God is seen on a great white throne. We do not know if this is the same throne he has been sitting on throughout the Revelation or if this is a new throne. The corrupt earth and the sky disappeared from before God."

Continue: "In verses 13 and 14 there is a general resurrection. This is the second resurrection and everybody who ever lived and died who is not already

resurrected will be resurrected at that time. The earthly body will be reunited with the spirit of the dead person. Even the sea will give up the bodies that are there. Then the judgement will begin."

Continue: "None whose name was missing from the book of life were allowed to live in peace with God. They had not followed God in life, they would not follow him in death."

Continue: "In verse 14 Death and Hades join Satan in the lake of fire. This is the complete and final end of evil upon the earth. Then those who followed Satan in life follow him into the lake of fire where they will be with him forever."

#### Application

Say: "We have considered many times whether we are ready to be with God or not. I believe this most serious lesson of all will cause each of us to think about our lives. Where will we spend eternity? Do we live each day for God? Do we need to start living for God today?"

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that each student is ready for the final judgement.
2. Pray that God will lead each student to live his life in a holy and righteous way.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 21:1-22:5

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 21:1-22:5

Memory Verse: "But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13).

Lesson Aim: I want my students to understand what a wonderful place heaven is.

Teaching Aids: None

#### Background Study

Revelation 21:1. The new heavens and the earth prophesied in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 have come to pass. Note that the sea has disappeared. It had separated God from his people. Now there is no separation from God.

Verse 2. The New heaven and the new earth were the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down. Read Isaiah 54:12; 60:11-12; Haggai 2:7-9 and Ezekiel 48:30-35.

Verses 3-4. The voice must be one of the Angels of the Presence. The voice announces that God will "tabernacle" or live with mankind. God will not take his glory away from men. There will be no more pain or suffering in heaven.

Verses 5-6. God speaks saying he will make all things new. Water will flow where there had been no water. Read Isaiah 43:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Isaiah 44:6. God is the beginning and ending of all life.

Verses 7-8. In these verses those who are to be excluded from the glory and presence of God are named. The cowardly loved their comfort more than they loved Christ. The unbelievers refused to accept the gospel. The polluted had lives that were thoroughly contaminated by the evils of the world. The murderers had killed Christians. The fornicators lived immoral lives. The sorcerers practiced magic and astrology and cast spells. The idolaters worshipped false gods. The liars were guilty of untruth, insincerity, falsehood of speaking and the silence that constitutes a lie.

Verses 9-10. An angel came to ask John if he could show him the Bride of the Lamb. This may be the same angel who showed him the harlot in Revelation 17:1. The Bride was the holy city, Jerusalem.

Verse 11. The holy city had a radiance about it, a heavenly glow, which might be because of the lives of the saints.

Verse 12. The city had a great, high wall with twelve gates. Read Isaiah 26:1 and Zechariah 2:5. This wall was an indestructible bulwark which may represent the faith of the believers.

Verse 13. There were sets of three gates. Read Ezekiel 48:30-35.

Verses 15-17 recall Ezekiel 40:3. Babylon and Ninevah were built four-square. The cube was a symbol of perfection. In Greece at that time, people called a man four-square who was a good man. There were some things in the temple construction and in the preparation of the priests' garments in the Old Testament that were four-square. The city will be 2,250,000 square miles in size. This would reach almost from London to New York City. The size is not important here. The symbolism is and that says there is room in the holy city for everybody.

Verses 18-21 describe the exquisite beauty of the city. Only the most precious of jewels is used in the construction of it.

Verses 22-23 tell us that there will be not need for a temple in heaven. Read Isaiah 60:19-20 and Psalms 36:10 which tell about the heavenly light which is God himself.

Verses 24-27. There is peace and safety in heaven. Nothing evil or dirty will enter. Read Isaiah 60:3 and Isaiah 60:11.

Revelation 22:1-5 tell us that the heavenly city is much like the garden of Eden. These verses describe the perfect beauty of the new heaven and the new earth.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "In our lesson last week we saw the end of Satan. That opened the way for the Bride of the Lamb to come down from God. The Bride of God is the holy city, the new Jerusalem. She is the chosen community of God. She is the body of believers. The lesson today describes the beauty as John sees it of this lovely lady coming down from God."

##### Examination

Have your students open their Bibles to Revelation 21. Ask several students to read this chapter and the first five verses of the next chapter. Divide the verses among the students. Or, if you prefer you may read the entire Scripture for the day.

Now, ask the students to use their own words to describe the city. If you have a chalk board you may want to write down a few words from each description. That is, some students might say, "God will continually live with mankind", and you might write on the board, "God with mankind". Allow the students to discuss the city fully. Add whatever you think will help their understanding. When they begin to describe the jewel-like appearance of the city, you might like to tell them the following.

"In verses 18 through 21 John uses precious jewels to describe the Bride of the Lamb. The jasper here was not the modern jasper, but was a rock crystal that was green in color. Light could be seen through the stone and made it glitter. The sapphire was mentioned in Exodus 24:10. It was sky-blue and flecked with gold. It may have been the stone that is now known as lapis lazuli, a beautiful blue stone. The chalcedony is a green silicate of copper. It was found in the mines near Chalcedon and was like the sheen of green on the neck of a dove or in a peacock's tail. The emerald was the greenest of green stones. The sardonyx was an onyx in which the white was broken up by layers of red brown. The carnelian

was blood-red. The chrysolite shines with a golden radiance and was known as the Stone of Tarshish. The beryl was like an emerald. They were sea blue or sea green. The topaz was transparent, which means you could see through it. It was greenish gold and is mentioned in Job 28:19. The jacinth was violet or bluish-purple stone. The amethyst was like the jacinth, but was more brilliant. This helps us understand the beauty of the holy city."

#### Application

Ask: "Do you feel that heaven was the most beautiful thing John had ever seen?" Let the students discuss this. Ask: "Do you plan to live there one day?" I do, but we must remember that not all people will go to heaven. Only those of us who have accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour will ever be allowed in that beautiful, holy place. If you have not made a decision to follow Jesus, I ask that you remain a few minutes after the class so that we may discuss the way you may accept him."

Close the meeting with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that God will lead your students in the way they should go.
2. Pray that God will send his Holy Spirit to convict lost persons of their sins so your students may be able to witness to them this week.
3. Pray for boldness and courage on the part of the students.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### LAST INSTRUCTIONS

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Revelation 22:6-21; Zechariah 14:11; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4; 2 Peter 1:19b; 2 Peter 3:16

Verses in Today's Lesson: Revelation 22:6-21

Memory Verse: "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done" (Revelation 22:12).

Lesson Aim: My students will learn what the conclusion of the book of Revelation was.

Teaching Aids: Write the references for all the Memory Verses on the chalk board so that you may have a time of revision with the students.

#### Background Study

Revelation 22:6. This verse can be compared to Revelation 21:5. The command to write down all that John had seen came from God himself. Jesus said here that the things John saw must happen very soon. That was two thousand years ago. We must remember that time is viewed by God differently than it is viewed by man. When God says soon, he certainly does not mean the same thing we mean when we say soon.

Revelation 22:7. Again Jesus promises that he is coming soon, then he says that the man who observes the prophecy of the book of Revelation is a happy man.

Revelation 22:8-9. John identifies himself once again, even as he did in 1:9. Then he falls down to worship the angel. John had already done this in 19:10, and he had been told not to do it.

Verse 10. Christ told John not to seal up the book. This is different from Daniel who was told to seal up his book. The meaning, of course, is that the book must be immediately sent and immediately read so that the people will be comforted. Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

Verse 11. The meaning of this verse is very difficult. It may mean that those who were following God should continue to do so. It seems wrong, though, to tell the evil to continue to do evil. The meaning is unclear.

Verses 12-13. Jesus says that he is the first and the last one more time. He has said it several times throughout the book. At times it means Jesus. At other times it means God. In the new age that will come, the distinction between Jesus and God will not be important.

Verse 14 is the last of seven beatitudes ("Blessed are...") that are in the Revelation. This time they who have washed their robes will be happy. This means those who have washed in the blood of Jesus. That is, these are they who are saved.

Verse 15. This is another list of those who will not enter heaven. The verse calls them those who are outside. This means they are the ones who are in the lake of fire.

Verse 16. Jesus identifies himself once again to reassure his readers that it is indeed he who writes through John. See 2 Peter 1:19b.

Verses 18 and 19 contain a warning to those who would distort the truth of the Revelation. 2 Peter 3:15-16 says, "And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures." This is what Christ is warning his readers about.

Verses 20-21. Again Christ emphasizes that he is coming soon. This is like 1 Corinthians 16:23-24.

#### TEACHING THE LESSON

##### Introduction

Say: "This lesson ends our study of Revelation. We have learned a lot about the book and about the last days of the world. I do not think any of us would be willing to guess when the end will come. All we can do is trust in God and believe that the time will be fulfilled according to God's own calendar."

##### Examination

Ask: "Can anyone say all the Memory Verses for this quarter?" If anyone thinks they can, allow them to do so. Do not embarrass anyone in any way. Point to the different references on the chalk board, and ask what each one says. If no one knows, have the scriptures looked up and read. Encourage the students to memorize Scriptures. Have them copy this list on paper or in their Bibles or in a notebook they want to use as a Scripture memory book. Ask them to practice saying the verses every day. Tell them that educators tell us that if we say something once a day for three weeks we will remember it for the rest of our lives.

Ask the students to turn to the first lesson in the book. Briefly review this lesson with the students. You may do the revision yourself or ask one of them to do it or do it together as a group exercise. Continue reviewing each of the lessons until you have done the first twelve lesson in the book.

Then, say: "Our lesson today is about the last instructions that Christ gave about the book of Revelation." Have someone read Revelation 22:6-21.

Ask: "What is the single most important message that Christ has for us in these last few verses?" (He is coming soon.) Ask: "When is soon for God?" Let the students discuss this. Help them to understand that God works under a different timetable than we do.

Ask: "What foolish thing did John do in these verses?" (He fell down to worship an angel.) Have someone read Revelation 19:10 where he was told to do this.

Ask: "What warning did Christ have in the last verses?" (not to distort the book). Have someone read 2 Peter 3:15-16. Say: "It was the custom in those days

to add whatever you need to make a point to a book, or you could cut away the portion you did not agree with. Christ did not want this to happen to the Revelation."

Ask if there are any questions concerning the book that you can answer for the students.

#### Application

Say: "John has taken us for a very long journey. He saw far into the future and was able to help us see into the future as well. Any time we study the Revelation we should remember that it is written in signs and symbols. We also need to remember that John knew the Old Testament and much of what he saw came from the pages of the Old Testament."

Close with prayer.

#### Prayer Suggestions

1. Thank God for John.
2. Thank him for the Revelation, and ask that he continue to help you and your students to understand it.