

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Course Aim:

1. To keep your focus on Jesus Christ, not world events (1:1)
2. To understand the importance of reading, hearing, and applying the truth of prophecy (1:3)
3. To know how to properly interpret prophetic passages of the Bible
4. To develop a conviction concerning the pre-tribulational, pre-millennial perspective of prophecy
5. To understand the importance of avoiding speculation regarding prophecy

Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance and notes (25% of your final grade)
2. Read through the book of Revelation, writing a brief summary of each chapter and making personal application for today (25% of your final grade)
3. Two exams established by your instructor (50% of your final grade)
Include the following memory verses: 1:3, 7; 3:19-20; 20:14-15; 22:18-19

Course Resources:

1. *A Woman Rides the Beast*, Dave Hunt
2. *Exploring Revelation*, John Phillips
3. *Revelation*, David Cloud
4. *The Book of the Revelation*, Robert Sargent
5. *Understanding the Bible, Hebrews through Revelation*, David Sorenson
6. *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, H.L. Willmington

Course Outline:

Part One: The Things Seen

1. Introduction to the Revelation
2. Responding to Revelation

Part Two: Things Which Are

3. Ephesus: A Backsliding Church
4. Smyrna: A Fearful Church
5. Pergamos: A Compromising Church
6. Thyatira: Jezebel in the Church

7. Sardis: A Morgue With a Steeple
8. Philadelphia: A Door of Opportunity
9. Laodicea: The Church of the People

Part Three: Things Which Shall Be Hereafter

10. The Rapture to Heaven
11. Six Seals of Sorrow
12. The 144,000 Sealed Witnesses
13. The Trumpet Judgments
14. The Bittersweet of Prophecy
15. Mid-Point of the Tribulation
16. The Battle of the Ages
17. The Dragon's Two Beasts
18. Final Announcements of the End
19. Seven Last Plagues of Wrath
20. Judgment of the Great Whore
21. The Coming Economic Crisis
22. The Marriage of the Lamb
23. The Valley of Decision
24. Hell's Final Roll Call
25. Life in a Perfect Place
26. Christ is Coming Quickly!

Permission is granted to duplicate or translate the following studies in their entirety for teaching and discipleship.

#1 Introduction to the Revelation

Background Information

1. There are two different titles given to the book.
 - 1.1 The traditional title is "The Revelation of Saint John the Divine."
 - 1.2 The *Biblical* title is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1a).
2. The word *revelation* is from a Greek word (*apokalupsis*) that means an unveiling, disclosure, or revealing (Deuteronomy 29:29; Amos 3:7).
 - 2.1 The book of Revelation is a revealing of Jesus Christ.
 - 1) The book of Revelation is about a *person*, not events.
 - 2) Revelation contains more titles for Jesus than any other book in the Bible.
 - 3) The central person of prophecy is Jesus Christ (19:10).
 - 2.2 Revelation is an unveiling of prophetic events related to Jesus Christ.
 - 1) The central event of *history* is the first coming and crucifixion of Christ.
 - 2) The central event of *prophecy* is the second coming of Jesus Christ.
3. The "transmission" of the Revelation began with God Himself (1:1).
 - 3.1 The book was given by *revelation* (cf. Ephesians 3:3).
 - 1) God the Father gave it to His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Jesus Christ sent an angel to the apostle John.
 - 3) The angel *signified* it to John (1:1b, symbols, signs). Satan has tried counterfeiting this with *writings that contradict the Bible* (22:18).
 - The angel Gabriel supposedly gave the Koran to Mohammed.
 - Mormonism teaches that Joseph Smith supposedly received the Book of Mormon from angel Moroni, "another testament of Jesus Christ" given to ancient America.
 - 3.2 Revelation was recorded through *inspiration* (II Timothy 3:16).
 - 1) God the Holy Ghost moved John to write every word about A.D. 95 or 96 (II Peter 1:20-21).
 - 2) John wrote it in a book for the seven churches of Asia Minor in modern-day Turkey (1:4a, 11, *book: Greek biblion*).
 - 3.3 Every word of Revelation was protected by *preservation* (Matthew 24:35).
 - 1) The seven churches copied Revelation without error (cf. Psalm 12:6-7).

- 2) Greek manuscripts have been copied for centuries.
 - 3) Men of God have translated it for God's servants today (1:1, *to shew unto his servants*).
 - 4) Many corrupt the Scriptures for their own benefit (22:19; II Corinthians 2:17). *Example:* the titles for Christ in Revelation 1:11 are removed from many modern translations even though there is textual evidence for them.
4. Many wrong interpretations of the Revelation have come from ignoring important rules for interpreting the Bible.
- 4.1 Different interpretations of the book
- 1) Many believe that Revelation is nothing more than fiction (II Peter 3:3-7).
 - 2) Some teach that Revelation has already been fulfilled (Roman Catholics).
 - Emperor Nero or Domitian was the Antichrist.
 - Revelation 4-11 records the conflict between the Church and Judaism.
 - Revelation 12-19 records the Church's conflict with Islam.
 - Revelation 20-22 reveals the glory of the Church in the Middle Ages.
 - 3) Some believe Revelation only teaches a spiritual lessons (Protestants).
 - Revelation reveals the age-long battle between good and evil.
 - Revelation was the only book of the Bible that John Calvin did not include in his commentaries.
 - 4) Some believe that Revelation is a continuous history of the Church from the first century until the coming of Christ.
 - The Geneva Bible states that the angel of the bottomless pit is "Antichrist the Pope, king of hypocrites and Satan's ambassador" (9:11).
 - Matthew Henry, John Wesley, and other Protestant writers follow this interpretation.
 - Many believe the seven churches represent seven periods of Church history.
 - 5) The *Biblical* interpretation of Revelation:
 - Revelation is a book of future events (1:3, *prophecy*).

- Since prophecies related to Christ's first coming were fulfilled literally, it will be the same for events leading to His second coming.
- 4.2 A study of Old Testament prophecy helps with proper interpretation.
- 1) There are five hundred references in Revelation to the Old Testament.
 - 2) Many verses refer to Old Testament Scripture (278 of 404).
- 4.3 Watch for symbolic language (*like* or *as*).
- 1) John was recording prophetic events that would be fulfilled at least 1,900 years later. Imagine trying to explain modern inventions to people in the first century.
 - 2) Symbolic language is often explained in the context.
 - Seven stars (1:16, 20)
 - Seven candlesticks (1:13, 20)
- 4.4 Rules for interpretation must be followed.
- 1) If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense or you get nonsense.
 - 2) Compare Scripture with Scripture (I Corinthians 2:13).
 - 3) There is only one proper interpretation; there may be many applications.
 - 4) Interpret literally unless the context indicates symbolism.
- 4.5 Jesus gave the key to understanding Revelation (1:19).
- 1) Things seen (1)
 - 2) Things which are (2-3)
 - 3) Things which shall be hereafter (4-22)

Application of Truth

1. Do you understand how imminent the events of Revelation are (1:1, 3; 22:6-7, 10, 12, 20)?
Look for Jesus, not Antichrist! (see Romans 13:11-14; II Peter 3:8-14; I John 2:28 - 3:2)
2. Are you sure about salvation through Jesus Christ alone (II Thessalonians 2:7-12)?

#2 Responding to Revelation

Introduction

1. Many are interested in Revelation because of curiosity.
2. Believers are often filled with fear while studying prophecy.
3. Satan hates the book of Revelation because it declares his future doom and wants to hinder people from reading, understanding, and obeying the book.
4. Notice the proper response to the prophecies of Revelation.

A Proper Response to Revelation

1. Read and obey God's Word (1:1-3; Joshua 1:7-8; Luke 11:28; James 1:21-25).
 - 1.1 Jesus Christ promises a three-fold blessing for responding to Revelation.
 - 1) God blesses the individual who reads Revelation (1:3, *he*).
 - 2) God blesses the hearing of Revelation preached (1:3, *they*).
 - 3) God blesses obedience to the commands of Revelation.
 - 1.2 Each of the actions are present tense, indicating continuous action (*continue to read, hear, and keep*).
 - 1.3 The blessing was given because of the imminent, urgent nature of Revelation (1:3b).
2. Recognize the co-equal members of the Trinity (1:4-8; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 5:7).
 - 2.1 The eternal Father (1:3a; Psalm 90:2)
 - 1) There are no tenses with God. Past, present, and future is in relation to man's perspective.
 - 2) There will be no time in eternity.
 - 2.2 God the Holy Ghost (1:3b; 4:5; 5:6, omnipresence)
 - 1) Seven is the number of completion or perfection.
 - 2) The context indicates a reference to the seven-fold ministry of the Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-2).
 - 3) The Holy Ghost's ministry is often replaced with intellectualism and sensationalism (see Zechariah 4:6).
 - 2.3 God the Son, Jesus Christ
 - 1) Jesus is the faithful witness (1:5).
 - 2) Jesus is the first begotten of the dead (1:5; I Corinthians 15:20-23).

- Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again.
 - The Old Testament feast of first-fruits pictured Christ's resurrection.
- 3) Jesus is the prince of the kings of the earth (1:5; 17:14; 19:16; Acts 5:31).
 - 4) Jesus is our loving Saviour (1:5b-6).
 - Redemption: He loved us and washed us through His blood (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 9:14, 22; I John 1:7).
 - Sanctification: He made us kings and priests unto God (5:10; I Peter 2:5, 9-10).
 - Glorification: We will rule with Him (20:6; 22:5; Daniel 7:13-14).
 - 5) Jesus will return in power and great glory (1:7; Matthew 24:27-30; 26:64).
 - Israel will believe in Him (Zechariah 12:10; 13:6).
 - The enemies of God will wail when they see Him.
 - 6) Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (1:8, 11, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet).
 - 7) Jesus is eternally the Almighty (1:8b). He has infinite power and omnipotence and holds sway over all things.
3. Respect men of God who proclaim the Word of God (1:9-10; I Thessalonians 2:13; 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7).
- 3.1 John was a humble man (1:9).
 - 1) He does not exalt himself.
 - He does not describe himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - He does not promote his position as the last living apostle.
 - 2) He takes a position of equality with other believers.
 - A *servant* of Jesus Christ (1:1)
 - A *brother* in Christ (1:9)
 - A *companion* in tribulation (1:9)
 - 3.2 John suffered for the cause of Christ (1:9b).
 - 1) Emperor Domitian exiled 90-year-old John to the rugged Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.
 - 2) He may have been exiled to Patmos after being boiled in a cauldron of oil.
 - 3) He may have been forced to work in the salt mines on Patmos.

- 4) God often uses trials for His glory.
 - Rome thought they were silencing John on the island.
 - God used the island to give His last message to the churches.
 - 5) He suffered for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (1:9b).
- 3.3 John was sensitive to the Spirit of the Lord (1:10).
- 1) He was *in the Spirit* (Spirit-filled).
 - 2) He observed the Lord's day.
- 3.4 John communicated the Word of God to others (1:11).
4. Reverence the glorified Christ (1:12-18; Daniel 7:9-14).
- 4.1 Note John's description of Christ in His glory.
- 1) He has a great trumpet-like voice (1:10b, 12; 4:1).
 - *Great voice*: English mega phone (Exodus 19:16, 19)
 - John saw the *voice of the LORD God* (1:12a; Genesis 3:8; Psalm 29:3-9).
 - 2) He is omnipresent (1:13, *in the midst of the seven candlesticks*).
 - 3) He claims the divine title *Son of man* from Daniel 7:13.
 - 4) His garment represents royalty, majesty, and modesty (1:13b).
 - He is wearing a high priestly garment (Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:24-26; 9:24).
 - The golden band around His chest represents royalty.
 - He presents Himself in modesty and respect.
 - 5) His head and hair were white (1:14a; Daniel 7:9, 13).
 - Eternality and maturity (Leviticus 19:32)
 - Purity (Mark 9:3)
 - 6) He has eyes like flames of fire (1:14b; 19:12; Jeremiah 17:9-10; I Corinthians 3:11-14; Hebrews 4:12-13).
 - Omniscience
 - Judgment
 - 7) His feet are like fine brass (1:15a; I Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 10:13).
 - He is the Judge of the churches (Revelation 2-3).
 - He is the Judge of the nations (6-20).

- 8) His voice was thunderous (1:15b; Psalm 93:4; Ezekiel 43:2; like a water fall or the tide of the ocean).
 - 9) He has the seven stars (pastors) in His right hand (1:16a; Isaiah 41:10; 48:13), picturing power and protection.
 - 10) He has a sharp two-edged sword out of His mouth (1:16b; 19:15, 21). His spoken word is powerful.
 - 11) His *countenance* (appearance) is as bright as the sun (1:16c; Acts 26:13; Matthew 17:2; I Timothy 6:16; I John 1:5).
 - 12) He is victorious over death (1:18a).
 - 13) He has the keys of hell and death (1:18b; Hebrews 2:14-15).
- 4.2 Everyone who meets the Lord in the Bible have the same response as John (1:17a; Isaiah 6:1-5).
5. Reflect the light of Jesus Christ as a church (1:19-20).
- 5.1 Jesus declared Himself to be the Light of the world (John 8:12).
 - 5.2 The candlesticks symbolized local churches (1:20).
 - 5.3 Collectively (and individually) believers are to act as light bearers (Luke 8:16; 11:33; Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:15-16).
 - 1) The light of Christ should not be hidden (under a bushel).
 - 2) The light should not diminish because of leisure and sensual pleasure (under a bed).
 - 5.4 There are no perfect churches (Revelation 2-3).
 - 1) Jesus gave urgent warnings to the churches to repent.
 - 2) The removal of the candlestick is a consequence of not correcting error in the church (2:5).
 - 5.5 The pastor (*angel*, messenger) is held accountable for proclaiming the message.

Application of Truth

Will you respond with more than curiosity to the message of Revelation?

#3 Ephesus: A Backsliding Church

Introduction to the Seven Churches

1. Three key applications can be made from the letters to the seven churches.
 - 1.1 Seven literal churches existed in the first century (1:11, 19-20).
 - 1.2 Each message is applied to individuals (2:7, *he that hath an ear, let him hear...*).
 - 1.3 Each message applies to local churches of all ages (*hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*).
 - 1) The pastor of each local church (*angel: Greek angelos, messenger*) is responsible for proclaiming the message to the people (II Timothy 4:2).
 - 2) Note that the application is to the churches (plural), not "the Church" (universal). The universal church is a Catholic and Protestant doctrine.
2. Many Bible teachers believe the seven churches represent seven periods of church history. The letter to Ephesus would represent the Apostolic Period (A.D. 30-100).
3. The apostle Paul spent about three years in Ephesus founding the church (Acts 20:17-31).
 - 3.1 The city of Ephesus was an important commercial center on the Aegean Sea.
 - 3.2 The temple of the pagan fertility goddess Diana was in Ephesus.
 - 1) The temple was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
 - 2) The Ephesian church affected the following of Diana (Acts 19:24-28).
 - 3.3 *Ephesus* means "desirable." The church had many desirable traits.

Lessons from Revelation 2:1-6

1. Every individual is accountable to Jesus Christ (2:1-2a).
 - 1.1 He has sovereign authority over His churches (2:1).
 - 1) He has the seven pastors in His right hand (1:20; 2:1a; *holdeth: to hold firmly, strongly*).
 - 2) The right hand is a symbol of authority and power (Hebrews 1:13; Colossians 3:1; Psalm 118:16).
 - 1.2 He is omnipresent (present everywhere, 2:1b; John 3:13; Matthew 28:20b). Jesus Christ *walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*.
 - 1.3 He is omniscient (all-knowing, 2:2a; Hebrews 4:12-13; 6:10).

2. Service is no replacement for vibrant love (2:2-4a, 6; I Thessalonians 1:3).
 - 2.1 The Ephesian church was zealous (2:2a, 3b, *labour*: diminished energy through work; wearisome toil).
 - 1) People often want "spotlight" ministries without work.
 - 2) Slothfulness is wickedness (Matthew 25:26, *wicked and slothful servant*).
 - 3) The Ephesians *laboured* for Christ's name's sake (2:3).
 - 2.2 The Ephesian church endured affliction (2:2a, 3; *patience*: steadfast continuance; triumphant fortitude; I Corinthians 15:58; I Thessalonians 3:3-4; Hebrews 12:1).
 - 1) Many quit serving the Lord when trials come because of the Word of God (Matthew 13:20-21).
 - 2) Of the Ephesian church, Jesus said, "*Thou hast borne, and hast patience, ... and hast not fainted.*" (2:3)
 - 2.3 The Ephesian church was separated from evil (2:2a; Psalm 97:10a; Romans 12:9)
 - 1) Ephesus was a morally corrupt city.
 - 2) Paul had taught the Ephesians about separation (Ephesians 5:1-12).
 - 3) They had intolerance for people who were evil (*canst not bear them...*).
 - 2.4 The Ephesian church was doctrinally sound (2:2b; 6).
 - 1) They tried the teaching of false apostles and found them to be liars (2:2b; II Corinthians 11:1-4, 13-15; I John 4:1; II John 7-11).
 - Roman Catholicism claims apostolic succession from Peter.
 - Many Charismatics claim apostolic succession for their bishops.
 - Even an independent Baptist pastor preaching heresy must be exposed (Titus 3:10-11).
 - 2) They hated the deeds of the *Nicolaitans* (2:6).
 - This is from two Greek words meaning "to conquer the people" (III John 9-10).
 - This eventually developed into the papacy and hierarchy of the Roman Catholic system.
 - Believers should hate every false way (Psalm 119:104, 128).
3. Love is an act of the will, not a feeling (2:4-5; Mark 12:30; Jude 21a).
 - 3.1 Many mistakenly think that love is an emotion.

- 1) The Ephesian church *left* their *first love* (2:4, *left*: to abandon; leave behind).
 - 2) They did not *lose* their love for Christ.
 - 3) They *chose to leave* their first love.
 - They had duty without delight.
 - They had doctrine without devotion.
- 3.2 Service does not replace love for Christ (Luke 10:38-42; I Corinthians 13:1-3).
- 3.3 Love for things and other people can detract from love for Christ (John 21:15-17).
- 1) Love for family (Matthew 10:37)
 - 2) Love for self (Matthew 10:38-39)
 - 3) Love for money (Matthew 6:24; I Timothy 6:10)
 - 4) Love for the world (I John 2:15)
- 3.4 Christ commands action in restoring first love for Him (2:5a).
- 1) *Remember* what your first love for the Lord was like.
 - Time
 - Dedication
 - Excitement
 - 2) *Repent*: a change of mind resulting in a change of action (II Corinthians 7:9-11)
 - Five churches were told to repent (cf. II Chronicles 7:14).
 - Reminiscing about the past is not enough.
 - 3) *Return* to your first works.
- 3.5 Christ will remove a church when it leaves its first love (2:5b, *quickly*: decisive, swift action).
- 1) Revelation was recorded about forty years after the church was established in Ephesus.
 - 2) A study of Baptist history reveals that the average duration of a movement is fifty to one hundred years before it is corrupted.
 - 3) Many of the founding members of the churches were gone because of martyrdom or old age.
 - 4) Second generation Christianity is more prone to leaving their first love (see Judges 2:10).

- 5) According to history, a church continued in Ephesus until sometime into the fifth century, but its testimony was gone long before then.
 - 6) Worship of Mary was established at an ecumenical (Roman Catholic) council held in Ephesus in A.D. 431.
 - 7) A church may continue to exist as an institution but have no light (see Matthew 5:14-16).
4. The promises of God should motivate you to fervent love (2:7).
 - 4.1 The Holy Spirit calls for all to hear (2:7a).
 - 1) Individuals (2:7, *he that hath an ear, let him hear...*)
 - 2) Churches (*hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*)
 - 4.2 A person *overcometh* through faith in Jesus Christ (2:7b; 21:7-8; I John 5:4-5).
 - 1) They will eat from the tree of life (22:2, 14; Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24).
 - 2) They will enjoy the paradise of God (21-22; II Corinthians 12:2-4).

Application of Truth

1. Do you understand the seriousness of not loving the Lord (I Corinthians 16:22, *Anathema*: accursed; cf. Galatians 1:8-9, *accursed*: Greek *anathema*).
2. Why do you serve the Lord? Is it duty or delight? Is there a time when you loved Jesus more?
 - 2.1 Prayer
 - 2.2 Bible reading and study
 - 2.3 Giving (II Corinthians 9:7)
 - 2.4 Standards and convictions
 - 2.5 Church attendance
 - 2.6 Outreach
 - 2.7 Ministry responsibilities
3. Do you realize that the future of your church is dependent upon fervent love for Christ?
4. Are you an *overcomer* through faith in Jesus Christ (21:7-8)? *First love* is only possible with the transformation of conversion.

#4 Smyrna: A Persecuted Church

Introduction to Revelation 2:7-11

1. Smyrna was a large, wealthy city dominated by pagan religions.
 - 1.1 Smyrna is known as the birthplace of the Greek poet Homer.
 - 1) Homer wrote the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
 - 2) Both of these writings contributed to the idolatry of the Greek and Roman culture.
 - 1.2 Many apostate Jews lived in Smyrna (2:9b).
 - 1.3 There were many temples in the city built for worship of gods and goddesses.
 - 1.4 The people were known for drunkenness because of a temple to the god Bacchus, the god of wine.
 - 1.5 Smyrna had a strong allegiance to the Roman emperor.
 - 1) The city had a temple dedicated to worship of the emperor.
 - 2) Christians often were executed for not publicly confessing allegiance to Caesar and Rome.
 - 1.6 The city is now known as Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey (dominated by Islam).
2. Many Bible teachers believe the church in Smyrna represents a period of persecution from A.D. 64 to 312.
3. *Smyrna* means "myrrh."
 - 3.1 It was used to embalm the dead (cf. Matthew 2:11).
 - 3.2 It was often used in perfumes.
 - 3.3 When myrrh was crushed, it gave forth a sweet fragrance.
 - 3.4 When the saints in Smyrna were crushed by persecution, they demonstrated a Christlike spirit.
4. The church in Smyrna was probably started when Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).
 - 4.1 Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, was the pastor of the church.
 - 4.2 He was arrested by the Roman government and brought before an angry mob.
 - 1) He was told to renounce Jesus Christ and declare Caesar to be lord.
 - 2) Polycarp answered, *"Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has done me no wrong; how can I then blaspheme my King who has saved*

me? You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched; but you know not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of the eternal punishment. Bring what you will." (Book of the Revelation, p. 12)

- 3) The judge replied, "I have respect for your age. Simply say, 'Away with the Atheists,' and be set free." (Christians were considered atheists since they did not worship a visible god.)
- 4) Polycarp pointed to the pagan crowd and said, "Away with the Atheists!"
- 4.3 He was martyred in the twenty-thousand-seat stadium dedicated to Zeus.
 - 1) He prayed earnestly as he was bound to the stake.
 - 2) As the fire burned, he sang praises to God until he died.
5. Note lessons from the persecuted church in Smyrna.

Lessons from Smyrna

1. Remember Christ is in control of all things (2:8).
 - 1.1 He is timeless (...*the first and the last*).
 - 1) Jesus is first in rank over all things (Colossians 1:12-18).
 - 2) Jesus has an eternal perspective on suffering.
 - 1.2 He is triumphant over death, an encouragement to a church facing persecution (I Corinthians 15:55-58).
2. Receive comfort from Christ's knowledge of your situation (2:9).
 - 2.1 Jesus knows your works.
 - 2.2 Jesus knows your *tribulation*.
 - 1) *Tribulation* refers to intense, constant pressure, often leading to death (I Corinthians 4:9-13; II Corinthians 4:8-10).
 - 2) Jesus promised tribulation in this world (John 16:1-4, 33).
 - 3) God provides the comfort you need in tribulation (II Corinthians 1:3-4).
 - 2.3 Jesus knows your financial and spiritual condition.
 - 1) The Lord knew of their material poverty.
 - *Poverty* means more than just poor; they were destitute.
 - The saints in Smyrna lost employment and had property confiscated for their testimony for Christ (Hebrews 10:32-34).
 - The "health and wealth gospel" is proven to be doctrinal perversion

with this verse.

- 2) The Lord knew that they were spiritually rich (James 2:5; II Corinthians 8:9).
 - Smyrna was the opposite of the church of the Laodiceans.
 - Smyrna was a *poor rich* church; Laodicea was a *rich poor* church.

2.4 Jesus knows the verbal abuse from religious people.

- 1) *Blasphemy*: to malign; slander; defame (Acts 14:1-2, 19)
- 2) The Judaizers claimed to be Jews but were not (Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; John 8:37-44).
- 3) Other groups claim to be heirs to the Jewish covenants.
 - Catholics and Protestants believe that the Old Testament covenants given to Israel apply to them. Roman Catholicism even carried out crusades against the Jews and supported Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany.
 - Jehovah's Witnesses claim they are the 144,000 of Revelation 7.
 - British-Israelists believe that the people of Western Europe are the descendents of the ten lost tribes of Israel, and the British royal family is directly descended from King David.
- 4) In reality, false teachers are a *synagogue of Satan* (2:9b; II Corinthians 11:13-15; I Timothy 4:1-3).

3. Remain fearless and faithful in suffering (2:10).

3.1 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer (2:10a; I Peter 4:12-19).

- 1) The devil would imprison some of them.
- 2) They would be *tried* (tested; Job 23:10b).
- 3) They would have *tribulation ten days* (2:10).
 - Some suggest this refers to ten major persecutions from Nero to Diocletian. An estimated five million saints were martyred.
 - Since this statement was given to a specific church, this probably meant a short period of intensified persecution.

3.2 Be faithful unto death (2:10b; Hebrews 11:32-38).

- 1) Christ requires faithfulness *unto* (not just *until*) death (I Corinthians 4:2).
- 2) Christ rewards faithfulness (22:12; James 1:12; I Peter 1:6-7).

4. Rejoice in the promise of Christ (2:11).
 - 4.1 Application is made to both individuals and churches (2:11a).
 - 4.2 Those who overcome through faith in Jesus Christ shall not be hurt of the second death (20:11-15; Matthew 10:28).

Application of Truth

1. Do you remember those who are suffering for the cause of Christ (Hebrews 13:1-3)?
 - 1.1 Christians persecuted in Communistic countries
 - 1.2 Christians persecuted in Islamic countries
 - 1.3 Christians persecuted by Hindus in southeast Asia
 - 1.4 Christians persecuted by Catholics
 - 1.5 Christians persecuted by Protestants
 - 1.6 Christians facing legal battles, fines, and imprisonment for "hate crimes"
2. Are you prepared for the coming persecution of the last days (II Timothy 3:1-5, 10-13; Revelation 6:9-11)?
3. Are you *living* for the Lord so that you would be willing to *die* for Him? You cannot say you would *die* for Him until you *live* for Him!

#5 Pergamos: A Compromising Church

Introduction to Revelation 2:12-17

1. Compromise causes a testimony for Christ to slowly disappear in Christians and churches.
 - 1.1 Compromise by definition is the blending of two different things into one.
 - 1.2 As a Christian or a church compromises with the world, the distinction disappears.
2. Pergamos was a prominent Roman city.
 - 2.1 Pergamos had the world's second largest library with 200,000 volumes. (The library in Alexandria, Egypt, was the largest.)
 - 2.2 Pergamos was known for its production of parchment (called *pergmena*).
 - 2.3 The altar in Pergamos to the god Zeus was forty-feet high.
 - 2.4 Pergamos had three temples built for worship of the Roman emperor. The first was built for Julius Caesar in 29 B.C.
 - 2.5 One temple in Pergamos was dedicated to the god of medicine (Asklepios).
 - 1) This god was called *Asklepios Soter* ("Asklepios the Savior").
 - 2) Those who had sicknesses would go to the temple hoping that Asklepios would reveal the cure for their illness to the priests and physicians.
 - 3) Coins depicted the serpent god coiled around a sapling in front of the Roman emperor. The emperor has his right hand raised in a "Nazi" salute, an ancient gesture of adoration.
 - 4) The medical field today still uses the symbol of Asklepios.
3. Some believe the church in Pergamos represents the period of church history where the government and Christianity were united (A.D. 312-606).
 - 3.1 The root word for Pergamos means "thoroughly married." Christianity was "married" with paganism.
 - 3.2 In A.D. 312, Roman Emperor Constantine made a profession of faith in Christianity (not in Christ) before a difficult battle.
 - 1) Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration (Milan, A.D. 313) making Christianity a protected religion.
 - 2) Emperor Constantine presided over the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325).
 - 3) Christians went from being *persecuted* to being *accepted* by a pagan culture.
 - 3.3 Satan's strategy of replacing persecution with infiltration resulted in many doctrinal

perversions (Wilmington, p. 543-544).

- 1) Making prayers for the dead (A.D. 300)
 - 2) Worship of saints and angels (A.D. 375)
 - 3) Institution of the mass (A.D. 394)
 - 4) Worship of Mary (A.D. 431)
 - 5) The practice of extreme unction (A.D. 526)
 - 6) The doctrine of purgatory (A.D. 593)
 - 7) The Roman papacy was firmly established.
4. Notice how to avoid compromise from the message to the church in Pergamos.

Lessons from Pergamos

1. Yield to the correction of the Word of God (2:12).
 - 1.1 In the Roman culture, the sword was a symbol of authority and judgment ("the right of the sword;" Romans 13:4).
 - 1.2 The written Word of God from the living Word cuts deeper than a Roman sword (Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13, 15, 21).
2. Resist satanic darkness in the power of God (2:13; Ephesians 6:10-13; James 4:7).
 - 2.1 Satan's seat (throne) on earth was centered in Pergamos (2:13a).
 - 1) Many wrongly think that Satan's throne is in hell.
 - 2) Satan exalts himself against the God of heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15).
 - 3) The Bible reveals territorial spirits over regions of the world (Daniel 10:12-13, 20-21).
 - 4) Satan is called *the prince of this world* (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
 - 5) Satan is called *the god of this world* (II Corinthians 4:3-4).
 - 6) The whole world is controlled by the wicked one (I John 5:18-19).
 - 2.2 Satan can be resisted (2:13b; 12:9-11).
 - 1) They held fast to Christ's name (2:13b, "Christian").
 - 2) They did not deny the Christian faith (2:13b, *faith*: unwavering persuasion; convictions; I Timothy 3:14-16; Jude 3-4; Colossians 2:6-9).
 - The inspiration and preservation of the scriptures
 - The virgin birth of Jesus Christ
 - Redemption through Christ's sinless blood

- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ
- 3) They were faithful even in times of persecution (2:13c).
- Very little is known about Antipas. His name means "against all," and he may have stood alone against Roman officials and a pagan mob.
 - Historical tradition says that Antipas was ordered to bow before a statue of Caesar and proclaim, "Caesar is lord."
 - When he refused, he became a burnt sacrifice to Roman gods. He was placed inside a bronze bull and roasted alive over a roaring fire.
3. Repent of all doctrinal compromise (2:14-16).
- 3.1 The church in Pergamos allowed two false doctrines into the church (2:14-15).
- 1) The doctrine of Balaam (2:14)
- Balaamism encourages idolatry (2:14b; Colossians 3:5).
 - Balaamism encourages fornication (2:14b).
 - Since Balaam could not curse Israel, he taught King Balac of the Moabites how to corrupt them (Numbers 25:1-3).
 - The *way of Balaam* is covetousness (II Peter 2:15).
 - The *error of Balaam* is a rejection of personal and organizational separation (Jude 11).
 - Balaamism casts a *stumblingblock* before believers (Greek word *skandalon*; English scandal).
 - Balaamism emphasizes relevance, not truth.
 - Balaamism emphasizes worldly values and philosophies.
 - Balaamism emphasizes liberty as a license for sin (Titus 2:11-12).
 - Balaamism promotes ecumenical causes.
- 2) The doctrine of the Nicolaitans (2:15)
- The deeds (2:6) of the Nicolaitans developed into doctrine (2:15).
 - The word *Nicolaitan* means "to conquer the people."
 - Nicolaitanism eventually developed into the hierarchy system of the Roman Catholic Church.

- Nicolaitanism is a denial of the headship of Christ over a local church (Colossians 1:18; III John 9-11).
 - Some Baptist preachers exalt themselves as leaders of fundamentalism and maliciously attack those who disagree.
 - Jesus hates the deeds and doctrines of Nicolaitanism (2:6, 15b).
- 3.2 Jesus Christ called the church to repentance (2:16).
- 1) Repentance will produce a change (II Corinthians 7:9-11).
 - 2) Christ warned of consequences for not repenting (2:16a, *or else*).
 - He would come unto the messenger of the church quickly (*thee*).
 - He would declare war against those teaching false doctrine (*them*).
4. Overcome through faith in Jesus Christ (2:17).
- 4.1 Application is made to individuals and churches (2:17a).
- 4.2 Those who overcome through faith in Christ will receive the following.
- 1) They will eat of the hidden manna.
 - Jesus Christ and His Word satisfies (John 6:31-35, 47-51, 63).
 - Our sufficiency is of God (II Corinthians 3:5).
 - The unsaved cannot know satisfaction through Jesus Christ.
 - 2) They will receive a white stone.
 - In Roman courts, a white stone would be given to a man on trial. A black stone meant condemnation; a white stone meant pardon and acquittal.
 - Sometimes a white stone was given to a slave receiving his freedom.
 - 3) They will have a new name written (Isaiah 62:2, 12; Romans 8:15-17).
Believers will enjoy a close relationship with the Lord forever.

Application of Truth

1. Are you an overcomer through faith in Jesus Christ (I John 5:4-5)?
2. Do you understand Christ's hatred for compromise in the church?
3. How much compromise have you allowed into your life personally?

#6 Thyatira: Jezebel in the Church

Introduction to Revelation 2:18-29

1. The city of Thyatira was the smallest of the seven cities mentioned in Revelation 2-3.
 - 1.1 It was a prosperous manufacturing and marketing center.
 - 1.2 Thyatira was most known for the production of purple dye.
 - 1.3 The city of Thyatira was a center of many trade guilds (unions).
 - 1) Each trade had its own guild.
 - 2) Each guild had its own false god.
 - 3) Immoral festivals were used to worship their false gods.
 - 1.4 The chief deity of Thyatira was the sun god (Tyrimnas), depicted as an armed warrior holding a two-edged ax.
2. The church in Thyatira may have been started with the influence of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15).
 - 2.1 The local church in Thyatira was doctrinally divided because it was tolerating heresy from a woman compared with Queen Jezebel.
 - 2.2 This church ceased to exist before the end of the second century.
3. Some believe this church represents the period of papal apostasy from A.D. 606-1517.
 - 3.1 This period of church history was characterized by immorality and idolatry, including worship of Mary.
 - 3.2 Revelation 17 refers to this apostate system as the "great whore" (17:1-6).
4. Consider ways to avoid toleration of heresy today.

Lessons from Thyatira

1. Remember that Jesus Christ will not overlook toleration (2:18).
 - 1.1 Christ has authority over local churches and individuals as the *Son of God*.
 - 1) Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God, not the son of Mary.
 - 2) Despising the Son of God brings severe judgment (Hebrews 10:28-31).
 - 3) A person cannot be saved while denying that Christ is the Son of God (I John 4:14-15).
 - 1.2 Christ has eyes like a flame of fire (2:18b; 1:14b; Daniel 10:6).
 - 1) Eyes refers to His omniscience (Job 34:21; Proverbs 5:21; Hebrews 4:13).
 - 2) The fire speaks righteous indignation (I Corinthians 3:11-17).

- 1.3 Christ has feet like fine brass (2:18b).
 - 1) Feet like fine brass speaks of strength and splendor.
 - 2) He will execute judgment as the glorious Judge.
2. Avoid justifying toleration of error (2:19; I Corinthians 5:1-7a).
 - 2.1 The church in Thyatira had many commendable qualities (2:19a).
 - 1) It was a working church (2:19).
 - 2) It was a loving church (2:19, *charity*).
 - 3) It was a serving church (2:19, *service*: ministry).
 - 4) It was a faithful church (2:19, *faith*: conviction; faithfulness).
 - 5) It was a persevering church (2:19, *patience*: steadfastness; perseverance; a patient enduring).
 - 2.2 The church was growing spiritually (2:19b; II Thessalonians 1:3-4).
 - 2.3 People often justify tolerance by what they are doing for the Lord.
 - 1) Love out of balance can overshadow loyalty to Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Service out of balance will cause a church to justify toleration of error.
3. Avoid associating with heretics (2:20-23; Titus 3:10-11).
 - 3.1 The pastor tolerated heresy in the church (2:20, *sufferest*: tolerate; permit).
 - 1) The rebuke was directed against the angel of the church, not Jezebel (2:18a, 20, *thou*).
 - 2) The pastor is responsible for standing guard over the local church (Acts 20:28-31).
 - 3.2 This woman was likened to Queen Jezebel of the Old Testament (I Kings 16:30-33; 18:13; 19:1-3; 21:25-26).
 - 1) She was a self-appointed prophetess (2:20, *she calleth herself a prophetess*).
 - Never ask for volunteers to teach a class in the church.
 - It is better to have no teachers than to have disqualified, unspiritual teachers.
 - 2) She was allowed to teach in the church (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:12-14).
 - Many cults were started by women (Seventh-Day Adventists; Christian Science; Spiritualism).

- Several denominations ordain women to the ministry.
 - Pentecostal and Charismatic groups have many women preachers.
 - Heresy often enters a church through books and recordings of false teachers.
 - Strife in local churches is often caused by women who do not remain in their God-given role (Titus 2:3-6).
- 3) She seduced the servants of Christ to commit fornication (2:20b, *seduce*: to cause to wander; lead into error; Proverbs 19:27).
- "It is not wrong for two consenting adults."
 - We are in a "committed relationship."
 - "Everyone is doing it."
- 4) She encouraged idolatry in the church (2:20b; I John 5:21).
- They could have said idolatry was unavoidable because of the trade guilds.
 - In Thyatira, they could have justified idolatry as the only way to remain employed.
- 3.3 She was given time to repent but did not respond to Christ's warning (2:21).
- 3.4 Christ deals severely with false teachers and their followers (2:22-23).
- 1) Jezebel would suffer in a bed of affliction (2:22a; cf. II Kings 9:30-37).
 - 2) Those who associate with false teachers will be judged with the heretic.
 - 3) God's day of mercy eventually comes to an end (2:22b).
 - 4) Children refers to second generation followers of heretics (2:23a).
 - 5) Christ would make an example of Jezebel and her followers (2:23b; I Timothy 5:20).
- He searches the *reins and hearts* (motives and thoughts; Jeremiah 17:9-10).
 - He deals with everyone individually (2:23c).
4. Remain faithful until the coming of Jesus Christ (2:24-29; Hebrews 2:1; 4:14; 10:23; I Thessalonians 5:21).
- 4.1 Jesus encouraged the faithful remnant (2:24-25).
- 1) They were separated from false doctrine and the *depths of Satan* (2:24).

- Satan has his counterfeit of *the deep things of God* (I Corinthians 2:10).
 - Satan wants to corrupt your mind from *the simplicity that is in Christ* (II Corinthians 11:3).
- 2) They were to hold fast to what they already had (2:25).
- 4.2 Overcoming faith (salvation) *and* faithfulness will be rewarded (2:26-28).
- 1) The faithful will have power over the nations (2:26b, *power*: delegated authority).
- 2) The faithful will rule with Jesus Christ (2:27; 19:11-16; 20:4-6; Psalm 2:7-9).
- 3) Those who overcome through faith will receive the morning star (2:28; 22:16; II Peter 1:19).
- Modern perversions wrongly translate *Lucifer* (Isaiah 14:12) as morning star.
 - Strong's concordance gives "morning star" as one of the definitions for Lucifer.
 - The saints in Thyatira did not need the sun god, Tyrimnas, because they had the morning star, the Son of God Himself.
 - The morning star appears just before dawn when it is darkest.
- 4.3 Application is made to individuals and churches (2:29).

Application of Truth

1. How tolerant are you of error?
2. With the compromise already in churches, *the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God* (I Peter 4:17a).
3. Do you understand that a lack of faithfulness in this life will affect your reign with Christ (Luke 19:11-28)?

#7 Sardis: A Morgue With a Steeple

Introduction to Revelation 3:1-6

1. Sardis was an important Roman city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).
 - 1.1 The city was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt in A.D. 17.
 - 1.2 Gold was found the river beds near Sardis, and gold and silver coins were minted there.
 - 1.3 Sardis had a large Jewish population and synagogue.
 - 1.4 The city of Sardis had a false sense of security because of its location.
 - 1) It was built on a cliff high above a valley.
 - 2) It was surrounded by high cliffs on three sides.
 - 3) The city was attacked on two different occasions.
 - In 549 B.C. by Persian emperor Cyrus
 - In 214 B.C. by Antiochus the Great
 - 1.5 A bishop from Sardis recorded the decline of his city.
2. There is no Biblical record about when the church in Sardis was started.
 - 2.1 Within a few decades, the church was already dying a slow death.
 - 2.2 Archaeologists have found the remains of a church building near the location of a temple for the goddess Artemis.
3. Some believe the Sardis church represents the Protestant Reformation (1517-1739).
 - 3.1 Many Protestant reformers sought to reform the Catholic Church.
 - 1) Martin Luther
 - 2) Ulrich Zwingli
 - 3) John Calvin
 - 4) John Knox
 - 3.2 Protestants retained many aspects of Catholicism.
 - 1) Formal liturgy
 - 2) Ritualism
 - 3) Traditionalism
 - 4) Denominational "machinery" (hierarchy)
 - 5) The state-church concept
 - 6) Infant baptism

4. There are several reasons that a church goes into a spirit of decline.
 - 4.1 A lack of vision (Proverbs 29:18a)
 - 4.2 Busyness with too many programs and conferences
 - 1) God evaluates churches on the basis of its *people*, not how many *programs* it has.
 - 2) God has only one "program" (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - 4.3 Preoccupation with "success" – growth often becomes the *goal* of a ministry.
 - 4.4 Exalting men to a spot-lighted pedestal – often a *movement of God* becomes a *monument to man!*
 - 4.5 Too much emphasis on education (Acts 4:13) – Bible "scholars" often correct the King James Bible.
 - 4.6 Insensitivity to the needs of people (I Corinthians 12:25-26)
 - 4.7 Conflict in the church (Galatians 5:13-15)
 - 1) Deacon-ruled churches
 - 2) Majority-ruled churches – many churches are only a majority vote away from false doctrine.
 - 4.8 Inconsistent standards of music (Colossians 3:16) and modesty (I Timothy 2:9)
 - 4.9 Becoming dull in hearing and applying the Word of God (Hebrews 5:11-14)
 - 4.10 Irregular church attendance (Hebrews 10:24-25)
 - 4.11 False teaching in the church (II Peter 2:1-2)
 - 4.12 Self-sufficiency (Revelation 3:17)
 - 4.13 Emphasis on outward image rather than inward character (Sardis)
 - 4.14 Formalism and traditionalism
 - 1) Formalism is strict, excessive attention on outward forms of religion.
 - 2) Traditionalism is the exalting of man-made traditions above the commands of God (Matthew 15:1-9; II Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6).
5. Note ways to protect from the spirit of decline in the independent Baptist movement.

Lessons from Sardis

1. Respond to Jesus Christ (3:1).
 - 1.1 He has the seven Spirits of God (the fullness of the Holy Spirit; Isaiah 11:2).
Much of what is done in churches today does not require the Spirit of God.

- 1.2 He has the seven stars in His right hand (sovereignty over pastors; I Peter 5:4).
- 1.3 He knows the true condition of a church (3:1b; Matthew 23:27-28).
 - 1) Sardis had a name of being an alive church (3:1b, *name*: reputation).
 - The name "Christian" used to mean something (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16).
 - The name "Baptist" used to mean something.
 - Many fundamental churches appear "successful" (a good attendance, many activities, good offerings...).
 - 2) In reality they were dead spiritually (3:1b; II Timothy 3:5).
 - Many only have a nominal form of Christianity.
 - Many only have a lifeless profession.
2. Restore past vibrancy (3:2-3).
 - 2.1 Be watchful (3:2a; present tense, continuous action; give strict attention; Matthew 26:41; Acts 20:31; I Corinthians 16:13; I Thessalonians 5:4-6).
 - 2.2 Strengthen the things that remain (3:2a; continuous action; to make firm).
 - 1) Things were ready to die (3:2b). The church was dying a slow death.
 - 2) Their works were not perfect before God (3:2b).
 - 2.3 Remember how you received and heard (3:3a; continuous action; Acts 17:11; I Corinthians 15:1; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:12-15)
 - 2.4 Hold fast to what you received (3:3a; I Timothy 6:20-21; Jude 3).
 - 2.5 Repent or receive judgment from Jesus Christ (3:3b; Luke 13:3, 5).
3. Remain undefiled spiritually (3:4, *defiled*: stained; soiled; contaminated).
 - 3.1 God always has His faithful remnant (3:4a; I Kings 19:9-10, 14, 18).
 - 3.2 The remnant remains undefiled in their character (3:4a; Ephesians 5:25-27).
 - 3.3 The believing remnant will walk with Christ in white (3:4b; 7:13-15; 19:7-8, 14).
4. Receive motivation from the promises of Christ (3:5).
 - 4.1 Clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ (3:5a).
 - 4.2 Eternal security (3:5b; 13:8; 17:8; 20:11-15; 21:27; Luke 10:20; Hebrews 12:23)
 - 4.3 His name confessed in heaven (3:5c; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9)

Application of Truth

The application is again made to individuals and churches (3:6).

#8 Philadelphia: A Door of Opportunity

Introduction to Revelation 3:7-13

1. Philadelphia was a key Roman city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).
 - 1.1 Philadelphia was known for its wine and worship of the god Bacchus.
 - 1.2 The city was continually subject to earthquake tremors.
 - 1.3 Philadelphia had a strategic location along the main route from Rome.
 - 1.4 The name "Philadelphia" means brotherly love.
2. Nothing is known of the founding of the church.
3. Many believe the Philadelphia church represents the revivals and the modern missions movement (1739-Present).
 - 3.1 Jonathan Edwards
 - 3.2 Evangelist John Wesley
 - 3.3 Evangelist George Whitefield
 - 3.4 Missionary William Carey
 - 3.5 Missionary Adoniram Judson
 - 3.6 Missionary David Livingstone
 - 3.7 Evangelist D.L. Moody
 - 3.8 Pastor Charles Haddon Spurgeon
4. Notice how to maximize the open doors the Lord provides.

Lessons from Philadelphia

1. Go in Christ's authority (3:7; Matthew 28:18-20).
 - 1.1 The pastor is responsible to lead the church in outreach (3:7a).
 - 1.2 The attributes of Christ demand attention (3:7b).
 - 1) He is holy (Psalm 99:9; Isaiah 6:1-5; 57:15; *holy*: pure; sacred; separate from evil; free from all contamination of sin; Hebrews 4:15).
 - 2) He is true (3:7b; John 14:6; I John 5:20).
 - 3) He has absolute authority (3:7b, *key of David*; Isaiah 22:22; Luke 1:32).
 - 4) He opens and closes doors of opportunity (3:7b).
 - God opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).
 - The Lord opens a door to preach the gospel (II Corinthians 2:12).

- Prayer opens doors of utterance (Colossians 4:2-4).
2. Prepare your life to witness effectively (3:8).
 - 2.1 When Christ opens a door, man cannot shut it (3:8a).
 - 2.2 Open doors are conditional (3:8b, *for...*).
 - 1) The church had *a little strength* (3:8b; II Corinthians 12:9-10).
 - A church's size does not limit God's power (cf. Judges 7).
 - Wealth and influence are not necessary for God to use a church.
 - 2) The church kept Christ's word (3:8b; I Timothy 6:20-21).
 - Doctrinal purity
 - Obedience to the commands of God
 - 3) The church had not denied Christ's name (3:8b).
 - Living as a good testimony for Jesus Christ ("Christian")
 - Not ashamed to be known as a follower of Christ
 - Loyalty to Jesus Christ even when it causes division (Matthew 10:32-39)
 3. Remain fearless in persecution (3:9).
 - 3.1 Open doors from the Lord do not mean they will be easy.
 - 1) The church in Philadelphia was persecuted by the local Jewish synagogue (3:9a).
 - 2) Open doors will bring satanic opposition (I Corinthians 16:9).
 - 3.2 Jesus Christ will vindicate you (3:9b; Genesis 37:5-11, 19-20; 42:6-9).
 - 1) Every person will one day recognize Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).
 - 2) Believers will judge the world and angels with Christ (I Corinthians 6:2-3).
 - 3) Jesus Christ will right all injustice (II Thessalonians 1:3-10).
 4. Receive motivation from the promises of Christ (3:10-12).
 - 4.1 True believers will be kept from the seven years of tribulation (3:10).
 - 1) The tribulation period is the seventieth week in God's dealing with Israel, not New Testament saints (Daniel 9:24-27).
 - 2) Keeping Christ's word gives evidence of saving faith (3:10a)
 - 3) Christ promises to keep believers *from the hour of temptation* (3:10b, *from*: out of; preserved outside the sphere of something).

- The *temptation* would try the whole world (3:10b; 13:8).
 - Believers were not saved to experience God's wrath (I Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:8-11).
 - There is no mention of a church on earth after Revelation 4:1.
- 4.2 Christ promised crowns at His coming (3:11).
- 1) There are five crowns that could be received from the Lord.
 - The incorruptible crown for temperate living (I Corinthians 9:25)
 - The crown of rejoicing for evangelism (I Thessalonians 2:19)
 - The crown of righteousness for loving Christ's appearing (II Timothy 4:8)
 - The crown of life for enduring temptation and faithfulness unto death (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
 - The crown of glory for faithful pastors (I Peter 5:4)
 - 2) Crowns will be used in our worship of Christ (Revelation 4:10-11).
 - 3) Someone else could receive your crown if you do not hold fast (3:11b).
- 4.3 Those who overcome through faith in Christ will receive eternal blessings (3:12).
- 1) He will be made a pillar in the temple of God.
 - Permanence (*he shall go no more out*)
 - Special recognition
 - 2) He will have the name of God written upon him (22:4).
 - 3) He will have New Jerusalem written upon him ("passport" into the city).
 - 4) He will have a new name of Christ written upon him.

Application of Truth

1. Application is made to individuals and churches (3:13).
2. Are you living your life so that Christ can open a door of opportunity?
3. How long has it been since you have told someone about your faith in Christ?

#9 Laodicea: The Church of the People

Introduction to Revelation 3:14-22

1. Laodicea was a wealthy Roman city founded by Antiochus II.
 - 1.1 The city was a wealthy banking and trade center (the "Wall Street" of Asia Minor).
 - 1.2 They refused help from the Roman government to rebuild the city after an earthquake in A.D. 60.
 - 1.3 The people of Laodicea loved sports and music, and many gathered in a stadium 1,000 feet long to enjoy these events.
 - 1.4 Laodicea was famous for the manufacturing of black glossy wool.
 - 1.5 There were many minerals in the streams near the city.
 - 1.6 The city was famous for a medical school and an eye ointment (cellyrium).
2. The church was probably started from the church in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:10).
 - 2.1 Paul mentions the church in Laodicea (Colossians 2:1; 4:13, 15-16).
 - 2.2 *Laodicea* is translated from two Greek words that mean "the rights of the people."
 - 1) Note that Jesus words the introduction differently (3:14a, *church of the Laodiceans*).
 - 2) The emphasis of this type of church is pleasing people (Galatians 1:10).
 - Pastors of Laodicean churches want to be accepted by people (3:14a, *unto the angel of the church*).
 - Some churches survey the community to determine what people want in a church.
 - Seeker-friendly services
 - Laodicean churches have political correctness in the pulpit.
 - Laodicean Christians base decisions on opinion polls.
 - These churches base decisions only on the vote of a majority. (Consider: churches should be a Theocracy under Christ; America was established as a constitutional republic.)
 - 2.3 This church took on the apathetic spirit of the Laodicean culture.
3. Many suggest the Laodicean church represents the apostasy of the last days before the rapture of believers.
 - 3.1 Most do not choose a church for its stand upon the Word of God.

- 1) Most are concerned about having activities for their children.
 - 2) Most want loud, sensual music.
 - 3) Most want people their own age (see Titus 2:1-5).
 - 4) Most desire a fashionable church with social status in the community.
 - 5) Most choose a church with visible "success."
 - Attendance
 - Buildings
 - Cash-flow
 - 6) Most choose a church which allows them to feel comfortable with lower standards (come as you are and leave as you were!).
- 3.2 Casual "churchianity" permeates Christianity today.
- 1) Young people slouch in boredom during the preaching of God's Word.
 - 2) Believers are indifferent to their family and friends going to a lake of fire.
 - 3) People are unconcerned about consequences for their decisions.
 - 4) Believers vote for financial reasons, not based on Biblical convictions.
 - 5) Those who serve in ministries of the church half-heartedly prepare for their responsibilities.
 - 6) Christians with a Laodicean spirit change churches, mates, or jobs instead of changing spiritually.
4. Notice what will protect a church from Laodicean lukewarmness.

Lessons from Laodicea

1. Respond to the authority of Jesus Christ (3:14b).
 - 1.1 Christ is the Amen of God (II Corinthians 1:20).
 - 1.2 Christ is the faithful and true witness (3:14b).
 - 1) Jesus will never dilute the truth.
 - 2) Jesus will never distort truth.
 - 1.3 Christ is the beginning of the creation of God (3:14b).
 - 1) This does not mean that Jesus was created by God.
 - 2) Jesus Christ is the origin of creation (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:13-17).
2. Honestly evaluate your true spiritual condition (3:15-17).
 - 2.1 A lukewarm indifference is known by the Lord (3:15a).

- 2.2 Christ wants you either cold or hot (3:15-16).
- 1) "I would thou wert cold" (spiritually refreshing to the Lord)
 - Christ never counsels a person to be spiritually cold toward Him.
 - Water in nearby Colosse was *cold* and refreshing.
 - 2) "I would thou wert ... hot.."
 - This Greek word (*zestos*) means boiling hot; fervent; zealous.
 - Water in nearby Hierapolis was *hot* with a medicinal benefit.
 - 3) Lukewarm pastors and churches are nauseating to Christ (3:16, *spue thee out of my mouth: vomit*).
 - Lukewarmness refers to complacency and indifference.
 - Water in Laodicea came from hot springs through miles of aqua duct. The water was nauseating by the time it reached the city.
- 2.3 Many churches are self-sufficient (3:17a).
- 1) Laodicea was financially independent (they refused help to rebuild).
 - 2) Their church was successful and did not need God (Luke 12:16-20).
 - Programs, property, and prosperity
 - Large mega-churches
 - The Word Faith Movement with their "health and wealth" gospel
 - Large influential para-church organizations
- 2.4 Many churches are self-deceived concerning their true condition (3:17b).
- 1) Wretched: distressed
 - 2) Miserable: pitiable condition
 - 3) Poor: spiritually bankrupt
 - 4) Blind: lacking spiritual insight (II Peter 1:9; Matthew 13:10-16)
 - 5) Naked: ill-clad (Genesis 3:7, 10-11) – the spiritual condition will affect modesty (I Timothy 2:9-10).
3. Listen to the counsel of the Son of God (3:18; Isaiah 9:6, *Counsellor*).
- 3.1 Christ is the only source to supply spiritual needs (3:18a, *buy*: invest what it takes; Isaiah 55:1-2; I Timothy 6:17-19; Matthew 19:16-22).
- 3.2 Christ mentioned three things needed (3:18b).
- 1) Gold tried in the fire: spiritual values (Proverbs 8:18; Matthew 6:19-21, 24)

- 2) White raiment: spiritual virtues; the righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10; Zechariah 3:1-4; Revelation 19:7-8)
- 3) Eye-salve: spiritual vision (Psalm 119:18; I John 2:27)
4. Yield to correction when necessary (3:19).
 - 4.1 Listen to His loving *rebuke*: to reprimand severely; to call to account; to demand an explanation (3:19a; II Timothy 4:2; Proverbs 9:8b).
 - 4.2 Respond to His loving chastening (3:19a; Hebrews 12:5-8; Deuteronomy 8:5-6).
 - 4.3 Be zealous, and repent (3:19b).
 - 1) No half-hearted repentance is acceptable to the Lord (II Corinthians 7:11).
 - *Zealous*: to be heated; to boil over
 - *Repent*: a change of mind that results in a change of actions
 - 2) They needed to repent concerning their true spiritual condition.
 - Self-sufficiency
 - Self-deception
 - 3) The church needed to rekindle their zeal for the things of God.
 - Zeal for the house of God (John 2:13-17)
 - Zeal for the Word of God (Acts 18:24-25; Hebrews 5:11)
 - Zeal for serving the Lord (Romans 12:11)
 - Zeal for prayer (Colossians 4:12; James 5:17)
 - Zeal in loving the family of God (I Peter 1:22; 4:8)
5. Desire close fellowship with the Lord (3:20; I John 1:7).
 - 5.1 This verse was given to a church, not to the unsaved in general.
 - 5.2 *Knock* is in the present tense, indicating continual action. Christ does not force His way into a church or individual life.
6. Receive motivation from the promise of Christ (3:21). The one who overcomes through faith in Christ (I John 5:4-5) will sit with Christ in His throne.

Application of Truth

1. Jesus applies this message to individuals and churches (3:22). Is there any truth given to the seven churches in which you are resisting the Holy Spirit?
2. How much of the indifference and apathy of our culture have you accepted?

#10 The Rapture to Heaven

Introduction to Revelation 4-5

1. John's call to heaven pictures the pre-tribulational rapture (4:1).
 - 1.1 There is no mention of a church on earth after Revelation 3 (*after this...*).
 - 1.2 The seven years of the tribulation relates to God's dealing with Israel.
2. Believers are to be looking for Christ, not the Antichrist (II Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13).
3. The rapture of believers is the next event on God's prophetic timetable (4:1a, *trumpet*; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-54).
4. God revealed to John what heaven will be like immediately following the rapture (4:1b, *things which must be hereafter*; cf. II Corinthians 12:1-5).

A Vision of God's Throne

1. God is upon His throne as the righteous Judge (4:2-3, 5; Psalm 9:7-8; Daniel 7:9-10).
 - 1.1 God is sovereignly in control of all things (4:2).
 - 1) The throne was *set in heaven*.
 - 2) God *sat on the throne*.
 - 1.2 God is glorious in His appearance (4:3; Ezekiel 1:26-28).
 - 1) God did not fully unveil His appearance to John (4:3a, *like*; I Timothy 6:16; Exodus 33:17-23).
 - He was like a jasper stone: clear as crystal (21:11).
 - He was like a sardine stone (ruby red).
 - 2) An emerald rainbow encircled the throne (4:3b).
 - The rainbow was *round about* the throne (a complete circle symbolizes perfection).
 - The emerald is a green color.
 - The rainbow is a reminder of God's covenant protection (Genesis 9:12-17).
 - 3) The sea of crystal glass reflects the glory and splendor of God (4:6a).
 - 1.3 God is fearsome in His judgment (4:5a; Hebrews 12:21).
 - 1) Lightnings and thunderings (Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18)
 - 2) Voices (Ezekiel 43:2; Daniel 10:6)

- 1.4 God the Holy Spirit will act as Prosecutor (4:5b; 5:6b; John 16:7-11).
 - 1) Seven is the number of perfection and completion.
 - 2) Seven horns refer to omnipotence (5:6b).
 - 3) Seven eyes refer to omniscience (5:6b; Psalm 139:1-6).
 - 4) The Spirit of God is omnipresent (5:6b, *sent forth into all the earth*; Psalm 139:7-12; II Chronicles 16:9; Zechariah 4:10).
2. Twenty-four elders will be seated around the throne (4:4).
 - 2.1 Twenty-four seats are arranged around God's throne (4:4a, *seats*: Greek *thronos*, seats of authority).
 - 2.2 The identity of the twenty-four elders is not absolutely clear.
 - 1) Some suggest they represent both Israel and the apostles (21:12-14; Matthew 19:27-28).
 - 2) Others claim they are representatives of church age saints.
 - 3) The word translated as *elders* is the Greek word (*presbuteros*) used for pastors.
 - 2.3 White raiment refers to the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (19:7-8).
 - 2.4 They received crowns of gold (4:4b).
 - 1) This is not a crown of authority (Greek *diadema*).
 - 2) These crowns are rewards for faithful service (Greek *stephanos*).
 - The incorruptible crown (I Corinthians 9:25)
 - The crown of rejoicing (I Thessalonians 2:19)
 - The crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:8)
 - The crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
 - The crown of glory (I Peter 5:4)
 - 3) These crowns will be cast before God's throne in worship (4:10).
 - 2.5 They worship God as creator (4:11).
3. God is worshiped by four angelic creatures (4:6-8).
 - 3.1 These four *beasts* are *full of eyes* (4:6b, 8a, perception and vigilance).
 - 3.2 The faces of these angels take on different forms (4:7).
 - 1) A lion: reflecting God's majesty
 - 2) A calf (ox): reflecting God's strength

- 3) A man: reflecting the intelligence of God
- 4) A flying eagle: reflecting the swiftness and severity of God (Romans 11:22)
- 3.3 These angels are possibly a different order than the cherubim and seraphim since they have similar attributes of both (5:11a, note the distinction).
 - 1) The cherubim (Ezekiel 1:4-14; 10:1-22; 28:14-18)
 - 2) The seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-3)
- 3.4 They worship God day and night for His holiness and eternity (4:8b-9).

The Book and the Lamb

1. God had a book in His right hand (5:1).
 - 1.1 This book (Greek *biblion*, scroll) may have been the one given to Daniel (12:4).
 - 1.2 The book was sealed with seven seals.
 - 1) Important legal documents in the Roman Empire required seven seals.
 - 2) On each seal was an official stamp of the government.
 - 3) Unauthorized breaking of a seal brought severe punishment.
 - 4) There was probably a seal on the outside and one on each section of the scroll.
 - 1.3 This book was possibly the title-deed to the earth (cf. Jeremiah 32:10-12).
 - 1.4 This book probably contained the announcements of judgment upon the earth.
2. A strong angel sought a man who was worthy to open the book and break the seals (5:2-4).
 - 2.1 *Worthy* speaks of legal and moral authority.
 - 2.2 No *man* was found *worthy*, though many have been *willing* (5:3-4).
 - 1) Prophets and apostles
 - 2) Religious leaders and theologians
 - 3) Statesmen and politicians
 - 4) Dictators of empires
 - 5) Philosophers
 - 6) Environmentalists
 - 7) Financiers
3. Jesus Christ is the only one worthy (5:5-14)
 - 3.1 He is the Lion of the tribe of Juda (5:5; Genesis 49:9-10).
 - 3.2 He is the Root of David (5:5; Isaiah 11:1, 10). Jesus Christ is heir to the throne of

David.

- 3.3 He is in the midst of the throne (5:6).
 - 1) John did not notice the Lamb in the midst of the throne (4:2-3).
 - 2) Notice the tri-unity of the Godhead (the Father, the Lamb, and the Spirit).
- 3.4 He has authority to approach the throne of God (5:7; Daniel 7:13-14).
- 3.5 He receives praise as the Lamb of God (5:8-12; John 1:29).
 - 1) Music and prayers are offered to Him (5:8-10).
 - The prayers of saints (5:8)
 - A *new song* of redemption (5:9-10; cf. Job 38:6-7) – *every kindred; tongue* (Greek *glossa*, language); *people* group; and *nation* (Greek *ethnos*, ethnic group)
 - 2) An innumerable company of angels worship Him (5:11-12; Hebrews 12:22).
 - Ten thousand times ten thousand equals one hundred million.
 - *Thousands of thousands*: Greek *myrias*, a myriad
 - 3) He has a seven-fold worthiness (5:12b).
 - Power: authority (Matthew 28:18; I Timothy 6:15)
 - Riches (II Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 4:19; Haggai 2:8)
 - Wisdom (Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 1:24, 30; I Timothy 1:17)
 - Strength (Psalm 24:8; Ephesians 6:10)
 - Honour (Hebrews 2:6-9; I Timothy 6:14-16)
 - Glory (Matthew 19:28; 24:30; John 1:14)
 - Blessing (Luke 19:38; Romans 9:5)
- 3.6 He is equal to God the Father (5:13-14).

Application of Truth

1. Are you ready for the rapture of the saints?
 - 1.1 Do you *know* that you have eternal life through Jesus Christ *alone*?
 - 1.2 Would you be ashamed at His coming (I John 2:28)?
2. Do you worship the Lord in humility (I Chronicles 29:11-14; Philippians 2:9-11)?

#11 Six Seals of Sorrow

Introduction to Revelation 6

1. The tribulation period is called a time of trouble by Daniel (12:1).
 - 1.1 Suffering
 - 1.2 Distress
 - 1.3 Devastation and destruction
2. The first six seals possibly cover the first half of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:8, *the beginning of sorrows*).
3. Note the first series of judgments upon earth that should motivate us to action.
 - 3.1 Make sure of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.
 - 3.2 Tell people about their need for the gospel.

The First Six Seals

1. The white horse – the emergence of the Antichrist (6:1-2)
 - 1.1 Antichrist will have a triumphant rise to power (6:2).
 - 1) He presents himself as a counterfeit Christ (19:11; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Matthew 24:5, 24).
 - 2) He will have a bloodless conquest (6:2, note a bow without an arrow).
 - He will offer peace, order, and prosperity (I Thessalonians 5:3; Jeremiah 8:11).
 - He will use deception (Daniel 8:25; II Thessalonians 2:8-10).
 - 3) He will be given great political power (6:2, *a crown was given unto him*).
 - He will have a solution for peace in the Middle East (Daniel 9:27).
 - He will be accepted by both Jews and Arabs (possibly a descendent of Abraham?).
 - Other nations will unite under his leadership.
 - 1.2 Many of the world's leaders are calling for a "global governance" because of the following perceived problems.
 - 1) Political instability in various regions around the world
 - 2) Economic instability
 - 3) Overpopulation

- 4) "Global warming"
- 5) Threats of nuclear warfare
2. The red horse – world-wide lawlessness and war (6:3-4; Matthew 24:6-7)
 - 2.1 After the rapture of believers, the restraining of the Holy Ghost will be removed (II Thessalonians 2:7).
 - 2.2 Wicked man is not able to achieve lasting world peace (Isaiah 57:20-21; Romans 3:17).
 - 2.3 People will begin killing one another for the necessities of life (6:4b).
 - 2.4 Wicked rulers consider war to be a means to an end.
 - 1) War stimulates the national economy.
 - 2) War controls overpopulation.
 - 3) War encourages scientific research.
 - 4) War increases control by the government.
 - 5) War refocuses attention from domestic problems.
 - 2.5 Jesus Christ conquered by shedding His own blood (5:5-6).
3. The black horse – global economic disaster (6:5-6)
 - 3.1 *A pair of balances* speak of strict rationing of food.
 - 3.2 Food will become very expensive (6:6a).
 - 1) *A measure of wheat* (less than one quart) was enough to feed one man for a day.
 - 2) A penny (*denarius*) was a Roman silver coin.
 - It was a normal day's wage (Matthew 20:2).
 - A denarius normally bought eight times as much grain.
 - 3) People will work an entire day to buy food for that day.
 - 3.3 People will go to desperate means to find food (II Kings 6:24-30; Ezekiel 5:10).
 - 3.4 The *oil and the wine* will not be hurt (6:6b).
 - 1) Luxury items will still be available to the wealthy.
 - 2) Some suggest this is symbolic of Israel's prosperous economy. Other nations experiencing economic problems will covet Israel's prosperity.
4. The pale horse – death of one-fourth of the world's population (6:7-8)
 - 4.1 *Pale* (Greek *chloros*) refers to a pale greenish color, the color of a corpse (6:8a).

- 4.2 After suffering here on earth, unbelievers will then suffer in hell (6:8a; Psalm 9:17; Luke 16:22-23).
- 4.3 A fourth part of the earth will die (6:8b; $\frac{1}{4}$ of 6.7 billion people is *1.675 billion* people!).
- 4.4 There will be various causes of death (6:8b; Ezekiel 14:12-21).
 - 1) The sword: violence and military campaigns
 - 2) Hunger: starvation
 - 3) Death: pestilence; plagues causing death
 - Biological and chemical warfare
 - AIDS
 - Influenza
 - Typhus
 - Diseases from dead bodies
 - 4) The beasts of the earth
 - Wild beasts will begin attacking people (reversal of Genesis 9:2).
 - Rats will devour and contaminate food supplies.
5. Martyrdom of believers (6:9-11)
 - 5.1 Multitudes will be saved after the rapture (7:9-17).
 - 5.2 Many will be slain during the tribulation (6:9-10).
 - 1) Their souls are under the altar (6:9a).
 - The altar is on the sea of glass (4:6a).
 - These martyred saints will have a special place under the sea of glass.
 - 2) They experienced severe persecution (6:9b).
 - *Slain* speaks of death by violence (20:4, *beheaded*).
 - They are slain for the Word of God and for their testimony for Christ (6:9b). These saints will not be nominal Christians who live like the world!
 - They probably become a "scapegoat" for the world's problems (Matthew 24:9-10).
 - They will resist the global movement of their day.
 - 5.3 They cry out for God to avenge their blood (6:10; II Thessalonians 1:6-8).

- 5.4 They receive a temporal body until the resurrection (6:11a; II Corinthians 5:1-4).
 - 1) A robe necessitates a body.
 - 2) God will avenge in His timing.
6. Catastrophic disasters (6:12-14)
 - 6.1 Some suggest this passage is symbolic of international and political upheaval, but there is no symbolic language used to indicate such.
 - 6.2 Global and universal disasters will take place (6:12-14; Matthew 24:29).
 - 1) The first of five great earthquakes will shake the entire earth (6:12; Isaiah 24:19-20).
 - 2) The sun will blacken as sackcloth (6:12, *sackcloth*: made from black goat's hair).
 - 3) The moon will appear blood-red (6:12).
 - 4) Stars fall upon the earth (6:13, note the plural *stars*).
 - 5) The atmospheric heaven appears to split apart, probably as stars crash through the atmosphere (6:14a).
 - 6) *Every mountain and island* are moved out of their places (6:14b).
 - This would cause tsunamis.
 - Towns and villages will be destroyed.

Man's Response

1. Fear and panic (6:15-17; Isaiah 2:17-21; 13:6-13; Luke 21:11, 25-26)
 - 1.1 Every class of people will be affected (6:15a).
 - 1.2 People will find places to hide (6:15b).
2. People would rather die than repent of their wickedness and believe in Christ (6:16-17; II Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Application of Truth

1. Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation?
2. Are you focusing on Christ instead of world events?
3. Are you living in victory over fear? (Luke 21:9)
4. Are you sharing the gospel with those who will live through this "beginning of sorrows?"

#12 The 144,000 Sealed Witnesses

Introduction to Revelation 7

1. The amazing thing about Bible prophecy is that John experiences a future event as if he were there in the future!
2. Habakkuk 3:2 reads, "In wrath, remember mercy."
 - 2.1 The world is in the midst of the seven seal judgments of God's *wrath* (6:15-17).
 - 1) War and bloodshed
 - 2) Famine and starvation
 - 3) Death
 - 4) World-wide calamities
 - 2.2 As God pours out His wrath upon a wicked world, He remembers *mercy* by saving a multitude of Jews and Gentiles (chapter 7).

Sealing of the 144,000

1. Four angels restrain the forces of nature temporarily (7:1-3). There will be a momentary tranquility on earth.
2. The seal of the living God provides protection during the tribulation (7:2).
3. Twelve thousand are sealed from each of the twelve tribes of Israel (7:4-8; 14:1-5).
 - 3.1 False teaching abounds concerning the 144,000.
 - 1) The Kingdom Hall of "Jehovah's Witnesses" cult claims to be the 144,000.
 - 2) The Seventh-Day Adventist cult claims to be the 144,000.
 - 3) British-Israelism teaches that the lost tribes of Israel are Britain and the royal family is a descendent of King David.
 - 4) Herbert W. Armstrong taught that the lost tribes make up the United States of America.
 - 3.2 The obvious reading of the passage gives a clear understanding of this group.
 - 1) No Gentiles are included in the 144,000 (7:4b).
 - 2) They are unmarried, virgin men (14:4a).
 - 3.3 There are no "lost" tribes of Israel.
 - 1) James addressed his letter to dispersed Jews (James 1:1).
 - 2) The tribe of Ephraim is not included in the list.

- The tribe of Ephraim was guilty of idolatry (Hosea 4:17).
 - They will be included in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:5-6).
- 3) The tribe of Dan is not included in the 144,000.
- This tribe did more than any other in turning people to apostasy (Leviticus 24:11; Judges 18:1-2, 30-31; I Kings 12:28-30; Amos 8:14)
 - Some believe the Antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan (Genesis 49:16-17; Jeremiah 8:15-16).
 - Dan will be included in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:1-2).
4. They probably believe in the Messiah from the two witnesses in Jerusalem (11:1-13).
5. The 144,000 serve as witnesses preaching the gospel (Matthew 24:14; cf. Isaiah 43:10-12).
- 5.1 All of Israel will be saved during the tribulation (Romans 11:25-26).
- 5.2 A multitude of Gentiles will be saved (7:9-17; Isaiah 66:19).
- 1) All nations will be represented (7:9).
- 2) They had imputed righteousness (7:9b, *white robes*).
- 3) They worship before the throne of God (7:10).
- 4) Angels join them in worship (7:11-12; I Peter 1:12).
- 5) The multitude is different from raptured saints and Israel (7:13-17).
- No crowns are mentioned (4:10).
 - They were not seated around the throne; they stood before God's throne (3:21; 7:9, 15).
 - John from the "church age" did not know them (7:13-14a).
 - They came out of great tribulation (7:14b).
 - They will enjoy the blessings of Christ's kingdom (7:15-17).
- 5.3 Based on the current number of missionaries, there will be more preaching the gospel *during* the tribulation than *before* it.

Application of Truth

1. Are you ready if the rapture happened in the next few minutes?
 - 1.1 *Today* is the day of salvation (II Corinthians 6:2).
 - 1.2 The tribulation will not be a ticket for a "second chance" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).
2. How long has it been since you have shared the gospel?

#13 Six Trumpets of Judgment

Introduction to Revelation 8-9

1. The trumpet judgments occur before the middle of the Tribulation (chapter 11-12).
2. Many interpret the trumpet judgments symbolically.
 - 2.1 Revelation should be interpreted literally unless symbolic language is used.
 - 2.2 The plagues in Egypt were literal judgments, and some of the trumpet judgments are similar to them.
3. The opening of the seventh seal is the prelude to the trumpet judgments (8:1-6).
 - 3.1 The loud worship around God's throne will make the silence seem ominous (8:1).
 - 3.2 Seven angels were given trumpets (8:2).
 - 3.3 The trumpet judgments are in answer to the prayers of the saints (8:3-4; Exodus 2:23-25).
 - 3.4 A golden censer is filled with fire from the altar and cast into the earth (8:5).
 - 1) Voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake follow (8:5b).
 - 2) The earth is given a taste of God's coming wrath (Hebrews 10:26-31).

The First Four Trumpets

1. Bloody hail and fire (8:7; Genesis 19:24-28; Exodus 9:23-26)
 - 1.1 No symbolic language is used to describe the destruction.
 - 1) Some claim this is a nuclear firestorm, but this is from God in heaven.
 - 2) One-third of the trees will be burned (massive forest fires).
 - 3) All the green grass will be burned.
 - The food supply will be diminished.
 - All pastureland will be burned up.
 - All crops will be destroyed.
 - 1.2 This judgment will cause difficulty for people to breathe.
 - 1) There will be a lack of oxygen in the air.
 - 2) There will be an increase of carbon dioxide.
2. A burning fireball from heaven (8:8-9)
 - 2.1 It will look like a burning mountain (8:8a, *as it were*).
 - 2.2 This burning mountain will land in *the sea* (8:8, singular, not plural).

- 1) Some suggest this refers to the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 2) A third of the sea will become blood (8:8b; Exodus 7:19-21; Psalm 105:29).
 - 3) A third part of the sea creatures will die (8:9a).
 - There will be a great stench caused by rotting sea creatures.
 - This will cause a shortage of food.
 - There will be great economic losses.
 - 4) One-third of the ships will be destroyed (8:9b). There may be an increase of military ships in the Mediterranean region.
3. Water becomes bitter (8:10-11)
- 3.1 Some believe the *great star from heaven* is an evil angel named Wormwood (8:10).
 - 1) God numbers and names all of the stars (Psalm 147:4).
 - 2) God refers to angels being the morning *stars* (Job 38:7a).
 - 3.2 Wormwood speaks of intense bitterness (8:11; Jeremiah 9:13-15; 23:15).
 - 1) One-third of all fresh water will be poisoned (8:10b, 11a).
 - Rivers
 - Subterranean water supply
 - 2) Many will die from drinking the contaminated water (8:11b).
4. Darkness upon the earth (8:12; Isaiah 13:6-13; Joel 2:10)
- 4.1 One-third of the sources of light will be darkened.
 - 1) A third part of the sun
 - 2) A third part of the moon
 - 3) A third part of the stars
 - 4.2 Days will be shortened by a third (8:12b).
 - 1) Time will be altered.
 - 2) The sun will set earlier in the day (Amos 8:9).
 - 4.3 This judgment will cause "global freezing."
 - 4.4 Shorter days will provide protection for the elect (Matthew 24:22).

Three Trumpets of Woe (8:13)

5. A demonic invasion (9:1-12)
 - 5.1 Some suggest this judgment refers to biological warfare and chemical weapons.
 - 5.2 A star falls from heaven to the earth (9:1; cf. Luke 10:18).

- 1) Personal pronouns *him* and *he* are used (9:1-2).
 - 2) The name Lucifer means "day star" (Isaiah 14:12-15; many modern translations change Lucifer to *morning star*, Revelation 22:16).
 - 3) This star (Satan) is given the key to the *bottomless pit* (9:1; 20:1-3).
 - The bottomless pit is translated from the Greek word *abyssos* (English *abyss*, the abode of devils; Luke 8:31; Matthew 25:41).
 - This bottomless pit may be the *great gulf fixed* (Luke 16:22-26).
 - Evil angels are presently bound in this pit (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
 - Smoke from the opened pit darkens the sky (9:2).
- 5.3 Demonic locusts will invade the earth from the bottomless pit (9:3-11; cf. Exodus 10:12-20; Joel 1:4-7).
- 1) Some believe these locusts are the result of genetic research that creates a mutant life form (Salem Kirban, *Countdown to Rapture*).
 - 2) They will sting like scorpions (9:3).
 - Pain
 - Heart palpitations
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Convulsions
 - Changes in blood pressure
 - 3) They are only given power to torment unbelievers (9:4-5).
 - 4) People will seek death but will not be able to die (9:6).
 - No unbeliever will die for five months.
 - People will experience severe suffering for five months.
 - God is in control of death.
 - 5) These locusts will have a fearsome appearance (9:7-10, note *like, as*).
 - Their shape is like a horse prepared unto battle (9:7a).
 - They have something like a golden crown on their heads (9:7b, represents authority).
 - They have a face similar to a man (9:7b, referring to intelligence).
 - They have hair like that of women (9:8a; implying beauty).
 - They have teeth like a lion (9:8b).

- They have a breastplate as iron (9:9a, meaning they are immune to destruction).
 - Their wings sound like horses and chariots running to battle (9:9b).
 - Their tail will sting like a scorpion (9:10).
- 6) They are organized under a king (9:11).
- Hebrew *Abaddon*: destruction
 - Greek *Apollyon*: destroyer; the one of perdition
- 5.4 Woe is again announced to the inhabitants of earth (9:12).
6. A demonic attack upon mankind (9:13-19)
- 6.1 Some believe this refers to a military invasion using thermonuclear warfare.
- 6.2 The passage indicates supernatural creatures (9:17, 19; cf. II Kings 2:11; 6:17).
- 1) They had breastplates of red, blue, and yellow (9:17a).
 - 2) The heads of the horses were like that of lions (9:17).
 - 3) Fire, smoke, and brimstone issued forth from their mouths (9:17b).
 - 4) They had tails like serpents (9:19).
- 6.3 Four angels are released when the sixth trumpet sounds (9:13-15).
- 1) There is a voice from the golden altar in heaven (9:13).
 - 2) Four angels have been bound in the Euphrates River (9:14).
 - Babylon is the source of all false religions (Revelation 17:5).
 - Demonic activity will increase in the last days (I Timothy 4:1).
 - 3) Their liberty lasts for about thirteen months (9:15).
- 6.4 These four angels organize an army of two hundred million (9:16-19).
- 1) They cause great destruction (9:17).
 - 2) One-third of the earth's population is killed (9:18-19).
 - 3) Half of the original population after the rapture is now dead (compare 6:8; Isaiah 24:1-6).

Application of Truth

1. Beware of a hardened heart that refuses to repent of sin (9:20a; Romans 9:17-23).
 - 1.1 Rebellious men are not forced to repent.
 - 1.2 Problems often harden a person's heart further (Pharaoh, Exodus 5-9).
2. Avoid the increasing evil of the last days (9:20-21)

- 2.1 Worship of devils (9:20b; I Corinthians 10:20; Deuteronomy 32:15-17; Psalm 106:37)
 - 1) Practices of the occult
 - 2) Satanism
 - 3) Spiritism
 - 4) Astrology
- 2.2 Idolatry (9:20b; Exodus 20:4-6; I John 5:21)
- 2.3 Murder (9:21)
 - 1) Violence
 - 2) Gangs
 - 3) Oppressive governments
 - 4) Terrorism
 - 5) School shootings
 - 6) Revenge killings
- 2.4 Sorceries (9:21, Greek *pharmakeia*; English *pharmacy*; use of drugs and sorcery)
 - 1) Drug abuse
 - 2) Magical arts, potions, and black magic
 - 3) Increase of prescription drugs to control behavior
 - 4) Interest in the occult (*Harry Potter* books)
 - 5) Eastern religions
- 2.5 Fornication (9:21, Greek *porneia*)
 - 1) Pornography
 - 2) Homosexuality
 - 3) Sensuality and immodesty
 - 4) Immoral behavior
 - 5) Nudity in the media
- 2.6 Theft (9:21)
 - 1) Filing bankruptcy (Psalm 37:21a)
 - 2) Not honoring contracts
 - 3) People will steal to survive during the Tribulation.
- 3. Now is the day of salvation (II Corinthians 6:2; II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

#14 *The Bittersweet of Prophecy*

Introduction to Revelation 10

1. Revelation 10:1 - 11:14 is a parenthetical passage giving additional information.
2. In Revelation 10, the apostle John is given a "little book" that had a "bittersweet" effect upon him.

The Little Book of Revelation

1. Another mighty angel met with John (10:1-7).
 - 1.1 There are differing opinions concerning the identity of this angel.
 - 1) Some believe it is an angel sent from the throne of God (*another mighty angel* indicates someone other than the Lord; Psalm 103:20).
 - 2) Some suggest this is Jesus Christ.
 - Christ was called the Angel of the LORD in the Old Testament.
 - His description is similar to chapter one.
 - He said the two witnesses were *my two witnesses* (11:3).
 - 1.2 Note the characteristics of this angelic being (10:1-3, 5-7).
 - 1) He is powerful (10:1a).
 - 2) He had a glorious appearance (10:1; Daniel 10:5-6).
 - 3) He had an open book in his hand (10:2a).
 - 4) He stands with the authority and power of God over the entire earth (10:2b; see Hebrews 2:6-8; Ephesians 1:18-22a concerning Jesus Christ).
 - 5) He spoke with power and authority as he announces the final judgments upon earth (10:3a).
 - 6) He raises his hand toward heaven and swears an oath by the eternal Creator (10:5-6; Hebrews 6:13).
 - 7) He makes a pronouncement concerning the seventh angel's trumpet (10:7).
2. John is commanded to take the little book from the angel and eat it (10:8-10).

Application of Truth

1. God does not reveal everything to us (Deuteronomy 29:29; Mark 13:29-33; Acts 1:6-8; II Corinthians 12:1-4).
 - 1.1 Many speak as if God gave them special insight where Scripture is silent.

- 1) They speculate about events.
 - 2) They calculate the years.
 - 3) They create formulas to make predictions.
- 1.2 There is no indication as to what was written in the little book.
- 1.3 John was told to seal up what the seven thunderous voices said (10:3-4; Daniel 12:9).
- 1) Thunder symbolizes coming judgment.
 - 2) Some suggest the seven voices are a satanic response to the lion-like roar of the mighty angel.
 - 3) John was told to not record what was said.
- 1.4 God is sovereignly in control of the timing of events (10:6b, *time no longer*: no more delay; time has run out; cf. Galatians 4:4).
2. Prophecy is both sweet and bitter (10:8-10).
- 2.1 Prophecy is sweet to the taste (Psalm 19:10; 119:103; Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:6-3:4; cf. Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12).
- 1) It is interesting to study prophetic events in the light of current events.
 - 2) Prophecy is the hope of the believer during trying times.
 - 3) It is a *revelation* from God Himself (Revelation 1:1-2).
- 2.2 Prophecy is bitter when digested (Ezekiel 3:14).
- 1) Revelation speaks of devastation, dread, and death (half of the earth's population dies in the first half of the Tribulation)
 - 2) Why study prophecy?
 - The blessing of God (Revelation 1:3)
 - Spiritual motivation (I John 2:28-3:3)
 - Motivation to witness (II Corinthians 5:9-11)
3. God's prophetic message must be told to the entire world (10:11).
- 3.1 Even at 90 years old, John was told to prophesy before many.
- 1) Peoples (people groups)
 - 2) Nations
 - 3) Tongues (languages)
 - 4) Kings
- 3.2 This has literally been fulfilled over the last 2,000 years.

#15 Mid-Point of the Tribulation

A Rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem

1. Revelation 11 marks the completion of the first half of the tribulation period.
2. The apostle John is told to measure the temple of God (11:1, *reed*: a measuring rod about ten feet long; Ezekiel 40:5).
 - 2.1 The last Jewish temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army in A.D. 70.
 - 1) The city of Jerusalem was destroyed.
 - 2) More than one million Jews were killed.
 - 2.2 The Dome of the Rock, an Islamic mosque built in 691, currently occupies the Jerusalem Temple Mount.
 - 2.3 Plans have already been made for a Jewish temple that will be rebuilt during the first half of the tribulation (see Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15).
 - 1) The Temple Institute was founded in 1986 with the objective of preparing for the rebuilding of the Temple on Mount Moriah.
 - Preparation of architectural designs
 - Construction of articles to be used in the Temple
 - Research and design of the high priest's garments
 - 2) More than \$20 million have been donated to the cause (as of 2010).
 - 3) Training of a Levitical priesthood has been started.
 - 2.4 The Jewish Sanhedrin met in January, 2005, for the first time in 1,600 years.
3. The court outside the temple is not measured because it will be controlled by Gentiles (11:2).
 - 3.1 Jerusalem (the holy city) will be dominated by Gentiles forty-two months (11:2b; Luke 21:20-24).
 - 3.2 The antichrist will set his throne in the rebuilt Jerusalem temple (II Thessalonians 2:3-5).
 - 3.3 The *abomination of desolation* refers to the desecration of the temple with either a Gentile or an unholy thing. In 165 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes slaughtered a pig in the holy place of the temple.

Two Witnesses

1. The identity of these two witnesses is not given (11:3).
 - 1.1 Some suggest Elijah and Moses (Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:3).
 - 1.2 Others suggest Elijah and Enoch since they are the only two who have not died (Hebrews 9:27; II Kings 2:11; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14-15).
2. They prophesy in Jerusalem for 1,260 days during the first half of the tribulation (11:3b).
3. They are two olive trees anointed by God with the power of the Holy Ghost (11:4; Zechariah 4:1-4, 11-14).
4. They display supernatural power during their ministry (11:5-6).
 - 4.1 They burn up their enemies with fire from their mouths (11:5; II Kings 1:10-12; Numbers 16:35).
 - 4.2 There is no rain for three and one-half years (11:6a; I Kings 17:1), causing starvation and great economic hardship.
 - 4.3 They are able to turn water into blood (11:6b; Exodus 7:14-25).
 - 4.4 They smite the earth with plagues (11:6b; diseases).
5. At the mid-point of the tribulation, God allows them to be killed by the antichrist (11:7-10).
 - 5.1 The antichrist will appear be a savior to the unsaved world.
 - 5.2 Their dead bodies are left unburied in the street of Jerusalem for three days (11:8-9).
 - 5.3 The world will celebrate their death (11:10, satanic X-mas celebration!).
6. After three days, they are resurrected and ascend into heaven (11:11-12).
7. A great earthquake occurs in the same hour (11:13).
 - 7.1 A tenth part of Jerusalem is destroyed.
 - 7.2 Seven thousand people die.
 - 7.3 The remnant of believing Jews give glory to God.

The Seventh Trumpet

1. The first six trumpets are recorded in Revelation 8-9.
2. The third woe is announced upon the earth (11:14).
3. The seventh angel sounds his trumpet (11:15-17).
 - 3.1 Some who hold to a mid-tribulation rapture believe it occurs at this time (see I Corinthians 15:52, *at the last trump*).
 - 3.2 The kingdoms of the world are officially given over to Christ (11:15; Luke 4:5-7).

- 3.3 The twenty-four elders fall before the throne in worship (11:16-18).
4. The heavenly temple is opened to reveal the ark of the testament (11:19).

Application of Truth

1. How bold is your witness in these last days?
2. Are you separating from the spiritual corruption of these last days (11:8)?
 - 1.1 Jerusalem spiritually will be like Sodom, a place of moral perversion.
 - 1.2 The city will be spiritually like Egypt, a place of spiritual bondage.
3. Does a study of prophecy lead you to worship (11:16-18)?
 - 3.1 Give thanks to the Lord God Almighty (11:17a).
 - 3.2 Worship Him as the eternal one (11:17b).
 - 3.3 Worship Him as the powerful Sovereign (11:17b).
 - 3.4 Worship Him as the God of wrath (11:18a).
 - 3.5 Worship Him as a righteous Judge (11:18b)
 - 1) He gives rewards to His servants (11:18b).
 - 2) He will eternally destroy those who destroy the earth (11:18b).

#16 The Battle of the Ages

Introduction to Revelation 12

1. Lucifer attempted to exalt his throne to be equal to the Most High God (Isaiah 14:12-14).
 - 1.1 Because of his rebellion, Satan knows that he will someday end up in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:15; Matthew 25:41; Luke 8:26-33).
 - 1.2 Satan has an all-consuming passion to overthrow God.
 - 1.3 Since he knows it will be a losing battle for him, he is now destroying as many lives as possible (John 10:10a).
2. Revelation 12 reveals a future war in heaven that will fuel the wrath of the devil.

Conflict in the Past

1. John is introduced to a woman (12:1-2).
 - 1.1 Roman Catholics claim that this woman represents Mary, calling her the Queen of Heaven. The chapter reveals things that were not true of Mary.
 - 1.2 Many Protestant denominations say that the woman is the Church, but the Church did not give Christ to the world. Christ established the church (Matthew 16:18).
 - 1.3 A study of the passage reveals the woman represents the nation of Israel (see Genesis 37:9-10).
 - 1) She is clothed with the sun (Jacob).
 - 2) She has the moon under her feet (Rachel).
 - 3) She has a crown of twelve stars (the twelve tribes of Israel).
 - 1.4 The woman with child has suffered greatly (12:2).
 - 1) Israel was oppressed during the Egyptian bondage (Exodus 1).
 - 2) King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem (II Chronicles 36).
 - 3) Haman of Persia persuaded the king to sign a decree for the destruction of all Jews in the empire (Esther 3).
 - 4) Many Jews had to flee for their lives under Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria (165 B.C.).
 - 5) Roman General Titus of Rome killed 1.3 million Jews (A.D. 70).
 - 6) The Roman Catholic Church slaughtered thousands of Jews in the Inquisition (A.D. 1411).

- 7) Five million Jews were killed by the Russian czars.
 - 8) About six million Jews were killed under the reign of Hitler. Six of every ten Jews living in Europe were killed.
 - 9) Arab nations continue to oppress Israel today.
2. John also saw a great red dragon (12:3-4).
- 2.1 The use of a dragon to describe Satan speaks of his fierce nature.
 - 2.2 The red color refers to him being murderous, cruel, blood thirsty (see John 8:44).
 - 2.3 Satan is symbolically described as having seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns (12:3b; 13:1; 17:3, 9-12).
 - 1) Seven heads refer to seven empires (17:9-10). The first five have fallen, one existed at the time of John, and one was future.
 - Egyptian
 - Assyrian
 - Babylonian
 - Medo-Persian
 - Grecian
 - Rome was in power when the Revelation was given to John (*one is*).
 - One kingdom is yet to come during the tribulation.
 - 2) The ten horns represent ten kings which yield to the rule of the Antichrist (17:12-13).
 - Some suggest this refers to ten Germanic tribes which conquered Rome in A.D. 476 and settled throughout Europe.
 - All ten horns are on the seventh head of the dragon (cf. Daniel 7:24).
 - The world may be divided into ten regions during the tribulation.
 - 3) The crowns represent kingly power over which Satan rules (Luke 4:5-7).
 - 2.4 Satan drew one-third of the angels of heaven with him (12:4a; Job 38:7; Isaiah 14:13; Luke 10:18).
 - 2.5 Satan tried to destroy Christ from the beginning (12:4b).
 - 1) He wanted to keep Jesus Christ from going to the cross.
 - 2) He attempted to do this through Herod the Great (Matthew 2:16-18).
3. The woman (Israel) brought forth a man child (12:5).

- 3.1 The Saviour, Jesus Christ, came through the nation of Israel (Romans 9:4-5).
- 3.2 Christ will rule all nations with absolute authority (12:5a; Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6-7).
- 3.3 Christ ascended to God's throne (12:5b; Mark 16:19).
4. In the future, the woman (Israel) will flee into the wilderness for 1,260 days (12:6; Matthew 24:15-21).
 - 4.1 Some suggest that the place prepared by God is the ancient city of Petra.
 - 4.2 Israel will be preserved by God during the last half of the tribulation period.

Coming War in Heaven

1. Michael and the good angels will war against the devil and his evil angels (12:7-9).
 - 1.1 Michael is an archangel whose primary duty is protection of Israel (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1).
 - 1.2 Michael and the devil fought for the body of Moses after he died (Jude 9).
 - 1.3 Satan will lose this final attempt to dethrone Christ (12:8).
 - 1.4 Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven (12:9). They will no longer have access to God's throne (cf. Job 1-2).
2. Satan will be filled with wrath after he is expelled from heaven (12:12-17).
 - 2.1 Woe is announced to those who inhabit the earth and sea (12:12a).
 - 2.2 Satan knows he only has a short time left (12:12b).
 - 2.3 He directs his wrath toward Israel (12:13).
 - 1) Antichrist will break his covenant with the nation of Israel.
 - 2) Israel as a nation will be purified spiritually (Zechariah 13:8-9).
 - 2.4 Israel swiftly flees to the wilderness for safety (12:14).
 - 1) Some suggest the *two wings of a great eagle* refers to the United States.
 - 2) The same term is used for Israel's exodus from Egypt (Exodus 19:4).
 - 2.5 Satan sends a flood of water after Israel (12:15-16).
 - 1) Some suggest this flood is a military invasion (Luke 21:20-24).
 - 2) Flash flooding is common in the wilderness surrounding this area.
 - 3) The earth opens to protect Israel from the flood of water (12:16; Numbers 16:31-33).
 - 2.6 Satan targets his wrath on the believing remnant of Israel (12:17).

- 1) Those who obey the commands of God.
- 2) Those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ, their Messiah.

Application of Truth

1. Are you praying for the peace of Jerusalem? (Psalm 122:6)
2. Are you living in victory over the accuser of the brethren? Are you giving him reasons to accuse you before the throne of God? (12:9-11)
 - 2.1 His names reveal his evil character (12:9).
 - 1) The *great dragon*
 - 2) That *old serpent* (Genesis 3:1)
 - 3) The *Devil* (Greek *diabolos*: slanderer; false accuser)
 - 4) *Satan* means adversary (I Chronicles 21:1; Zechariah 3:1-2; I Peter 5:8)
 - 2.2 Be aware of his methods (12:9-10; II Corinthians 2:11).
 - 1) He deceives the whole world (12:9; John 8:44; II Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:1-4, 13-15; II Timothy 3:13; II John 7).
 - 2) He accuses the brethren day and night (12:10; Job 1-2).
 - 2.3 Believers are able to silence their accuser three ways (12:11).
 - 1) By trusting in the blood of the Lamb (I John 2:1-2)
 - Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan (Genesis 3:15; I John 3:8).
 - Jesus Christ has made us more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).
 - 2) By the word of their testimony (active evangelism and preaching; 1:9; 19:10)
 - 3) Through a willingness to sacrifice their lives (2:10, 13; Hebrews 10:32-35; 11:35-38)
 - Early Christians had complete commitment to Jesus Christ.
 - Modern Christians love life and fear death.

#17 The Dragon's Two Beasts

Introduction to Revelation 13

1. Satan is currently ruler of the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:5-7; John 12:31; 14:30; II Corinthians 4:4).
 - 1.1 He ruled through Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4, 12-14).
 - 1.2 He ruled through King Ethbaal of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:11-17).
 - 1.3 He will someday rule through the beast of the tribulation (Revelation 13:1; 12:3).
2. The beast of Revelation is often called the *antichrist* (against Christ; a rival Christ).
 - 2.1 This coming ruler is called a *beast* in Revelation, not the antichrist (13:1).
 - 2.2 The term antichrist is taken from the apostle John's epistles (I John 2:18, 22; 4:1-3; II John 7).
 - 2.3 Some refer to the false prophet as the antichrist because he portrays himself as a lamb (13:11).
 - 2.4 Paul refers to characteristics of both the beast and false prophet (II Thessalonians 2:1-9).
 - 1) Worship of the beast
 - 2) Miracles of the false prophet
3. Satan is a master counterfeiter.
 - 3.1 He will present a counterfeit of the trinity (16:13).
 - 1) The dragon will be a counterfeit of God the Father.
 - 2) The beast will be a counterfeit Christ.
 - 3) The false prophet will be a counterfeit of the Holy Ghost.
 - 3.2 He will perform counterfeit miracles to deceive the nations.
4. Many have speculated about the identity of the "antichrist" through the centuries.
 - 4.1 Judas Iscariot, who some say will be resurrected as the "son of perdition"
 - 4.2 Emperors of Rome
 - 4.3 The Pope of the Roman Catholic Church
 - 4.4 Napoleon of France
 - 4.5 Adolf Hitler of Germany
 - 4.6 Benito Mussolini of Italy
 - 4.7 Henry Kissinger, who served as Secretary of State for the United States

- 4.8 Saddam Hussein of Iraq
- 4.9 Communistic dictators
- 5. Note the two beastly leaders of the satanic kingdom of the tribulation.

Two Beasts

- 1. John saw a *beast* rise to political power (13:1-8).
 - 1.1 *Beast* refers to his beast-like character (Greek *therion*: a dangerous, wild animal).
 - 1) Evolutionists claim that humans have evolved from animals. They will get a beastly ruler.
 - 2) The Bible describes his evil character in various ways.
 - A vile person (Daniel 11:21)
 - That man of sin (II Thessalonians 2:3b)
 - The son of perdition (II Thessalonians 2:3b)
 - That Wicked (II Thessalonians 2:8)
 - 1.2 The beast will arise from the sea (13:1).
 - 1) The sea is symbolic of the masses of humanity (17:15; Isaiah 17:12-13).
 - 2) The sea sometimes represents agitation and turmoil (cf. Isaiah 57:20-21; James 1:6). The beast will come to power through political and economic trouble.
 - 3) The sea may refer to the region around the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 1.3 He will rule over a federation of ten kings (13:1b; 17:9-13). The earth may be divided into ten regions.
 - 1.4 The seven heads are blasphemous by receiving worship as God (13:1b).
 - 1.5 His kingdom will be a composite of all prior kingdoms (13:2a)
 - 1) The animals mentioned reveal characteristics of his kingdom.
 - A leopard speaks of swiftness in conquering.
 - A bear refers to strength and power.
 - A lion speaks of majesty and pride.
 - 2) Some suggest the animals represent modern empires.
 - The leopard represents the Nazi Empire of Hitler.
 - The bear represents the former Soviet Empire.
 - The lion represents the imperialism of the British Empire.

- 3) The beasts of Daniel are the proper Biblical interpretation (Daniel 7:3-8).
 - The lion represented Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar.
 - The bear refers to the Medo-Persian Empire of Cyrus.
 - The leopard refers to the Macedonian-Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great.
- 1.6 His power and authority will come from Satan (13:2b; 16:13-14).
 - 1) The beast will accept the offer that Jesus refused (Matthew 4:8-11).
 - 2) His coming is after the working of Satan (II Thessalonians 2:9).
- 1.7 He will be worshiped as God after an imitation resurrection (13:3-4, note *as it were*).
 - 1) Some speculate that the first "son of perdition," Judas Iscariot, is raised from the dead (John 13:27; 17:12; II Thessalonians 2:3).
 - 2) Some believe this refers to the revival of the Roman Empire.
 - 3) The passage indicates a counterfeit resurrection of the beast.
 - Some speculate that he is killed by the two witnesses (11:5).
 - Some believe he receives a deadly wound in battle or an assassination attempt (13:14b, *wound by a sword*).
 - 4) People will worship the beast, not just his empire (II Thessalonians 2:4).
- 1.8 The beast will defy the God of heaven (13:5-6; Daniel 7:8, 25).
 - 1) He will have the ability to move the world against God with his oratory skill.
 - 2) He will speak blasphemies against God (13:6).
- 1.9 God will permit him to persecute the saints of God (13:7; 20:4; Daniel 7:21, 25).
- 1.10 He will establish both political and religious power (13:7b, 8a).
2. The second beast will have religious power as a false prophet (13:11-18).
 - 2.1 This beast comes up from the earth (13:11a). This may refer to the pagan religious system of man.
 - 2.2 He will be a devilish John the Baptist (13:11b; cf. Matthew 7:15).
 - 1) He will appear to be a lamb (II Corinthians 11:13-15).
 - 2) He will speak as the dragon, Satan (John 8:44).
 - 2.3 He will have the same satanic power as the beast (13:12a).
 - 2.4 He promotes the worship of the beast (13:12).
 - 2.5 He performs miracles to deceive the multitudes (13:13-14; II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

These will be counterfeit miracles of the Holy Ghost (II Corinthians 12:12; cf. Exodus 7:10-12, 22; 8:7).

- 2.6 He will set up an image of the beast for all to worship (13:14b).
 - 1) He will give life to the image through the power of Satan (13:15a).
 - 2) Anyone who does not worship the image will face martyrdom (13:15b; Daniel 3).
- 2.7 He will enforce economic controls for the beast (13:16-18).
 - 1) All social classes will be forced to receive a mark *in* their right hand or *in* their forehead (13:16).
 - Modern translations change this to *on* the hand or forehead. Many in apostate churches may not recognize the mark because of using these corrupt bibles.
 - Some believe this will be microchip technology implanted in the hand or forehead.
 - A cashless system with an international currency will probably be established.
 - No one will be able to transact business without this mark (13:17).
 - Anyone who refuses the mark will be treated as an enemy of the global political, religious, and economic system.
 - 2) Those with wisdom and understanding will recognize the beast by his number (13:18).
 - Many alphabets have a numeric value applied to each letter.
 - It will not be possible to accurately identify the beast before this time.

Application of Truth

1. Remember that even ungodly governments have limitations (13:5-7; note the phrases *given unto him*).
2. Is your name written in the book of life through faith in the Lamb of God? (13:8)
3. Are you listening to the warnings of Scripture? (13:9; Matthew 24:23-25)
4. How is your patience and faith in times of tribulation? (13:10)
5. Do you desire wisdom and understanding in these last days? (13:18)

#18 Final Announcements of the End

Introduction to Revelation 14

1. The word *voice* is emphasized in this chapter (14:2, 7, 9, 13, 15; verse 18, *loud cry*).
2. In Revelation 14, John hears announcements concerning the end of the tribulation period.

Update on the 144,000

1. The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, stood on mount Sion with the 144,000 (14:1).
 - 1.1 These 144,000 Jews were sealed by God earlier in the tribulation period (14:1; 7:2-8; cf. 3:12).
 - 1.2 They join Jesus Christ on the heavenly mount Sion (Hebrews 12:22).
 - 1) John heard voices from *heaven* (14:2).
 - 2) They will sing *before the throne* (14:3a; 4:2-4).
 - 1.3 They were either martyred or raptured to heaven about the mid-point of the tribulation (note that they *were redeemed from the earth*, 14:3b).
2. The 144,000 lived exemplary lives (14:2-5).
 - 2.1 Christ-exalting music (14:2-3)
 - 2.2 Undeified conduct (14:4a; I Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)
 - 2.3 Consecration to Christ (14:4b; John 10:27)
 - 1) They will refuse to follow the beast and the false prophet.
 - 2) They will preach the gospel in both large cities and remote rural areas.
 - 2.4 Conversion unto God and the Lamb (14:4c)
 - 1) They will be redeemed from among men.
 - 2) They are the first-fruits of the spiritual harvest of the tribulation (Romans 11:25-27).
 - 2.5 Conversation that is without guile (14:5a, *guile*: deceit; falsehood; Zephaniah 3:13)
 - 1) They will speak with honesty and sincerity as they preach the gospel (II Corinthians 4:1-4).
 - 2) They will be a contrast to lies and deception of the beast and false prophet.
 - 2.6 Blameless character (14:5b, *without fault*: no impurity; without blemish)
 - 1) God is able to present them blameless before His glory (Jude 24).
 - 2) They will live differently from apostate teachers (II Peter 2:12-14).

Announcements of Coming Judgment

1. God in His mercy will send an angel to proclaim the everlasting gospel before the final judgments are poured out (14:6-7; Matthew 24:14).
 - 1.1 Every nation, tribe and ethnic group, language, and people group hears the gospel.
 - 1.2 The angel flies in the midst of the atmospheric heaven with a final appeal to repent (14:7).
 - 1) Fear God, not the beast.
 - 2) Glorify God as Judge.
 - 3) Worship God as Creator.
2. A second angel will announce the coming destruction of Babylon (14:8; Jeremiah 51:6-9).
 - 2.1 Babylon in Scripture refers to both a city and a religious and political system.
 - 2.2 The announcement is repeated for emphasis.
 - 2.3 The fulfillment of this is recorded in chapters seventeen and eighteen.
3. A third angel warns of damnation for pledging allegiance to the beast (14:9-13).
 - 3.1 Many will sell their soul to the dragon and the beast to be able to buy and sell (14:9).
 - 3.2 People will experience the outpouring of God's undiluted wrath (14:10a; Psalm 75:8; Jeremiah 25:15-17).
 - 3.3 Followers of the beast will be tormented with fire and brimstone (14:10b).
 - 1) They will be in the presence of the holy angels.
 - 2) They will be in the presence of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.
 - Unbelievers are often told that they will be separated from Christ forever if they are not saved.
 - As God, Jesus Christ is omnipresent (Psalm 139:8; Amos 9:2).
 - The unsaved will be separated from the *grace* of God forever, not His *presence*.
 - 3.4 The unsaved will never find relief from their suffering in hell (14:11).
 - 1) They will literally burn forever (14:11a).
 - There will be no annihilation.
 - There will be no temporary suffering in purgatory.
 - There will be no second chance to repent.
 - There will be no eventual salvation as universalism teaches.

- 2) They will find no rest day nor night (14:11b).
- 3.5 Believers will endure persecution because of this announcement (14:12-13).
 - 1) They will have the patience to keep the commands of God and the faith of Jesus (14:12).
 - 2) During the tribulation, death for the saints will be a release from persecution (14:13).
 - They will have *rest from their labours*.
 - They will be rewarded for their works (Hebrews 6:10).
4. Another angel announces the final harvesting of the earth (14:14-20).
 - 4.1 Jesus Christ made preparation for His return to earth (14:14, *sickle*: a pruning hook used in harvesting).
 - 4.2 The angel urges Christ to begin harvesting because the harvest is ripe (14:15-16, *ripe*: overripe; rotting; withered).
 - 4.3 Angels will assist Christ by gathering the nations together (14:17-20; Matthew 3:12; 13:24-30, 36-43).
 - 1) The nations will be gathered to Armageddon (16:16).
 - 2) Blood will cover an area almost two hundred miles (1,600 furlongs) about five feet deep (14:20; Isaiah 63:1-6; Joel 3:2, 9-14).

Application of Truth

1. Are you separating from the antichrist spirit and the Babylonian world system today?
2. Are you proclaiming the gospel to others while we still have an opportunity *before* the tribulation?
3. Will you be delivered from never-ending torment in the lake of fire?

#19 Seven Last Plagues of Wrath

Introduction to Revelation 15-16

1. Many preach about God's love but not His righteousness, holiness, and wrath.
2. A key word in these two chapters is *great* (Greek *megas*; English *mega*). These calamities will be intense.
3. The seven vials bring God's wrath to completion upon the earth (15:1).
 - 3.1 These *vials* were deep saucer-like cups, not small glass tubes (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15).
 - 3.2 In these plagues (calamities) God's wrath is finished (15:1b, *filled up*).
 - 3.3 The vials of God's wrath will continue to fill until the end of the tribulation (Genesis 15:16).
4. Revelation 15 gives the scene in heaven before the vials are poured out (15:1-8).
 - 4.1 The crystal sea of glass is mingled with fire (15:2a; 4:6; Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29).
 - 4.2 A multitude stands before God's throne on the sea of glass (15:2-4).
 - 1) Even though they were martyred, they were victorious over the beast (15:2; 12:11; 13:7; 20:4).
 - 2) They sing songs of praise to God (15:3-4). Note that they are not using drums and "contemporary Christian music!"
 - The song of Moses is a celebration of God's deliverance (Exodus 15:1-9; Deuteronomy 31:30 - 32:43).
 - The song of the Lamb is of redemption (Revelation 5:9-13).
 - 4.3 The most holy place of the heavenly temple is opened (15:5; 11:19).
 - 4.4 Seven angels will come out of the temple with the seven last plagues of wrath (15:6).
 - 4.5 One of the four living creatures (*beasts*; a different Greek word than 13:1) will distribute the seven golden vials of wrath to the angels (15:7).
 - 4.6 The heavenly temple will be filled with the glory of God (15:8). No man will be permitted in His presence (Exodus 40:34-35; II Chronicles 5:13-14; Psalm 76:7).
 - 4.7 The seven angels prepare to pour out the seven vials rapidly (16:1). The nature of the calamities indicate that they are poured out quickly near the end of the tribulation. People would not be able to live very long without water.

The Seven Last Plagues

1. Those who worship the beast will receive painful sores (16:2; Exodus 9:8-11).
 - 1.1 These sores are *noisome* and *grievous* (loathsome, troublesome, festering, ulcerated).
 - 1.2 These sores will cause men to audibly moan from the pain (*noise*).
 - 1.3 God will bring these sores upon them because of receiving the mark of the beast.
2. The sea will become as the blood of a dead man (16:3).
 - 2.1 Some suggest this is a "red tide" of microscopic red protozoans.
 - 2.2 Note that the sea will become *as the blood of a dead man*.
 - 2.3 Some believe this refers to only the Mediterranean Sea, but these seven judgments affect the entire earth.
 - 2.4 There will be a horrible stench from both the blood-like water and the dead sea life.
3. All sources of drinking water will be turned into blood (16:4-7; Exodus 7:19-21).
 - 3.1 All rivers and fountains of water are changed into literal blood (16:4).
 - 3.2 This judgment will be righteous retribution for the blood of the martyrs (16:5-7; Matthew 23:34-35).
 - 3.3 This third plague is an answer to prayer (6:9-11).
4. The heat of the sun will be intensified (16:8-9; Isaiah 30:26). True global warming!
 - 4.1 This judgment immediately follows a water shortage.
 - 4.2 Some suggest this may be caused by the sun (a star) using up its energy and emitting intense heat.
5. Thick darkness will engulf the kingdom of the beast (16:10-11; Exodus 10:21-23).
 - 5.1 The darkness is upon the *seat* of the beast, Jerusalem (16:10; II Thessalonians 2:4).
 - 5.2 They will experience severe pain (16:10b).
 - 1) From the sores and the burns from the sun
 - 2) Possibly from the *darkness which may be felt* (Exodus 10:21)
 - Hell is described as the blackness of darkness (Jude 13; Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
 - God may give them a taste of the hell they will experience.
6. The Euphrates River is dried up for the kings of the east (16:12-16).
 - 6.1 The Euphrates is 1,800 miles long and 3,600 feet wide in places.
 - 6.2 Note the plural *kings* of the east (16:12). This will probably be an alliance of China,

Iraq, Iran, nations of the Indian subcontinent, and nations of southeast Asia.

- 6.3 Unclean, devilish spirits will be used by God to gather the world to the battle of Armageddon (16:13-14, 16).
- 6.4 All of Palestine will become a battlefield.
7. Widespread calamities around the world will serve as God's "grand finale" (16:17-21).
 - 7.1 With this vial, God will announce, "It is done" (16:17).
 - 7.2 The greatest earthquake in the history of the earth will shake the entire planet (16:18-20).
 - 1) Jerusalem will be divided into three parts (16:19a).
 - 2) The cities of the world will crumble (16:19a).
 - 3) Babylon will be destroyed (16:19b; details given in Revelation 17-18).
 - 4) Every island will disappear (16:20a).
 - 5) Mountains will be flattened (16:20b).
 - 7.3 Large hailstones will fall to the earth (16:21).
 - 1) Some have suggested this may be caused by the rapid temperature changes between the fourth and fifth vials.
 - 2) A talent of silver was approximately one hundred pounds; a talent of gold was two hundred pounds.
 - 3) These hailstones will be one hundred pounds or more!

Application of Truth

1. How do you respond when trials come? Do you plead for God's mercy, or blaspheme God? (16:9, 11, 21)
2. All unbelievers will experience the *wrath* of God forever. Have you *repented* toward God and *believed* on the Lord Jesus Christ? (16:9) Are you hardening your heart toward God?
3. Are you staying alert spiritually and keeping yourself pure morally? (16:15)
4. Do you understand that God *remembers* violations of His law though He carries the execution of His judgment? (16:19; Ecclesiastes 8:11)

#20 Judgment of the Great Whore

Introduction to Revelation 17

1. Scripture seems to indicate three capital cities during the tribulation.
 - 1.1 Jerusalem will become the religious capital (II Thessalonians 2:4).
 - 1.2 Rome will initially be the political capital (Revelation 17).
 - 1.3 Babylon will be the economic capital (Revelation 18).
2. Revelation 17-18 describes God's judgment of the Babylonian system.
 - 2.1 Religious Babylon (17:1-18)
 - 2.2 Political Babylon (18:1-10)
 - 2.3 Economic Babylon (18:11-19)
3. The Babylonian system has been in existence since the time of Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9).
 - 3.1 The system was rooted in global rebellion against God from the beginning.
 - 1) Nimrod was the great-grandson of Noah.
 - 2) The name *Nimrod* means "Let us rebel," and he apparently was trained to lead the rebellion against God.
 - 3) Nimrod hunted down those who opposed his power and the global system.
 - He is described as a *mighty hunter before the Lord* (Genesis 10:9).
 - The beast of Revelation will declare war against the saints, hunting down anyone who opposes him (13:7).
 - 3.2 Babel tried to establish a political and religious unity (Genesis 11:4).
 - 1) They built a *city* to unite politically.
 - 2) They built a *tower* to unite their religion (a *ziggurat*: a pyramid-like temple dedicated to false gods, including the moon god of Islam today).
 - The religion of Babel was established after Nimrod's death.
 - Nimrod's widow (Semiramis) had a son named *Tammuz*. She claimed there was a miraculous conception (Genesis 3:15) to cover her immoral relationship.
 - She also claimed that Tammuz was a reincarnation of Nimrod.
 - Tammuz was killed while hunting wild boar, and his mother claimed that she brought him back to life.

- Forty days of weeping for Tammuz was observed by the people of Babel that corresponds to the season of Lent observed by Catholics and other religions (Ezekiel 8:14).
4. The religion of Babel spread to other cultures.
 - 4.1 Nimrod's widow was worshiped as the Queen of heaven.
 - 4.2 Mother-child worship became common after Nimrod's widow actually married her son Tammuz.
 - 1) Phoenicia: Ishtar (Ashtaroth) and Tammuz (Baal)
 - Easter eggs, rabbits, and other practices have their origin in pagan rituals in honor of Ishtar.
 - 2) Egypt: Isis and Osiris (Horus)
 - 3) Greece: Aphrodite and Eros
 - 4) Rome: Venus and Cupid
 - 5) Roman Catholic Church: Mary and Jesus
 - 4.2 Religious ritualism was established that included prostitution and feasts (see Ezekiel 8:13-16; Jeremiah 7:16-20; 44:15-19).
 5. Revelation seventeen describes the judgment on the *great whore*, Satan's corrupt counterfeit of the bride of Christ.

Identifying Satan's Apostate Religion

1. Satan's apostate religion is universal (17:1, 15).
 - 1.1 *Many waters* refers to *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*.
 - 1.2 The word *catholic* means "universal."
 - 1.3 The Catholic Church has practiced *inclusivism*, reaching out to many religions around the world.
2. Satan's apostate religion is immoral (17:2, *fornication*).
 - 2.1 Both kings and the inhabitants of the earth have been intoxicated with the wine of her *fornication*.
 - 2.2 *Fornication* includes both moral impurity and idolatry.
 - 1) The Roman Catholic leadership has proven to be immoral.
 - Many Catholic priests violate their vow of celibacy for fornication.
 - More than one billion dollars has been paid out by the Roman

- Catholic Church to settle lawsuits for the sexual misconduct of its priests.
- Sodomites are now entering the Catholic priesthood.
- 2) The Roman church "Christianized" the pagan idols of the Roman Empire.
- 2.3 Satan's wicked religious system is a direct contrast to the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27; II Corinthians 11:1-2).
3. Satan's apostate religion has great political power (17:3, 18).
- 3.1 Jesus said there must be a distinction between the things of God and the government (Matthew 22:15-22).
- 3.2 The Roman Catholic Church was formed in the fourth century when Roman Emperor Constantine the Great made Christianity a state religion.
- 3.3 The Roman church has possessed great political power and influence.
- 1) Pope Gregory VII was called "king of kings."
- In 1077, King Henry VI was forbidden to rule over Italy and Germany.
 - The pope threatened to excommunicate anyone who served the king.
 - King Henry spent three days barefoot outside the castle in the middle of the winter before he was permitted to express his repentance.
- 2) Pope Gregory XI (fourteenth century) declared papal dominion over the kingdoms of the world.
- 3) Pope Pius XI put Mussolini into power over Italy and aided Hitler in Germany.
- 4) The world's rulers have bowed before the pope.
- 3.4 The apostate church will ride upon (control) the beast during the first part of the tribulation (17:3).
4. Satan's apostate religion is blasphemous (17:3b, *full of names of blasphemy*).
- 4.1 The pope claims many titles that are blasphemous.
- 1) Pontifex Maximus (greatest bridge-maker)
- This title was given to the chief priest of the old Babylonian religion.
 - This title was also assumed by the Roman emperors.

- 2) Priest after the order of Melchisadec (Hebrews 5:6-10)
 - 3) Holy Father (John 17:11)
 - 4) Holy See
 - 5) The Vicar of Christ
 - A vicar is one who stands in the place of another.
 - Jesus Christ said He was sending the Holy Ghost as His representative on earth.
- 4.2 Catholics exalt Mary to be greater than Jesus Christ.
- 1) Mary is called the "Mother of God" by the Catholic Church.
 - 2) The Catholic Church teaches that Mary had an immaculate conception.
 - 3) Catholics teach that Mary had an assumption to heaven without dying.
 - 4) Mary is called the Co-Redemptress with Jesus Christ and is sometimes hanging on the cross with Jesus.
 - 5) Mary is called the "Queen of heaven."
5. Satan's apostate religion has seven heads and ten horns (17:3b).
- 5.1 Seven heads refer to seven mountains (17:9).
- 1) At least fifty-one cities claim to be built on seven hills or mountains, including the following cities.
 - San Francisco, California
 - Moscow, Russia
 - Istanbul, Turkey
 - Jerusalem, Israel
 - Mecca, Saudi Arabia
 - Tehran, Iran
 - 2) Rome, Italy, was called the "City of Seven Hills" (*septem montes*) and is probably the city in Revelation 17 (17:18).
- 5.2 The seven heads may refer to seven kingdoms (17:10; cf. Daniel 2:31-35).
- 1) Five kingdoms have fallen.
 - Egypt (1600-1200 B.C.)
 - Assyria (900-600 B.C.)
 - Babylon (606-538 B.C.)

- Medo-Persia (538-333 B.C.)
 - Greece (333-63 B.C.)
- 2) One was in power during the time of John: Rome until A.D. 476.
 - 3) The *other not yet come* is the kingdom of the beast during the tribulation (17:11).
- 5.3 The ten horns are ten kings who have not received a kingdom as yet (17:12-13).
- 1) Many have suggested the European Union is a fulfillment of this, but there are now more than ten member nations.
 - 2) The Club of Rome, formed in 1968, has plans for establishing *ten* regulatory regions in the world.
 - The United States and Canada (The United States Association of the Club of Rome was established in 1976 to gradually shut down the United States economy.)
 - Western Europe and Turkey
 - Japan
 - Australia and South Africa
 - Eastern Europe, Russia, Mongolia, and Korea
 - Mexico and South America
 - North Africa and the Middle East
 - Middle Africa
 - The Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia
 - China
- 5.4 The seven heads and ten horns reveal the Satanic ties of this religion (12:3).
6. Satan's apostate religion is arrayed in purple and scarlet (17:4a).
- 6.1 Purple and scarlet speaks of royalty (Matthew 27:28; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5; note: this is not a contradiction in Scripture. The robe placed upon Jesus obviously had both colors in it).
 - 6.2 The Roman Catholic hierarchy wears scarlet and purple.
 - 1) Bishops wear purple robes.
 - 2) Cardinals dress in scarlet robes.
7. Satan's apostate religion has great wealth (17:4b, *decked with gold...precious stones...pearls*)

- 7.1 Jesuit Malachi Martin estimated Rome's world-wide value of properties and financial resources to be three hundred billion dollars (*Rich Church, Poor Church*).
- 7.2 The Roman Catholic Church has gained its wealth through several sources.
 - 1) Forced tithes based on income
 - 2) Selling of indulgences
 - 3) The Inquisition (the Catholic Church took the property of those it persecuted)
- 7.3 Many false teachers live in luxury while their followers live in poverty.
- 8. Satan's apostate religion has a golden chalice (17:4c).
 - 8.1 The Catholic Church teaches the false doctrine of transubstantiation (the elements are converted into the actual body and blood of Christ, a form of cannibalism).
 - 8.2 They resacrifice Christ each time they observe the mass (see Hebrews 7:27; 9:28; 10:1-14, *once*).
 - 8.3 The Roman Church uses a *golden chalice* in the celebration of the mass.
- 9. Satan's apostate religion is *the mother of harlots and abominations* (17:5).
 - 9.1 Every false religion has its origin in the religion of Babel.
 - 9.2 The Roman Catholic Church is often referred to as the "Mother Church."
 - 9.3 Protestant churches have their origin in the Catholic Church.
 - 1) Eastern Orthodox churches (including Greek and national orthodox churches like the Russian Orthodox Church)
 - 2) Lutheran churches
 - 3) Presbyterian and Reformed churches
 - 4) Charismatic churches
 - 5) Congregational churches
 - 6) Anglican churches (The Church of England)
 - 7) Methodist churches
 - 9.4 Many apostate Protestant denominations are reuniting with Rome.
 - 9.5 True Baptist churches have separated from the apostate religious system since the ministry of Christ.
- 10. Satan's apostate religion persecutes the true saints of God (17:6).
 - 10.1 Both Catholics and Protestants have persecuted Baptists.
 - 10.2 Some estimate that fifty million were martyred during the Catholic Inquisition from

A.D. 606 through the mid-nineteenth century (John Dowling, *History of Romanism*).

11. God will move the ten kings to destroy the Babylonian religious system and city (17:16-17).
 - 11.1 When the world begins worshiping the beast as a god, they will no longer need this religious city and system (17:16).
 - 11.2 God will use wicked kings to perform His perfect will (17:17).

Application of Truth

1. Do you understand that salvation is not found in a religion? Do you have a saving *relationship* with Jesus Christ through faith in His finished work?
2. Are you separating from false religions and the ecumenical movement? (II Corinthians 6:14-18)
3. Are you praying for spiritual discernment in these last days of many departing from Bible doctrine?

#21 The Coming Economic Crisis

Introduction to Revelation 18:1-19:6

1. Revelation 18 describes the destruction of commercial Babylon.
2. A *city* is destroyed, not just a *system* (*city* is mentioned seven times, 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21).
3. Many suggestions have been made regarding the city mentioned in chapter eighteen.
 - 3.1 Jerusalem
 - 3.2 Rome, Italy
 - 3.3 New York City and the United States
 - 1) New York City is home to several global political agencies.
 - Council on Foreign Relations
 - United Nations
 - Trilateral Commission
 - 2) New York City is a global economic trade center.
 - Wall Street
 - World Trade Center
 - 3) No prophecy mentions America (Isaiah 18:1, *land shadowing with wings*, refers to Ethiopia, not the United States).
 - 3.4 Babylon in modern-day Iraq
 - 1) Old Testament prophecies concerning a violent overthrow of Babylon have not been fulfilled (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 50:35-51:64).
 - The ancient city of Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire but not destroyed.
 - Babylon flourished during the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great. He planned to make it his eastern capital.
 - Napoleon of France planned to rebuild Babylon and ordered surveys and maps done of Babylon.
 - 2) The apostle Peter sent greetings from the church at Babylon (I Peter 5:13).
 - 3) The city of Al Hillah was built from the ruins of Babylon about A.D. 1100.
 - 4) An estimated 364,000 people lived in Al Hillah in 1998.
 - 5) Saddam Hussein, who claimed to be a reincarnation of Nebuchadnezzar, spent one billion dollars toward the rebuilding of Babylon.

- 6) Large oil reserves in Iraq and the Middle East may contribute to a rebuilt Babylon becoming the economic capital of the tribulation period.
- 7) The Euphrates River is mentioned twice in Revelation (9:14; 16:12).
- 8) No figurative language is used in Revelation eighteen regarding the city (compare 11:8).

Destruction of Babylon

1. A mighty angel announces the overthrow of Babylon (18:1-3).
 - 1.1 The angel had great power and glory (18:1).
 - 1.2 *Fallen* is repeated for emphasis and certainty (18:2a).
 - 1.3 Babylon will become the habitation of demonic spirits (18:2b).
 - 1.4 Babylon will be destroyed because of its depravity (18:3).
 - 1) Fornication: including moral impurity and idolatry
 - 2) Delicacies: sensuality; careless ease; affluence; strength of wealth; the economy
 - 1.5 Different classes of people have participated in the depravity of Babylon (18:3).
 - 1) All nations
 - 2) Kings: political leaders
 - 3) Merchants: commercial leaders
2. God warns His people to separate from the Babylonian system (18:4-8; Jeremiah 51:6, 45).
 - 2.1 Believers should not participate in the sins of Babylon (18:4).
 - 1) Materialism
 - 2) Sensuality
 - 3) Moral impurity
 - 4) Idolatry
 - 2.2 If God's people do not separate, they will experience the same plagues (18:4b).
 - 2.3 God's judgment is cumulative (18:5).
 - 1) Babylon's sins reach unto heaven (Jeremiah 51:9; cf. Genesis 11:4, tower built to heaven).
 - 2) God does not forget or overlook iniquities (Revelation 16:19).
 - 2.4 Babylon will receive double retribution (18:6; Exodus 22:4, 7, 9).
 - 2.5 Babylon will receive judgment that is appropriate for her pride and self-confidence

(18:7; Isaiah 47:7-11).

- 1) Pride and self-exaltation (18:7a, *she hath glorified herself*; Jeremiah 50:29-32)
- 2) Pleasure and self-indulgence (18:7a, *lived deliciously*: sensuously; luxuriously)
- 3) Presumption and self-confidence (18:7b)

2.6 Babylon's judgment will be sudden (18:8, 10, 17, 19, *one day ... one hour*).

3. There will be opposite reactions to the destruction of Babylon (18:9-20).

3.1 The people of this world will have overwhelming sorrow (18:9-19; note the repeat of *Alas, alas*, 10, 16, 19).

- 1) The kings of the earth shall bewail and lament the fall of Babylon (18:9-10).
- 2) The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn because people will no longer buy their merchandise (18:11-17a).
 - Precious metals and expensive jewelry (18:12a, *gold, silver, precious stones, pearls*)
 - Expensive fashions (18:12b, *fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet*)
 - Expensive building materials for mansions (18:12b, *thyine wood*: a dark, fragrant wood used for expensive furniture and cabinets; *vessels of ivory, most precious wood, brass, iron, marble*)
 - Exotic spices, perfumes, and cosmetics (18:13a, *cinnamon, odours*: perfumed ointment, *ointments, frankincense*)
 - Fine dining (18:13, *wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, beasts, sheep*)
 - Expensive transportation (18:13b, *horses, and chariots*)
 - Slaves and the souls of people (18:13b)
- 3) Those in the shipping industry will cry out with weeping and wailing (18:17b-19).

3.2 All of heaven will rejoice (18:20; 19:1-6).

4. The overthrow of Babylon will be sudden, violent, and complete (18:21-24).

4.1 A mighty angel casts a great millstone into the sea to picture the violent overthrow of Babylon (18:21; Jeremiah 51:61-64).

4.2 Note how many times *no more at all* is repeated to express the completeness of

Babylon's destruction (18:21b-23).

- 1) Entertainment (18:22a; Genesis 4:21; Daniel 3:4)
- 2) Technology (18:22b, *craft*: Greek *techne*, English *technology*; Genesis 4:22)
- 3) Industry (18:22c, *millstone*)
- 4) The night life (18:23a, *light of a candle*)
- 5) Marriage celebrations (18:23b)
- 6) Pharmaceuticals (18:23c, *sorceries*: Greek *pharmakeia*, mind-altering drugs; world drug trade)

4.3 Babylon will be violently overthrown because it has blood on its hands (18:24).

Application of Truth (18:4-5)

1. Live for eternal values, not temporary pleasures (Matthew 6:19-21; 16:26).
2. Love God, not money or material possessions (Matthew 6:24).
3. Love God, not the world (I John 2:15-17).
4. Learn to be content (Philippians 4:11-12; I Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5-6; Luke 12:13-21).
5. Look for the new heavens and earth (II Peter 3:10-14).

#22 *The Marriage of the Lamb*

Introduction to Revelation 19

1. All heaven begins rejoicing after the destruction of Babylon (18:20; 19:1, *after these things*).
 - 1.1 Salvation, glory, honour, and power (19:1)
 - 1.2 Severity (19:2-4)
 - 1.3 Sovereignty (19:5-6)
2. Revelation 19 describes the "mystery" marriage of the church to the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:7-10)

1. Unlike many modern weddings, Jesus Christ is the center of attention, not the bride (19:7, *marriage of the Lamb*, 10). Note: In the Old Testament, Israel is called the wife of Jehovah (Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20).
2. There is disagreement as to who will make up the "bride" of Christ.
 - 2.1 Some say it is the "universal" church (a Catholic and Protestant view).
 - 2.2 Many teach that the bride of Christ consists of all believers from Pentecost to the rapture (a Protestant view).
 - 2.3 Some believe that only saved, baptized members of New Testament Baptist churches make up the bride ("Baptist Bride" view).
 - 2.4 All true believers (not just Baptists) from the time Jesus Christ established the first church until the rapture of the saints will be part of the bride of Christ.
3. An understanding of Jewish weddings is helpful to interpreting Revelation 19 (Genesis 24; Matthew 22:1-10).
 - 3.1 The betrothal period established a legally binding marriage (see Matthew 1:18-19).
 - 1) Arrangements for the marriage were made by the fathers of the groom and bride (Genesis 24:1-3).
 - 2) The groom was required to pay a dowry (see Acts 20:28).
 - 3) Preparation of their future home occurred during the betrothal period (see John 14:1-3).
 - 4) The future bride prepared herself for her wedding day (see 19:7b-8).
 - New Testament saints have a responsibility to prepare for the marriage (19:7b, *his wife hath made herself ready*; I John 3:2-3).

- The bride will be arrayed in the glory of God (19:8a; see Mark 9:3; Philippians 3:20-21).
 - The *righteousness of the saints* includes both imputed righteousness from Christ and righteous living.
 - Final preparation of the bride will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12; I Corinthians 3:11-17; 4:5).
- 5) The betrothal period for this future wedding is the current New Testament church age.
- 3.2 The presentation of the bride to the groom (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-30)
- 1) In Jewish culture, the wedding procession went from the bride's house to the house of the bridegroom.
 - 2) The rapture will be our procession from earth to our new home, New Jerusalem.
- 3.3 The wedding feast lasted seven days (John 2:1-10).
- 1) The friend of the bridegroom (groomsman) organized the wedding celebration (see John 3:28-29).
 - 2) There will be many invited guests at the wedding feast of the Lamb (19:9; Hebrews 12:22-24).
 - An innumerable company of angels
 - The general assembly is a different group from the church (*and church*).
 - Old Testament and tribulation saints (*spirits of just men made perfect*)

Application of Truth

1. Do you spend time every day praising and thanking God?
2. Are you watchfully preparing for the coming of the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13)?
 - 2.1 The parable of the ten virgins applies to New Testament saints, not the future kingdom age.
 - 2.2 Half of the virgins were not prepared, indicating that half of the church age saints will not be ready for Christ's coming.
 - 2.3 Many have an outward form of Christianity, but they do not have the oil of the Holy Ghost (II Timothy 3:5).

#23 *The Valley of Decision*

Introduction to Revelation 19:11-21

1. World peace will not be possible until the Prince of Peace rules with a rod of iron (Isaiah 9:6-7).
 - 1.1 The world has only had 292 years of peace since 3600 B.C.
 - 1.2 There have been 14,531 wars (and counting!).
 - 1.3 An estimated 3.64 billion people have been killed in these wars.
 - 1.4 The total value of the destruction would create a golden belt around the world more than ninety-seven miles (156 kilometers) wide and thirty-three feet (10 meters) thick.
 - 1.5 Only sixteen of 1,656 arms races have not ended in war, and these have often caused national economic collapse.
(Canadian Army Journal, as quoted in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 1571).
2. The Battle of Armageddon will be the final war before the 1,000-year reign of Christ.
 - 2.1 This battle is called a harvesting of the earth (Revelation 14:14-20; Isaiah 63:1-6).
 - 2.2 Military alliances will form in the campaigns of the tribulation period.
 - 1) An Islamic alliance of nations (Ezekiel 38-39)
 - 2) An eastern alliance from Southeast Asia (Revelation 16:12, *kings of the east*)
 - 3) A western alliance led by the beast of Revelation thirteen
 - 2.3 Demonic spirits will draw the nations to the Battle of Armageddon (16:13-14, 16).
3. Multitudes will be brought to the valley of decision (Joel 3:2, 9-16).

The Battle of Armageddon (19:11-21)

1. Jesus Christ returns to earth during the massive military campaign in Israel (19:11-14).
 - 1.1 Christ will be seated upon a white horse, symbolic of a conquering warrior (19:11a).
 - 1.2 He is called Faithful and True.
 - 1.3 He judges and makes war in righteousness (19:11b; cf. Exodus 15:3).
 - 1.4 He has a burning, piercing look of judgment (19:12a).
 - 1.5 He will have many crowns upon His head (19:12a, *crowns*: Greek *diadema*; English *diadems*, representing triumph, glory, and deity).
 - 1.6 He has a name known only to Him (19:12b; Judges 13:18, *secret*).
 - 1.7 He will be clothed in a vesture dipped in blood (19:13a).

- 1) Many believe this is the splattering of blood from His enemies, but it is dipped in blood *before* the destruction of His enemies.
 - 2) The word *dipped* is from a Greek word (*bapto*) meaning it was immersed in blood.
 - 3) This pictures His own shed blood which gives Him the authority to shed man's blood.
- 1.8 His name is called the Word of God (19:13b; John 1:1).
- 1.9 Armies in heaven follow Christ on white horses (19:14, note the plural).
- 1) Innumerable angels (Matthew 25:31; II Thessalonians 1:7-10)
 - 2) Glorified saints (Jude 14-15)
2. Jesus Christ will take charge of the world's kingdoms with authority (19:15-16).
- 2.1 He will defeat the nations with His spoken word (19:15a; 1:16; Isaiah 11:4).
- 1) The arresting soldiers fell to the ground when Jesus spoke (John 18:4-6).
 - 2) His written word has power (Ephesians 6:17).
 - 3) Jesus spoke creation into existence (Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6-9).
- 2.2 He will rule the nations with absolute authority (19:15b, *rod of iron*).
- 2.3 His name is *KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS* (19:16).
3. Flesh-eating birds will be called to this *supper of the great God* (19:17-18, 21).
- 3.1 The flesh of the armies of the world will consume away (Zechariah 14:12-15).
- 3.2 There will be a massive slaughter of the nations of the earth (Isaiah 34:1-6; Jeremiah 25:30-33; Zephaniah 3:8).
- 3.3 It will take seven months to clean up after just one of the battles (Ezekiel 39:11-20).
4. This war will begin as an attack on Israel and end as an united attack against the Son of God (19:19-20; 17:14).
- 4.1 Jesus Christ will return to earth in defense of Israel (Psalm 83; Isaiah 31:4-5; Zechariah 14:1-4).
- 4.2 The beast and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire (19:20).

Application of Truth

1. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ alone?
2. Do you understand the futility of rebellion against the Lord? (Psalm 2)

#24 *The Great White Throne*

Introduction to Revelation 20

1. Many preachers neglect the important doctrine of judgment to come (Acts 24:24-25).
2. There are two key judgments in the last days.
 - 2.1 The judgment seat of Christ to judge the works of believers.
 - 2.2 The great white throne judgment for all unbelievers.

Events Before the Great White Throne Judgment

1. Satan will be bound for one thousand years (20:1-3; Romans 16:20).
 - 1.1 An angel is sent from heaven to bind Satan (20:1).
 - 1) This angel has the key to the bottomless pit (9:1; Greek *abyssos*: a place of confinement; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4).
 - 2) The angel carries a great chain in his hand.
 - 1.2 Satan will be powerless to resist the binding of the chain (20:2).
 - 1.3 Satan's initial jail term will be one thousand years (20:3).
2. The Millennial Kingdom of Christ will be established (20:4-6).
 - 2.1 Glorified saints will have delegated authority from Christ (20:4; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10).
 - 2.2 Saints who are faithful in martyrdom will be rewarded with authority (20:4b).
 - 1) They will be *beheaded* for their witness and for the Word of God.
 - 2) They will refuse to worship the beast or his image.
 - 3) They will not receive the mark of the beast.
 - 2.3 There are two resurrections at the end of the age (20:5-6; John 5:28-29).
 - 1) Unbelievers will be raised at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (20:5a).
 - 2) All true believers will be included in the first resurrection (20:5b).
 - Christ is *the firstfruits* (I Corinthians 15:20-26).
 - Old and New Testament saints will be *the gathering* of the first resurrection.
 - Tribulation and Millennial saints will be *the gleanings*.
 - 3) Those who have a part in the first resurrection are blessed and holy (20:6).
 - The second death will have no power over them.
 - They shall be priests of God and of Christ.

- They will reign with Christ one thousand years.
3. Satan will lead a final rebellion against the authority of Jesus Christ (20:7-10).
 - 3.1 Satan will be released from his prison at the end of the kingdom (20:7).
 - 3.2 He will immediately begin deceiving the nations throughout the entire earth (20:8).
 - 3.3 Multitudes will only have outward conformity to the rule of Christ (20:8b; Zechariah 14:16-19).
 - 3.4 The enemies of Christ will surround Jerusalem before they are consumed by fire from God (20:9).
 - 3.5 Satan will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented for ever and ever (20:10; Matthew 25:41).

The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)

1. John saw a great white throne (20:11).
 - 1.1 This throne has no rainbow of mercy (4:2-3; Psalm 9:7-8; 97:2-3).
 - 1.2 Jesus Christ will be seated upon this throne of judgment (John 5:22-23; Acts 17:30-31).
 - 1.3 Earth and heaven flee from the *face* of the Son of God (20:11).
 - 1) People will try to hide from the face of the Lamb (cf. 6:15-17).
 - 2) The heavens and the earth will be dissolved (II Peter 3:7, 10).
 - 3) There will be no place for them to hide (20:11b).
2. Social status will be of no help in this judgment (20:12b, *dead, small and great*).
 - 2.1 The least known individual (*small*) will not be overlooked.
 - 2.2 The rich and the famous (*great*) will not receive special favors from the Judge.
 - 2.3 They all stand before God to await their sentencing.
3. Every mouth will be stopped as guilt is proven (Romans 1:20; 3:19-20).
 - 3.1 Books (plural) will be opened (20:12b).
 - 1) The written Word of God (John 12:48)
 - 2) The books of works
 - Every work, good or bad (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:6)
 - Secrets (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Luke 12:1-3; Romans 2:16)
 - Words (Matthew 12:34-37)
 - Thoughts and motives (Hebrews 4:12-13)

- 3) The book of life: a record of all believers (Luke 10:20)
- 3.2 There will be degrees of punishment given according to their works (20:13; Luke 12:47-48; 20:46-47; Matthew 11:20-24; 23:14; Romans 2:11-12).
- 3.3 Believers will stand as witnesses at the Great White Throne.
 - 1) The men of Nineveh will condemn those who did not believe Jesus (Matthew 12:41).
 - 2) The saints will judge the world and angels (I Corinthians 6:2).
4. Unbelievers will be *cast* into the lake of fire (20:14-15).
 - 4.1 Hell is a temporary place of torment (Luke 16:19-31).
 - 4.2 *Second death* indicates that people will feel like they are dying forever.
 - 4.3 The unsaved will be separated from the grace of God forever.
 - 4.4 The book of life is the final record to determine eternal destiny (20:15).

Application of Truth

1. Are you living in the victory over Satan that Jesus Christ has already provided? (Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15; I John 3:8).
2. Are you faithfully serving Christ *now* to prepare for reigning with Christ *later* (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-24)?
3. Are you *living* for the Lord so that you would be willing *die* for Him (20:4)?
4. Where will you stand at the Great White Throne judgment?
 - 4.1 Will you stand as a witness with God?
 - 4.2 Will you stand as a condemned unbeliever?
 - 1) There will be no exceptions or second chances (Hebrews 9:27).
 - 2) There will be no annihilation (as the cults teach).
 - 3) There will be no purgatory (as the Catholics teach).
 - 4) There will be no universal salvation (that everyone will eventually be saved).

#25 *Life in a Perfect Place*

Introduction to Revelation 21:1-22:5

1. The Lord has been preparing a new home for the saints (John 14:1-3; Hebrews 12:22-23).
2. The apostle John was given an opportunity to see our future home (21:1-2).

God's New Creation

1. John saw a new heaven and earth (21:1).
 - 1.1 The first heaven and earth will pass away (21:1b; Matthew 24:35; II Peter 3:10-13).
 - 1) The Gap Theory of creation is error: *the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.*
 - The Gap Theory states that an original creation was destroyed before the Genesis one account of creation.
 - There are *two* heavens and earths, not *three*.
 - 2) The foundations of the earth were established forever (Psalm 104:5).
 - Some suggest that the old earth "flees" to an uninhabited part of the universe (see 20:11).
 - The old sin-cursed earth will probably be renovated and restored to its original condition (Romans 8:19-23; Psalm 102:25-26; Hebrews 1:10-12).
 - 1.2 There will be no more sea to divide the nations (21:1b).
2. John saw new Jerusalem (21:2-27).
 - 2.1 New Jerusalem is a place of holiness (21:2, the *holy* city; 21:27).
 - 2.2 New Jerusalem is a new city (21:2, *new* Jerusalem; 21:5).
 - 2.3 New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven (21:2b).
 - 1) Some believe it will remain above the earth during the Millennial Kingdom.
 - 2) New Testament saints will only spend a short time in heaven.
 - 2.4 New Jerusalem is a place of beauty (21:2b).
 - 1) Note that it is *as a bride* adorned for her husband.
 - 2) New Jerusalem is the future home of the bride of Christ (21:9).
 - 2.5 New Jerusalem will be the earthly tabernacle of God (21:3, 22).
 - 1) The presence of God

- 2) Fellowship with God face to face (Exodus 33:11a)
- 2.6 New Jerusalem will be a place a great joy and comfort (21:4; Isaiah 65:17-19).
- 1) God will wipe away all tears after the great white throne judgment (21:4a).
 - 2) There will be no more death, sorrow, or crying (21:4a; Isaiah 25:8).
 - 3) There will be no more pain (21:4b).
- 2.7 New Jerusalem will be a place of complete satisfaction (21:6; 22:17; Matthew 5:6).
- 2.8 New Jerusalem will have a restricted access (21:8; 22:14-15).
- 1) All unsaved individuals will be excluded from new Jerusalem and will be in the lake of fire forever.
 - The *fearful*: those who do not become a Christian because they are afraid of what their family or friends will think, of missing happiness and fun in life, or of the beast during the tribulation (Proverbs 29:25; I John 4:18)
 - The *unbelieving*: atheists, agnostics, and hypocrites who give a false profession of faith in Christ
 - The *abominable*: those who are polluted, detestable, abhorrent, and disgusting before a holy God (Leviticus 18:22-24, 30; Deuteronomy 18:9-13; 22:5; 25:13-16; 27:15; Proverbs 6:16-19)
 - *Murderers*: taking the life of another human being and includes abortion and euthanasia (Exodus 20:13)
 - *Whoremongers*: translated from a Greek word (*pornos*) referring to all sexual activity outside of marriage (Exodus 20:14; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 13:4)
 - *Sorcerers*: translated from a Greek word (*pharmakeus*) that speaks of drug use in practices of the occult and the magical arts
 - *Idolaters*: idolatry includes anything or anyone taking the place God should have in a person's life, including images, people, money, and things (Exodus 20:3-5; Ezekiel 14:4; Colossians 3:5)
 - *All liars*: all forms of lying including exaggeration, flattery, false witness, deception, and hypocrisy are forms of lying (22:15b; John 8:44)

- *Dogs*: men with an impure mind (22:15; Philippians 3:2)
- 2) Only the saints of God will have access to new Jerusalem (22:14-15).
- 2.9 New Jerusalem will be a glorious city (21:10-11, 23-26).
- 1) The city will reflect the light of God's glory (21:11, 23; 22:5a; Matthew 17:2; Acts 9:1-3; 22:6, 11; I Timothy 6:15-16; I John 1:5).
 - 2) The city will be made of pure gold like clear glass that will sparkle as crystal (21:18).
 - 3) The glory and honour of the nations will come into the city (21:24-26).
- 2.10 New Jerusalem will be a large city (21:12-21).
- 1) The wall is *great and high* (21:12a).
 - The wall has twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles on them (21:14; Ephesians 2:20-22).
 - The wall measured 144 cubits (21:17; 216 feet; 67 meters).
 - The foundations are garnished with precious stones (21:19-20). The foundations will display the brilliant colors of the rainbow.
 - 2) There are three large gates on each side of the city.
 - Honorary guardian angels will stand at each of the twelve gates (21:12-13).
 - Each gate is named with a tribe of Israel (21:12b).
 - Each gate is one pearl (21:21a).
 - 3) The city will be enormous (21:15-16).
 - The length, breadth, and the height are equal (21:16).
 - A furlong is about one-eighth of a mile; twelve thousand furlongs is approximately 1,500 miles.
 - The passage does not indicate if it is 12,000 furlongs around the city or on each side (21:16). Twelve thousand furlongs square would cover half of the continental United States.
 - The passage does not indicate if the city is a cube or a pyramid.
- 2.11 New Jerusalem will be a delightful place (22:1-5).
- 1) The crystal clear river of life will flow from God's throne (22:1).
 - 2) The tree of life will grow in the midst of the street and along the river (22:2).

- These trees will bear a different fruit each month.
 - The leaves will have a *therapeutic healing* for the nations (Greek *therapeian*).
- 3) The curse upon creation will be removed (22:3a; Genesis 3:17-19).
 - 4) Believers will enjoy serving God the Father and the Lamb (22:3b).
 - 5) Believers will see God's face (22:4a).
 - 6) Believers will have His name in their foreheads (22:4b).
 - 7) Believers will reign with the Lord *for ever and ever* (22:5b).

Application of Truth

1. Are your affections focused on things above instead of earthly things? (Colossians 3:1-2)
2. Are you looking forward to the heavenly city by faith? (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16)
3. Are you living a righteous life in preparation for God's new creation? (II Peter 3:11-14)
4. Have you made your "reservation" for the heavenly city through faith in Jesus Christ? (Revelation 21:7; cf. I John 5:4-5)

#26 *Christ is Coming Quickly!*

Introduction to Revelation 22:6-21

1. Several times Jesus Christ emphasized that His coming would happen quickly (22:7a, 12a, 20a).
2. Christ does not tell us when He is coming or we would not prepare until the last moment.
3. Notice several ways to be ready for the coming of Christ.

Readiness for Christ's Coming

1. Keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book (22:6-7).
 - 1.1 Prophecy is *faithful and true* (22:6a; II Peter 1:16-21).
 - 1.2 The Lord God of the holy prophets sent an angel to signify the message of Revelation (22:6b; 1:1-2).
 - 1.3 The things of Revelation *must shortly be done* (22:6b).
 - 1) God is not bound by time as we are (II Peter 3:3-9).
 - 2) The events will be sudden and quick when they occur.
 - 3) The events of prophecy are *imminent*: they could happen at any moment (22:7a).
 - 4) There is a blessing to those who keep the sayings of prophecy (22:7b; 1:3).
 - The word *sayings* is translated from the Greek word *logos* which means word.
 - Generally it refers to the verbally inspired Word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17).
 - There must be personal application and obedience to the truth.
 - The truth of prophecy should change your life, not just inform.
2. Worship God alone (22:8-9).
 - 2.1 John was awed by what he saw and heard (22:8a).
 - 2.2 John misdirected his worship toward the messenger (22:8b).
 - 1) Some worship angels.
 - 2) Some exalt men of God.
 - John was the last apostle of Jesus Christ.
 - John was not greater than any other saint of God (1:9).

3. Prepare now for eternity (22:10-17). Notice several reasons why:
 - 3.1 The fulfillment of prophecy is *at hand* (22:10).
 - 1) John was told not to seal up the revelation (22:10a; Daniel 12:4, 9).
 - The prophecy of Revelation was to be accessible to the saints.
 - Prophecy is meant to be understood and proclaimed.
 - 2) There is nothing that must be fulfilled before the rapture of the saints.
 - 3.2 Change is impossible after death (22:11).
 - 1) After death, there are no second chances to make things right.
 - 2) Your condition at death will determine your permanent character.
 - He who is unjust and filthy will remain in that condition forever.
 - He who is righteous and holy (through the merits of Jesus Christ) will remain in that condition forever.
 - 3.3 Christ will reward His servants (22:12-13).
 - 1) Note that His rewards are *with him* (22:12b).
 - The opportunity to receive rewards will be ended at His coming.
 - *Rewards* refer to wages or compensation for services performed (see Hebrews 6:10).
 - Each one will be rewarded individually according to their works.
 - 2) Some believers will be ashamed before the Lord at His coming (I John 2:28).
 - 3.4 Blessings await those who are obedient to the gospel (22:14-15).
 - 1) Doing His commandments is not about works salvation (Romans 3:20).
 - 2) The first step of obedience is obeying the gospel (22:14; Romans 10:16; II Thessalonians 1:8).
 - 3) Those who are unsaved will be outside new Jerusalem (22:15).
 - 3.5 Churches have been told (22:16).
 - 1) Churches have been given the message of Revelation (22:16a).
 - 2) Christ has the authority to demand obedience (22:16b).
 - He is both the root (origin) and offspring (descendent) of David (Isaiah 11:1).
 - He is the bright and morning star (2:28; Numbers 24:17).
 - 3.6 The invitation is still open to all (22:17; Matthew 11:28-30).

- 1) Through conviction, the Spirit says, "Come."
 - 2) Through evangelism, the bride says, "Come." (II Corinthians 5:18-21)
 - 3) Those who hear say, "Come." (Romans 10:17)
 - 4) Those who are spiritually thirsty are invited to "Come." (John 7:37; Matthew 5:6).
 - 5) Whosoever will can take the water of life freely.
 - This refutes the teaching of Calvinists (irresistible grace; limited atonement; election of some to salvation).
 - This requires an individual response.
4. Remain true to the Word of God (22:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32).
- 4.1 Christ warns those who *add* to His words (22:18; Proverbs 30:5-6).
- 1) Roman Catholic leaders added the apocryphal books to the Word of God in 1546.
 - 2) Cults add their heretical writings to the Bible.
 - The Book of Mormon was added by Joseph Smith.
 - Charles Russell and other false teachers of the Jehovah's Witnesses have added their unbiblical teachings to the Bible.
 - Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy added *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* to the Word of God.
 - 3) Charismatics add supposed visions and revelations to the completed Scriptures.
 - 4) Some Baptist preachers add things not found in the Bible.
- 4.2 Christ warns those who take away from His words (22:19; Genesis 3:1-6).
- 1) Some diminish the authority and credibility of individual words.
 - Many deny the preservation of individual words (Psalm 12:6-7).
 - Some claim there are mistranslated words in the King James Bible. ("This word can be better translated as...")
 - 2) Modern perversions of the Word of God omit words and entire verses from the Word of God.
 - 3) Modern translators use dynamic equivalency in their translations rather than a word-for-word translation (II Corinthians 2:17; Jeremiah 23:36).

- The New International Version (NIV) preface says, "...they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation."
 - All modern perversions are based on the corrupted Westcott and Hort manuscripts.
- 4) Tampering with God's words gives evidence of unbelief (22:19b).
5. Look for Christ with eager expectation (22:20).
- 5.1 Expect Christ to come suddenly at any moment (22:20a).
- 5.2 If you love the Lord, you will long for His coming (II Timothy 4:7-8).
6. Rest in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (22:21).
- 6.1 Since this was addressed to believers, this is not grace for salvation.
- 6.2 It is the grace of God that changes a believer (I Corinthians 15:9-10).
- 6.3 Believers need grace to endure the persecution of living for Christ in these last days.

Application of Truth

Christ is coming! Are you ready?

1. Salvation: repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Increased service for the Lord