

## LESSON TWENTY-FIVE:

# The Book of Revelation

### Introduction:

We come now to the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. This particular book has drawn much attention throughout history and many have ventured to teach from it. Unhappily, many of those who have undertaken to study this book have themselves done insufficient study of the rest of Scripture. This book is one that cannot be readily understood except in the light of all that God has revealed in His Word. It is clearly given to those who *know* the Word of God and can interpret it *in the light of all that God has taught elsewhere*. (Quite appropriately it is the final book). Therefore, when reading this lesson, it will aid your understanding to look up the references provided.

This is, of course, a principle which is not unique in the study of this one book, but applies to all portions of Scripture. We have noted before the important principle of Bible interpretation; namely, that every Scripture passage must be interpreted in the light of the whole of Scripture. This is sometimes called *the analogy of Scripture*. God's Word is a unit and what is taught in one portion is not contradictory to what is taught elsewhere.

The Book of Revelation is particularly susceptible to misinterpretation because it is highly symbolic, with the symbols being understood only in the light of their use elsewhere in Scripture. To ignore this and to let one's mind run wild in seeking to interpret Revelation leads to all kinds of problems. We have already looked at some other portions of Scripture which were symbolic, such as portions of Ezekiel, portions of Daniel, the Song of Songs, and portions of Zechariah. We noted, then, that the symbols used must be interpreted in the light of what is taught elsewhere in Scripture and not simply by our own imagination.

We might ask why the Book of Revelation was written using so much symbolism and so many figures which are difficult to understand. A look at the

background of the times, which we have already studied to some extent, will be helpful in answering this.

When the gospel first began to be preached by the Christians throughout the Roman Empire, the Romans seemed little concerned about what was being preached and apparently regarded Christianity as a form of Judaism with which they were already familiar. In fact, as we traced the missionary journeys of Paul, we noted that from time to time the Roman officials were actually able to protect Christians from unfair treatment. Paul did not hesitate to call on the Romans, exercising every right he had as a Roman citizen.

But as time went on, the Romans became more hostile toward Christianity. Christians began to be persecuted, first locally, then finally in an empire-wide persecution which probably began under the leadership of Nero. Christians in Rome no doubt provoked the wrath of the Roman emperors as they preached the truth which ran counter to the evils of Rome, just as the wrath of the people of Sodom was built up against Lot who lived counter to the standards of Sodom.

Tacitus, a Roman writer of the First Century after Christ, described Rome as follows: "All things vile and shameful flow from there." At this time, Rome had a population of about one million.

Paul's first arrest in Rome was more because of the Jews of Jerusalem than the Romans. They were quite lenient toward him. But later, in the latter career of Nero, Paul was imprisoned again (at the time he was writing the second letter to Timothy) and this time, Paul died at the hands of the Romans.

In his later years, Nero became increasingly vicious in his dealings with all around him, killing his brother, his mother, several of his wives, his teacher, and many more. It is generally understood that he also killed both Paul and Peter at Rome. In the end, he killed himself as well. He is considered the originator of what developed into the empire-wide persecution of the church which began to increase as the First Century drew to a close.

The leading Roman writers of that period, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny were all strongly

anti-Christian. Roman sentiment against the church increased as the Jews rebelled against Rome; and in A.D. 70, the Romans under the leadership of Titus, destroyed Jerusalem when Vespasian, Titus' father, ruled Rome. At some time toward the end of the First Century, John was imprisoned by the Romans on the isle of Patmos, in the Mediterranean Sea west of Miletus (See the map in this lesson). It is generally agreed that he was a prisoner of Rome on Patmos in the time of the persecutions of Domitian, sometime around A.D. 95. John would be quite old now; and we suspect that this was his last writing, though that is not certain.

For a long time, John had served the churches of Asia Minor centering his work in Ephesus. This is known primarily through tradition, not the Scriptures. However, in the Book of Revelation, he shows a considerable familiarity with those churches; and Jesus, through him, addresses seven of the churches of Asia Minor directly (see the map).

It was important that a final message to the churches be distributed throughout Christendom in this time when the First Century was about to run out and when the life of the last of the apostles was about to end on earth. But it was also a time of great danger when things said openly about Rome and the kingdoms of this world would immediately raise the ire of Rome and endanger those found possessing such literature.

Therefore, the Lord spoke through John using language and terms which would not be clear to those who did not understand the rest of Scripture but would be clear to those who were grounded in God's Word. To the rest, it would sound like a book of confusion saying very little but containing fanciful imaginative tales of no import and of no threat to Rome. It may well have been the same kind of situation that existed in the days of Israel when it was necessary to write the book, the Song of Songs, in a similarly cryptic way.

Thus, at a time when it seemed to many believers that the Roman Empire would wipe the Church off the face of the earth, it was imperative that the Christians see that such was not to be; but that rather, in the end, the triumph would go to God's people — no matter how bad times seemed to be at the

present. It was a message from God to encourage God's people to hope for the triumph which the Lord had promised from the beginning (see Gen. 3:15) — a triumph in which the seed of the woman, the children of God, would triumph over the seed of the serpent and over Satan himself. The Book of Revelation, then, is basically a final reiteration of the promise given and taught so many times; namely, that in Christ, the people of God would triumph and see all of their enemies and Christ's enemies overthrown finally and forever.

Some have sought to interpret Revelation as addressed solely to the Christians of the First Century and therefore, pertaining only to them in all of its symbolism. Others have seen it as speaking only to the last days of the church in history and therefore, of no real significance to any but those living in the last times. Still others see it as progressive and giving to us a running commentary on the history of the church as it develops, so that the earliest chapters would pertain to events in the earliest centuries of the church, the middle chapters speaking of events to occur approximately midway in the church's history, and final chapters dealing with the last things.

The approach which we will take is that the Book is symbolic and tells in symbolic language of the struggle of the church with the world and Satan throughout its history, culminating in the ultimate victory of Christ and his church over the world and Satan. Thus, its truths would be applicable to every generation of Christians in helping them to see the issues in the struggle in which every generation of Christians is engaged with Satan (the god of this world) and his followers (all of those who have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ).

## **What Do We Find Here?**

### **THE BOOK OF REVELATION:**

#### **The Struggle Between the Kingdoms of This World and the Kingdom of God, Which, in the End, Will Triumph**

The Book of Revelation opens with the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor. In his introduction to the whole book, John says that the

matters dealt with in this book will come to pass soon (v.1). This informs us, at the start, that the book is not all about things that will be happening long in the future and which, therefore, are of no importance to the readers in John's day. This helps us to see that the message here is timely for every generation of Christians.

John identifies himself as the writer (v.1) and states that he is recording here faithfully that which he has received from the Lord by the agency of angels (1:1,2). He further declares that those who read this message and who take it to heart will be blessed (v.3). Once more, he reminds us that the book is about things that are *happening* even as he writes: "the time is at hand."

### **Salutation: (1:4-7)**

The message is particularly addressed to the seven churches specifically mentioned which were, at the time of writing, in existence in Asia Minor. They would, therefore, have been well-known to John (v.4). It is a message from the Triune God who is here indicated by the Three Persons mentioned in the salutation: the *Eternal Father* (He who is, who was, and who is to come); the *Holy Spirit* (The Seven Spirits before His throne — we shall note that the number seven is often used in this book to represent that which is whole or complete, i.e. perfect); and *Jesus Christ*, who is described here as the faithful witness and first born, the ruler of the nations, in accord with the words of Psalm 2:7-9.

He follows with a great tribute to Jesus who loved us and loosed us from our sin, making us to be a kingdom of priests, in accord with the words of Exodus 19 and I Peter 2:9 (Revelation 1:6). The salutation appropriately closes with a reminder of the hope of Christ's return, at which time, we are taught, judgment against the world will occur (v.7).

### **Vision 1:**

#### **The Vision of Christ in the Midst of the Churches (1:1-3:22)**

The messages to the seven churches of Asia which are contained within the second and third chapters, are introduced in the remainder of the first chapter (1:8-20).

The revealer of the messages to follow is described as the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, i.e., the first and the last, the Eternal God, who is Almighty) (v.8).

John tells of the first revelation which was given to him and the instigation of this Book of Revelation (vs.9ff.). He relates that he was on the isle of Patmos for the gospel's sake, probably meaning that he was imprisoned there because of his preaching (v.9). On the Lord's day (in other words, "the day of the Lord" often referenced throughout Scripture) he was guided by the Spirit of God and given a series of revelations which are subsequently recorded in this Book (vs.10,11).

*Vision one* begins with verse twelve. John sees seven golden candlesticks and in the midst of them one who is described in terms of his glory. Standing out here is the appearance of the figure with white hair, feet like burnished brass, and a mighty voice. In his right hand he holds seven stars and from his mouth protrudes a sword, two-edged and sharp (1:12-16). It was a frightening picture to behold and overwhelmed John (v.17). It will be interpreted symbolically.

At this point, the figure identifies himself in terms that make clear that it was Jesus whom John saw, not Jesus as John remembered him, but in symbolic vision (vs.17,18).

Jesus begins to teach John what he is to write (vs.18,20). He speaks of the symbols which John has seen in the vision as "a mystery." He explains that the seven stars seen in Christ's right hand *represent* the angels of the seven churches to whom the message is addressed and that the seven candlesticks *represent* the seven churches themselves. Thus, plainly, Jesus is telling John that the vision he has seen, and apparently the visions yet to be shown, are symbolic visions —

meaning that what is seen is representative of truth to be taught and is not to be taken literally. Christ is here communicating truth to John through the symbols seen in the visions. This truth will be in accord with the Word of God already revealed.

Looking back at the vision further, we can see, then, that the whiteness of his hair, the flame of fire describing his eyes, and the burnished brass which describes his feet all point to the purity of Christ. Fire, whiteness, and burnished brass all connote that which has been purified and is tried by fire (Isa. 1:18; 6:6,7). The sword protruding from his mouth recalls the words of Hebrews 4:12, and symbolizes the Word of God that comes forth from Christ. The keys in his hand are to be seen as the keys of the Kingdom of God which unlock the doors of death and hell (Matt. 16:19).

The whole vision, then, tells John and the church that Christ is in the midst of his churches and that he holds standards of purity before his church, examining the church through His Word to know its purity. The keys remind John, and all of us, that the church's testimony is a matter of life and death for those to whom they go, therefore, it must be a pure church and have a pure witness — as Christ is pure.

### **The Messages to the Seven Churches (chs. 2, 3)**

The messages to the seven churches of Asia revealed that those churches were typical of the churches of which we have learned already in reading the epistles of Paul and the others. They reveal that some of the churches were striving to be pure before the Lord but were often persecuted for their efforts. Others were quite impure and in a critical condition, in danger of becoming useless to the Lord. Some of these were wealthy and seemingly prosperous in the eyes of men, but not to the Lord. Still others were of a mixed character, having some members who were faithful and some who were not. Some of these were growing and seemingly vital churches but had problems within that threatened their future usefulness to the Lord. We shall look at them below, one by one.

#### *1. The church at Ephesus (2:1-7)*

The messages are all similar in form. Each begins with a description of Christ the speaker, in terms of the vision just seen by John in chapter one. Each message contains exhortations and promises with provisions for the fulfilling of those promises.

Christ emphasizes here his presence in the midst of the churches in accord with the vision John saw and in accord with his promise to be with his churches always (v.1). The church in Ephesus is a strongly conservative church and very active, being faithful in doctrine (vs.2-3). However, the church has been departing from its first love, which probably means its love of the Lord. Though active and prosperous, the church is not motivated in all that it does by the love of God and by its reciprocal love for Him. It always matters to the Lord why we serve Him, not just that we serve Him (vs.4,5). This church is apt at dealing with heresy, but negligent in spiritual fruit (v.6). The promise to this church is in terms of partaking in eternal life — a concern which John had expressed in his first epistle as well. The tree of life mentioned here is further explained in the last chapter (Rev. 22).

#### *2. The church at Smyrna (2:8-11)*

Christ mentions to these his victory over death (v.8). This church is faithful to the Lord and, because of this, is suffering persecution. Christ wants them to know that he knows. He encourages them to endure this persecution and remain faithful — much as Peter does to those to whom he writes who are suffering in his day for the faith (vs.9-10). As he has conquered death, he is now prepared to offer them the crown of life (life with Christ after this trial is over) (v.10). Again, in conclusion, he promises them victory over the second death (eternal death; a term which will be later dealt with in Rev. 20).

#### *3. The church at Pergamum (2:12-17)*

Here emphasis is on the Word of God protruding from Christ's mouth. The church is mixed. On the one hand there are in it those who have been faithful. They are apparently in the majority (v.13). Christ recognizes how difficult it is to remain pure in

the world, where Satan rules in the hearts of unbelievers. But on the other hand, they are tolerant of those who teach false doctrines and this threatens the future of that church (vs.14-16). Thus, these have ignored the words of John in his first epistle and have become tolerant of those who live evilly and remain in the church. Christ threatens to bring the Word of God against them if they do not repent. In this impure church, Christ holds out hope that many will obey him and become identified with the true believers in the church and the true remnant who remain faithful to Christ — a matter of the distinction between the visible church, containing impurities, and between the true church, which is invisible to men but known to the Lord (v.17).

#### 4. *The church at Thyatira (2:18-29)*

This also is a mixed church. Christ mentions here his eyes which see all that is going on. He sees some who are faithful but others who are going after false doctrines and who are living more like pagans while in the church. Christ will not remove this heretic who is leading astray so many and who is described in terms of one of the most evil women in Israel's history, Jezebel. We assume that she is symbolic of those who, though in the church are not of it, as John said in his first epistle (vs.20-23). Apparently the numbers of those going after the heresy are increasing. Jesus calls on the faithful ones simply to hold out against the vile teaching (vs. 24, 25). He reminds them that if they are faithful — though they may seem to be losing now — in the end they will rule with Christ over the nations, reigning with him (vs.25ff.). This may be a commentary on the words of Psalm two pertaining to the rule of Christ.

#### 5. *The church at Sardis (3:1-6)*

This church is altogether unsatisfactory to Christ who reminds them that he is the one controlling their future (holding them in his hands). The church appears to be prosperous (alive) but to Christ it is dead (v.1). Christ finds none of its works satisfactory (grounded in his word which alone can make it perfect in God's sight — cf. II Tim. 3:16,17).

Nevertheless, there are a few in Sardis who are seeking to remain pure in doctrine and practice (v.4). He emphasizes the *white garments* of believers to stress their contrasting purity as over against the majority who have departed to impurity.

Though the names of the rest may remain on the rolls of the church, only these will have their names on the roll that counts: God's book of life (v.5).

#### 6. *The church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)*

Christ is pleased with this church. He reminds them by the keys he has that they have a vital mission to perform on earth. He has opened the door for them in spite of their weakness (v.8). They have kept his word and he promises to them a great place in His Kingdom forever (vs.9-12).

#### 7. *The church at Laodicea (3:14-22)*

This church is also unsatisfactory to the Lord. He reminds them of his own faithfulness. He is the *Amen* which means that he is the source of all truth and faithfulness (v. 14). They suppose that they are a strong and rich church; but Jesus sees them full of compromise and like lukewarm water, not fit to be used for any good thing (vs.15-17). Christ calls them to be reconciled to him before it is too late (v.18), in a way reminiscent of his words through Isaiah (Isa. 55:1ff.).

Christ offers to have fellowship with them provided they repent (vs.19,20). Following these messages there begins the series of visions given to John which carry through the rest of the book. The visions seem to focus, in succession, on increasing detail in terms of the revelation. We have all seen pictures which were blown up to give greater detail. We can think of this series of visions to John as increasingly detailed pictures of some aspect of the vision just given. Below, I have sought to chart how this works.

*Vision two* (ch. 4) is a blow up of that opened door which Christ mentioned in *vision one* (3:8). *Vision three* (ch. 5) is a blow up of the worthy God mentioned in vision two (4:11). *Vision four* (chs. 6-11) is a blow up of the opening of the book mentioned in vision three (5:1). *Vision five* (chs. 12-16) is a blow up of the interlude mentioned in vision four (10:1-11:14). *Vision*

six (chs.17,18) is a blow up of the fall of the great city mentioned in 16:19-21. *Vision seven* (chs. 19-22) is a blow up of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and the final triumph of God's Kingdom mentioned in 18:19, 20.

The following chart, then, gives to us this telescopic view of Revelation and will be the guideline to our study.

**VISION ONE:** *Christ in the Midst of His Churches* (1:1-3:22)

**VISION TWO:** *Vision of the Opened Door*

— detail of 3:8 (ch. 4).

**VISION THREE:** *Vision of the Closed Book*

— detail of 4:11 (ch. 5)

**VISION FOUR:** *Vision of the Opened Seals*

— detail of 5:1 (chs. 6-11)

**VISION FIVE:** *Visions of the Struggle of the Church with Satan and the World*

— detail of 10:1-11:14 (chs. 12-16)

**VISION SIX:** *Vision of the Fall of Babylon*

— detail of 16:19-21 (chs. 17, 18)

**VISION SEVEN:** *Vision of the End of the World and a Glimpse into Eternity*

— detail of 18:19, 20 (chs. 19-22)

*Vision Two: The Vision of the Opened Door (detail of 3:8) — ch. 4*

John is invited to see a glimpse of heaven as God has prepared it and purposed it for His people (v.1). In accord with the words of Ephesians 1:4, God has purposed to have a people to be in His presence: holy, without blemish, in a bond of love. Here, John is shown the presence in heaven of *the Father*, portrayed as one sitting on a throne (vs.2,3) (cf. Isa. 6:1ff.). *The church* is there, represented by 24 elders who reign with God (v.4) The number 24 here, as elsewhere, is indicative of the *twelve* tribes (symbolic of the Old Testament Church) and the twelve apostles (symbolic of the New Testament Church). The number twelve is quite familiar to readers of Scripture both in the Old and the New Testaments. Note too that they are arrayed in white, the symbol of those who have been cleansed

by the blood of Christ (3:4, 18). *The Holy Spirit* is also there, indicated by the seven lamps (the seven Spirits of God, the Holy — perfect, complete — Spirit) (v.5). Finally, *Christ, the redeemer of the church* is there, indicated by the four living creatures (vs.7-8). You may wish to compare the vision recorded here with the words of Ezekiel 1:4-10, pertaining to the four living creatures. Note also the comments from our OT Survey on Ezekiel.

The conclusion that the four living creatures symbolize Jesus in his redemptive work is as follows: *the lion* identifies Jesus as coming from the tribe of Judah (v.7; cf. 5:5); *the calf*, a sacrificial animal, identifies Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins (Isa. 53); *the man* identifies Jesus as the son of man, descended from men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6,7); and *the flying eagle* identifies Jesus as the Lord of the Old Testament (Ex. 19:4) and as the continuing protector of the church (Isa. 40:31; Rev. 12:14). The Christ, then, leads heaven in worship of Almighty God (4:9-11). God is declared to be worthy of all the glory, honor and power. He is the originator of all and the redeemer of all.

*Vision Three: The Vision of the Closed Book (detail of 4:11, the worthy God) — ch. 5*

God, in His glory, holds a book which is sealed. Subsequent chapters will show to us that the book contains God's unfolding plan for the redemption of men and the judgment of the world. Only Christ who is truly God and truly man is worthy (see 4:11) to open the book (vs.2-5). The *lion* of David (see 4:7) is also the *lamb* of God (v.6) (see 4:7 — the calf — another sacrificial animal). Here, the glory and humility of Christ are knitted together, something which most Jews in Jesus' days and since have refused to see. Only by his laying aside his glory (the lion) and taking on him the form of a man (the lamb of God) (see 4:7) was he able to redeem men and thus to unfold God's plan of redemption (5:7-10). It is clear that the same glory and praise accorded to God Almighty in chapter four is here accorded to Jesus, the Lamb of God (5:11-14).

This is a highly symbolic vision, but we have sought to understand it, not by our imagination, but by the solid Word of God. The vision says that Christ

alone is able to redeem sinners and that he was willing to lay aside his glory to do this — laying down his life for us (cf. Phil. 2:5-11, which teaches the same truth).

*Vision Four: The Vision of the Opened Seals (detail of 5:1) — chs. 6-11*

*Seals 1-4 (6:1-8)*. The Lamb and the four living creatures work together in the opening of the first four seals. These seals are quite similar to a vision given to Zechariah (Zech. 1:7-11) (6:1-8). Both in Zechariah and here, the four horsemen seem to portray the various forces that are at work on earth. The one with the crown on the *white* horse, who goes forth to conquer (6:1-2) reminds us of 3:21, where Christ is the one who conquers (cf. also 19:11ff.). The second horse, *red*, takes peace from the earth and his color apparently signifies shed blood (vs.3-4). The third horse, *black*, indicates a time of scarcity of needed foods, though a time of the abundance of luxuries (vs.5-6). The final horse, *pale*, indicates death that spreads over the earth due to various plagues and afflictions (vs.7-8).

Here we have, in symbolic form, the forces that are brought to bear on the world in which men live, simultaneously. These seals, in the form of four horsemen, symbolize four simultaneous occurrences in man's history as they occur throughout the history of the world from John's time until the end. The *first* represents *Christ going forth to win a people for God* from the world. The *second* represents the *ravages of war* throughout history. The *third* represents the *injustices of men to men* such as social injustice (symbolizing how there is a scarcity of necessities, forcing the poor to get poorer while the rich can increase their luxuries which are abundant). The *fourth* symbolizes forces by which God *judges different parts of humanity* at different times: by war, famine, pestilence and wild beasts (Compare Ezek, 14:21, where these same plagues are mentioned as God's judgment. See also II Samuel 24:13).

*Seal 5 (6:9-11)*. While history on earth goes on as portrayed in the first four seals, seal five shows that *meantime, in heaven*, those of Christ's who have already died for the faith cry out for history to end and the righteous to be avenged by the Lord. They ask how

long history (so described as in 6:1-8) should go on. Christ's answer is that it must go on until all of God's children for whom Christ died have fulfilled their course on earth (till all are saved).

*Seal 6 (6:12-17)*. This seal, the sixth and near the last, tells of that which must happen near the end. It is in terms of frightful events on earth near the end of time in much the same way Christ also taught (see Luke 13:4ff; Matt. 24). It is the carrying out of the wrath on the nations of the world as God brings history to a close, much in the way the Lord predicted in Psalm 2.

But before the great day of wrath comes, all of God's children must be saved and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (7:1-17) (cf. Eph. 1:13,14). Therefore, the angels of God's wrath are commanded to hold back the final judgment until *all* of God's children have been sealed (vs.1-3). The total number sealed is *144,000* (v.4). This number is the result of the multiplication of twelve times twelve times *1,000*. We have seen earlier that the two figures 12 derive from the symbolic church of God in the Old and New Testaments (see Rev. 4:4 and our discussion). The number *1,000* is used both in the Old and New Testaments for an indefinite, innumerable figure (Ps. 90:4; 50:10; Isa. 60:22; Mic. 5:2; 6:7; II Pet. 3:8). The vision makes plain that not an exact number is intended but a great multitude *without number*, as the Lord had promised Abraham concerning his seed (7:9). The number 144,000 indicates, therefore, the completeness of the church which, in this context, is important. The point is that *the end* will not come to history and man on earth until the very last of God's children have been sealed.

Those so sealed are those washed in the blood of the lamb (v.14) who serve and reign with Christ (v.15). Much of what we read here is also taught in other portions of Scripture (Matt. 24:21, Ezk. 37:27; Isa. 54:2, 3; Psa. 2; Psa. 23; Isa. 25:8).

*Seal 7 (8:1-11:19)*. This seal, the last, is itself blown up in detail to show the sounding of the seven trumpets of the last judgment of God on men (8:1,2). The incense, indicating the prayers of the saints, has reference to those prayers mentioned in 6:10. The mention of them here would signify that finally, the Lord is about to

answer those prayers and avenge the shed blood of God's children on earth (8:3-5).

The *first four trumpets*, as the first four seals, are grouped together (8:1-12). These apparently represent the massive judgment of God on the earth in which great numbers of men shall die at one time, by direct judgment of God from heaven. The picture given here is similar to Christ's description of the last days (Matt. 24:15-22).

After this breathtaking scene, there is a brief interlude in which a voice is heard crying out "woe" three times (v.13).

The *fifth trumpet* (9:1-12) which is described as the first woe (see 9:12), apparently represents Satan's evil activity in the last days: destructive and vicious but under God's control. Believers are still in the world (9:4). Satan is elsewhere clearly identified with the abyss (Luke 8:31; Rev. 11:7; 20:3). Later, we are taught that in the last days Satan will appear in great destructive power (Rev. 20:7ff. cf. the man of sin — II Thess. 2:1ff.). Thus, Satan's power which had been checked until the last days, will, in that time, be released to do his evil on earth in a way exceeding his activity before.

The *sixth trumpet* (9:13-21), called the second woe (11:14), indicates heavenly power which is released in these same last days. The judgments are described in terms similar to the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (9:18). Though men on earth will know in those days that the judgment is from God, yet, they will refuse to repent and believe in Him for the most part (9:20,21).

There follows a *brief interlude* (10:1-11:14). This interlude precedes the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal. When the seventh trumpet of the seventh angel does sound, then the end will be upon men (10:5-7). But before the end, John is shown a little book which has been opened (10:2). John is told to take and eat it (v.8). He does so and learns that though it was sweet to his taste it made his stomach bitter (vs.9,10). The application of the lesson taught to John here is that he is compelled to preach God's Word over and over to the nations of the earth (v.11).

Thus, the Lord shows to John that the end and the final judgment cannot come until the work of the church in carrying out the great commission is completed in God's view. Until the end comes, believers, represented by John here, must declare God's truth to those to whom Christ had sent them (Acts 1:8). That gospel, though sweet to them, will also be a bitter gospel as they begin to suffer because of it — just as Peter had taught in his two letters (cf. also Ezek 2:8; 3:1-3; Jer. 15:16). Thus, John and we, as Paul, seeing these revelations, can say that knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (II Cor. 5:11).

Chapter 11, gives to us first a picture of the struggle of the church against evil in the world throughout her history. The duration of that struggle is represented as 42 months (11:1,2). the number 42 is the product of 7 x 6. If we see the number "7" as indicative of completeness, then "6" would indicate that which is incomplete, or the amount of time falling just short of the final moment. Remember, we have not yet come, in the revelation given so far, to the final or seventh trumpet of the seventh seal. In terms of days, the number 42 months gives us the figure 1,260 days, a number that will come up shortly (12:6).

The struggle between the church and the world of Satan is here represented in terms of two witnesses of God who, after their faithful witness, are wounded by Satan (the beast from the abyss), but who are finally raised up by God (11:3-13). Several things here recall the words of Zechariah, chapter 4. The picture given indicates that the two witnesses (the witnesses for Christ in the world) will, in the latter days, seem to be overcome by the power of Satan — a thing for which the world will rejoice (11:10). But the Lord has the final answer and, in the end, it will be the witnesses who survive when the city of this world is judged (vs.12,13).

The *seventh trumpet* of the seventh seal brings the final judgment of God on the world. Immediately after the witnesses for Christ on the earth are resurrected (11:12), God calls for the final judgment of sinners and of Satan (11:15-19). History is now ended. God's promise given first in Genesis 3:15, is now fully

kept. Satan is vanquished (11:15) and all of heaven, including the church, rejoices (11:16ff.).

The seventh seal, therefore, in symbolic terms, has told us that as the day of judgment grows closer, increasingly terrible things will occur on earth. The witness of God's children on earth will continue to the end. They will seemingly be overwhelmed by the world and put to silence, but Christ will come before they are completely vanquished and will raise up his own, judging the rest finally and completely. This is quite similar to what Jesus teaches about the last days (see Matt. 24) and what Paul teaches (see II Thess. 2, II Tim. 4) and what Peter also teaches (see II Pet. 2, 3). In the Old Testament, Daniel also speaks similarly of the last days (Dan. 12).

*Vision Five: The Visions of the Struggle between the Church and Satan in the World, throughout History (detail of the interlude; 10:1—11:14) — chs. 12-16*

The next section of Revelation really contains several visions, but I have grouped them together because they deal with the same truth. The interlude in the last vision (10:1-11:14), speaks of the church's task to proclaim the gospel and keep on proclaiming it until the final day of judgment. Here, the struggle that results from fulfilling that mission is more fully dealt with as Satan undertakes, through his followers on earth — the enemies of Christ and his followers — to hinder the proclamation of the gospel on earth. We shall now look at these visions one by one.

### *1. The vision of the woman and the dragon (ch. 12).*

The woman (v.1) signifies the church, having a crown with twelve stars (symbolic of the church, as we have seen before; 4:4; 7:4). In accord with the promise that the Christ should be born of a woman (Gen. 3:15, Isa. 7:14) she bears a child, who is the Christ (v.2).

The dragon (v.3) is clearly Satan (see 12:9). He seeks to devour the child to be born of the woman (v.4), just as, indeed, Satan, through Herod the Great, sought to kill Jesus, and later, as Satan through temptations, sought to get Jesus to compromise with him and still later did incite men to crucify Jesus. The babe born is clearly identified with the Son of God (v.5; cf. Psalm 2). When he has ascended to God, then

the woman — the church — left on earth, is required to remain in the world, nurtured by the Lord, throughout history (v.6). Note here that the time of her endurance is 1,260 days, the equal of the 42 months given in 11:2. Thus, the time of the woman's testimony in the world is the same as that of the two witnesses of chapter 11. We can conclude that they are talking about the same time. When Christ ascended, then Satan was expelled from heaven from the presence of God, so that he could no longer accuse God's children (12:7-12). Satan is earth-bound, bound by the power of Christ, but this does not mean that he is ineffective on earth. Christ speaks of his binding Satan (Matt. 12:28, 29) and also of seeing Satan fallen from heaven (Luke 10:18). And it is Paul who rejoices that now, in the victory which Christ has won for his saints, there is no longer anyone who can accuse them before God (Rom. 8:31-39). Evidently before (for example in Job's time), Satan did have access to heaven and did accuse those who believed in the Lord, but no more!

The rest of this vision indicates the hostility between Satan and the woman (the church). She is persecuted (v.13) but is also nurtured by the Lord (v.14) (cf. Ex. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; Rev. 4:7). Here, "a time, and times, and a half time" would be equivalent to the 42 months or the 1,260 days. This term is used by Daniel to represent the period of history of the church in the world (Dan. 12:7). The closing words of this vision indicate the continuing struggle between Satan and the church throughout history (v.17).

### *2. The vision of the Dragon and the Beast (13:1-10).*

The beast with the crowns on his head represents the kingdoms of this world, under the control of Satan (the dragon) (13:1-2). The beast is seen elsewhere as representative of the kingdoms of this world (Dan. 7). The beast, the world's kingdoms which seemed to be defeated, rises again and the world gives to the beast all glory (vs.3-6). Like Satan, the beast is full of blasphemy and makes war with the church (vs.6-8). This would be comparable to what we saw in the last vision.

Yet, God's people on earth are not to fight the beast with the weapons of this world (men's swords),

but with the sword of the Spirit, as we have seen before (v.10).

### 3. *The Vision of the First and the Second Beast (13:11-18).*

The other beast, which appears here, is described as looking like a *lamb*, but speaking as the *dragon* (the devil). This indicates, then, a beast which looks outwardly like the church (Christ-like) but, when one listens to what it says, speaks as do the children of Satan (v.11). His chief function seems to be to lead those in the world to follow the first beast (the secular powers of the world) (vs.12-15).

This vision indicates the existence in the world of a false (pseudo) church. That church will deceive many and lead many, not to Christ, but to Satan. This corresponds then to what Jesus taught when he said that there would arise many false prophets who would deceive, if possible, *even the elect* (Matt. 24:24). It also corresponds to Paul's words about the man of sin in the last days who will serve not God but Satan — though he had a form of religion (II Thess. 2:3-12). Furthermore, it corresponds to what John taught in dealing with the antichrist who is from the church but not of it. The seal of the beast which is given to men on earth who do not believe in Christ is in contrast to the seal of the righteous, noted in Revelation 7.

What is indicated here is that Satan will have a strong ally in the false church which will arise in the world in history and will lead many from Christ to Satan. The Gospels and the rest of the New Testament have plainly taught of this false church throughout, as we have seen — which is only a continuation of the false church of the Old Testament as well. Ultimately, the power of the world will be so great and exerted against men so powerfully, that none can hope to succeed financially or economically without cooperating with the world (13:17). The number 666 (v.18), given as the number of this second beast, indicates that which is *grossly imperfect*, (compared with the number 777 which would indicate completion, perfection).

### 4. *The Vision of the True Lamb and His Church (14:1-5)*

Over against the false lamb we see here the true Lamb, who is Christ (v.1; cf. 5:6). With him is the whole church (144,000; cf. ch. 7 and our comments there). These are the perfected church of Christ, the *true remnant*, contrasted with that false church noted in chapter 13 (14:3-5). They are purchased by the blood of Christ as all who are saved must be (v.4). They are without blemish, as God determined all of His should be (Eph. 1:4), etc.). They are called virgins (v.4) since this term is often used to describe the people of God in the Old Testament (Isa. 37:22; Jer. 31:4, etc.). In short, this does not represent a group of super Christians, but simply the true church contrasted with the false church in the world.

### 5. *The Vision of the Good News Proclaimed (14:6-13).*

This vision shows the world under judgment with no hope except in the good tidings of the gospel (14:6). Men are called to fear God and be reconciled to him (vs.7ff.; cf. Psalm 2). Those who are not reconciled to God will spend eternity in hell (vs.9-12; cf. Isaiah 1:24-31; 66:22-24). Those who are reconciled to God will be the blessed ones (v. 13; cf. Psalm 1).

### 6. *The vision of the two harvests (14:14-20).*

The first harvest is the harvest of souls by Christ (vs.14-16). This is comparable to Jesus' words in Matthew 9:37-38; 13:36-43, concerning his harvest. The second harvest is God's harvest of wrath (vs.17-20). Isaiah similarly describes God's wrath (Isa. 63:2, 3; cf. Rev. 19:15). The judgment of God's and our enemies, represented here, recalls again God's promise of Genesis 3:15.

### 7. *The Vision of the seven plagues of God's wrath (chs.15,16).*

This scene is of the final days of the earth's history, comparable, therefore, to the latter part of chapter 11. God will finish His judgments on the nations.

First, we see God's people in heaven in a song of triumph while on earth is judgment (15:2-8). Chapter 16, enumerates the last terrible days of judgment in history. This section can be compared to Christ's words

found in Matthew 24:15-22. It is clear that these events are still before Christ has come, since apparently believers still are on earth (16:15).

This concludes the visions begun in chapter 12, pertaining to the struggle of the church in the world against Satan and his followers. What is shown here is quite similar to what we have noted elsewhere about the difficulty of being Christ's witnesses and lights in a sin-filled and spiritually dark world. But we are assured here that God has the last word and in the end His people, and they alone, will triumph.

*Vision Six: The Vision of the Detail of the Fall of Babylon (the kingdoms of this world) (detail of 16:19-21, the fall of Babylon) — chs. 17-18*

Here the world's kingdoms are represented by Babylon, the site of the first great empire of men (cf. Dan. 2). In 17:9, Rome is likened to this great empire, symbolized by the seven hills.

We recall in Daniel 2, that the Lord spoke of four great kingdoms which would come before God established His Kingdom on earth to destroy the kingdoms of the world. The fourth of those kingdoms, we noted in our study there, is Rome. In this context, Babylon represents the nations of the world — the secular power as over against the Kingdom of God on earth — and is comparable to the first beast of chapter 13. It indicates the domain of Satan's world.

These kingdoms of the world compete with God for the hearts of men, but God calls his own out of the world's kingdoms (18:4,5). God's people will, in the end, rejoice over the overthrow of the cities of this world in the last day (18:20). In the meantime, the world will love the city of Satan and will mourn over its overthrow (18:8-19). Again, the picture here is quite similar to the first few verses of Psalm 2, which speak of the world's rebellion, led by her leaders, against God and against His anointed.

*Vision Seven: The Vision of the End of the World and the Glimpse into Eternity (detail of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and the joy of God's people, 18:19, 20) — chs. 19-22*

### *1. The two great suppers (ch. 19).*

The first supper is the marriage supper of the Lamb of God with his bride, the true church (19:1-18). We can compare Matthew 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Luke 12:36; John 3:29. Christ's bride is dressed in fine linen, white (19:8 — cf. 6:11; 7: 14). The bride is the church.

The *second supper* is the feast of the birds who eat of the flesh of those slain by the Lord in His judgment (19:11-21). First, Christ is described going forth to war with his two-edged sword (vs.11-16). This compares to the words of Paul concerning the Christian warfare (Eph. 6). It also reflects the truth taught in Psalm 2:4-9, pertaining to Christ's warfare with the nations of the world as he brings men to their knees through the establishing of his kingdom. The dead bodies of the slain is a graphic portrayal of the alternative to belief — destruction (John 3:16; 11 Cor. 2:14-17). All men will be at one of the two suppers!

### *2. The overthrow of Satan, the god of this world (ch.20).*

Satan is said to be bound for 1,000 years (20:2). We recall that Jesus spoke of binding Satan when he came to earth, that he might spoil him (set free from him those who were in his control) (Matt. 12:28, 29 — See what we said in discussion of Rev. 12 also.) The binding of Satan need not mean that he is helpless, but rather that he is prevented from holding any whom God desires to loose from him through the gospel. The gospel is the power to set men free from Satan; and Satan is bound, not able to prevent them from coming to Christ. The preaching of the gospel does indeed bind Satan.

The 1,000 years, noted here, is symbolic of the period of the church in history, in just the same way Peter used that term (II Pet. 3:8,9). It is not a literal number of years, but spans the time from Christ's ascension until he returns. It is therefore, comparable to the 42 months and the 1,260 days and the time, times and a half time, given earlier in our study of this book. It is a time in which Satan is helpless to keep the gospel from reaching men and snatching them from Satan's clutch (see Jude 23). It is that period which God has

granted to the church to proclaim His gospel to the ends of the earth before Christ's return.

At this time, Christ's people *reign* with him in his Kingdom among men (20:3). It is not right to think of Christ reigning *only* at the end of time. He reigns now (Ex. 15:18; Rom. 5:17; II Tim. 2:12; Luke 22:29, etc.). Thus, those who die in faith in the Lord, go to reign with him in heaven (v. 4) (cf. 3:21; 5:10).

The rest of the dead remain dead (not able to come before God, shut off from God — though dead). The rebirth and continued life of God's children, once they are saved, is called the *first resurrection* (vs.5,6) the first phase of the ultimate resurrection of their bodies, as well as their spirits (cf. I Cor. 15). Such are immune to the *second death*, though they have died once, in the body. The second death — eternity in hell, the lake of fire — is described in verse 14. All who have not believed in Christ on earth, therefore, when they die, go to a place separated from God and God's people, and await their second death — the eternal suffering of hell (cf. Luke 16:19-31, the story of the rich man and Lazarus).

Toward the end of man's history on earth — the end of the 1,000 years — Satan will be loosed for a short time; it will be a time of great terror on earth and particular hardship for the church in the world in that day (vs.7-9). We can compare this period of the last days to Satan's activity described in 9:1-11. We have noted already that Jesus, Paul, and Peter all stress the particular hardships of the last days, when the man of sin rises up and leads men against Christ in a very awesome way (Matt. 24; II Th. 2; II Pet. 3:3; also Jude 18).

Though Satan will appear to have conquered the church, before that happens, the Lord will come and will *immediately* judge Satan and the world (vs.9,10).

The judgment of the world is further detailed in verses 11-14. All men who have ever lived on earth will be judged by the books of God, in accord with God's standards. All whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (v.15; cf. 3:5).

3. *The New Heavens and the New Earth* (chs.21,22).

The new heavens and the new earth which come down from God are first described in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22, as the place created by God for rejoicing and which is in contrast to the old heaven and earth which will pass away. Peter describes this same phenomenon (the new heavens and earth) as the Christian hope, where righteousness dwells (II Pet. 3:12,13). Jesus had himself spoken of a place he has prepared for his own (John 14:1ff.). The place is also often called the new Jerusalem (v.2). The writer to the Hebrews made clear that it was to this new heaven and earth — this new Jerusalem — this city of God, prepared for His own, to which *all the saints*, from Abraham on, have looked in hope (Heb. 11:10,16; 12:22). Paul, as well, cautioned the Galatians not to put hope in the Jerusalem of this world (the present Jerusalem) but in the Jerusalem that was from above (Gal. 4:25,26).

Thus, the new Jerusalem — the new heaven and new earth — comes at the climax of all history, after men have been judged, when only the saints of God remain. Again, she is described as a bride (v.2; cf. 19:7). Then, as God's children inhabit the new Jerusalem He has prepared for them, all tears and sorrow and sickness is done away, as the Lord had promised long before through Isaiah (25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19). Then, God's purpose to have a people to spend eternity with Him will be fulfilled (v.3; Eph. 1:4). Then, all things will be new (v.5). What He promised through Isaiah, a fountain of the water of life, freely, will be fulfilled (v.6; Isa. 55:1ff.). Then, truly, God's children will inherit the inheritance that will not pass away (I Pet. 1).

The new Jerusalem is described in terms similar to Ezekiel's tour of the city of God in his vision (Ezk. 40-48) (Rev. 21:9-26). There, the things which men have struggled and killed and cheated for in this world (precious stones, pearls, gold) will be commonplace, showing the vanity of the world's obsession with its goals and treasures (vs.18-21). There will be found there *none* of those who are not cleansed in the blood of the lamb (v.27).

The symbolism of this eternal city, having 12 gates and 12 foundations, again suggests the Old Testament and the New Testament churches (12 tribes, 12 apostles; cf. Rev. 4:4).

From chapter 22, we can conclude that there, God's people will serve the Lord (22:3), indicating that their life will not be idle but active to God's glory. This activity includes reigning with the Lord forever (v.5). From this we can conclude that the believers' eternal life will be full and rich.

The book concludes in 22:8-21, stressing that heaven is for the *true believers*, whose robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb (22:14; cf. 7:14). No unbeliever will be there (22:11,15).

The book appropriately closes with an invitation from Christ and his church to come to Christ and then a call from the church on earth to the Lord to come soon (22:17-20).

### **What Additional Information is Helpful?**

It would be well to review what was said about the areas of Asia Minor which we discussed in the study of Paul's missionary journeys and the study of his letters to certain of the cities in Asia. We shall not add to this further, except to say that the island of Patmos is located off the southwest corner of Asia, in the Mediterranean Sea. It is a very small island, and during the time John was imprisoned there was quite dry and desolate. It was a place which Romans used for banishing enemies of the state.

### **What Did This Revelation Mean to God's People When Originally Given?**

The Book of Revelation, as we have sought to show, was written for the people of God struggling against the power of Rome in the latter days of the First Century. The very fact that John himself, the last of the apostles, was there under banishment by Rome, indicates what the church as a whole was up against at that time. It was important, as the First Century came to a close and the first generation of the followers of Christ were all but gone, that succeeding generations be encouraged to remain steadfast and see the ultimate

outcome of their efforts, not as men see but as God sees.

The seven churches of Asia were typical of that age and typical of the churches of every age since then: some faithful — some not; some with mixed membership of the faithful and the unfaithful. All of the churches needed to know the importance of the church remaining pure in order that its testimony (a testimony of life and death for the hearers) might also remain pure. As they recalled that Jesus is with his church and watches all churches, they would be encouraged to remain pure in doctrine and life.

As they reviewed the messages to these seven churches (seven being representative of the whole, complete church) they would know that no matter how sound in doctrine and diligent in good works the church was, if its love of God grew cold, it would not please Him. They would understand that Christ sees the flaws in churches so that man cannot afford to overlook those flaws either; and where there is heresy or those who lead others astray, they must be dealt with. They would see that the faithful churches cannot expect to be relieved of their persecution, but must continue to be faithful in spite of the world's pressures. Churches which were outwardly prosperous and therefore, self contented, would learn that to Christ they are repulsive, and he will spew them out of his mouth.

The vision of the open door would encourage the believers to know that in heaven, God's good purpose for His people is determined and that what is His will there will ultimately be His will on earth as well.

By the vision of the opened seals, the church would realize that the troubles on earth must continue down through history, but that in the context of man's suffering, Christians have their opportunity to offer to men a better life — one free of all the sorrows and death of this world. They would be encouraged to know that though the Christians must live in a sin-filled world, full of wars, sickness, famine and social injustice, it is worth it, for out of the world every single child of God must ultimately be called. History will not end until every one of them is safely with the Lord.

They would learn, too, that as time goes on, things will get worse and worse, which might lead Christians to give up, were they not assured by these visions that God is in control and is redeeming His own out of the world.

From the visions of the struggle of the church in the world against Satan, the people of God would learn that their battle with Satan and his followers was but a continuation of the battle between Satan and Christ which raged on earth when Jesus walked the earth. This would challenge them to joy at sharing in his sufferings on earth. They would see that though Satan is a powerful foe, he is yet no match for the gospel with which they have been entrusted, which can set men free from his group.

They would also see that, indeed, all of the enemies of the church are not in the secular world, but many are within the church itself and many will be led to follow Satan, thinking that they are religious people. They would understand why Christ was so hard on the churches of Asia which tolerated those who were Satan's servants in the church.

In the vision of the true Lamb, they would be encouraged to know that though they might not always be able to discern the true from the false church, Christ does; only the true believers will, in the end, be saved.

The vision of the two harvests and the two suppers would make them realize how vital it was that men everywhere be invited to the harvest and feast of Christ, lest they be destroyed.

The visions relating to the fall of Babylon would be understood by them to speak to the inevitable downfall of Rome, the current city of Satan, capital of the secular world and present persecutor of the church.

The last visions, pertaining to the last days, might, to them, seem to have come already, as they looked on that day. Nevertheless, they were assured that no matter how bad things got for God's children on earth, Jesus would return before that church was destroyed on earth and raise up his own to be with him before the day of judgment came. In the meantime, they would see from this that they do indeed reign with Christ and those who have died before them are with

Christ even now. While the world thinks it is winning out over Christ and his church, the true situation is quite different.

They would be assured that in the end, every wrong would be righted by Christ in judgment; Christ had in store for them an eternal life with him in the place he has prepared, a place which eye has not seen nor can man imagine, a place where all the treasures of the world are as but cobblestones under the feet of the saints compared to the glory to be revealed to them.

As the book concludes, they would be encouraged to join Christ in calling all men to be reconciled to him, assured that the time will soon come when Christ will return; and then it will be the end for the wicked, but the beginning of greater bliss for the righteous.

### **What Significance is There for Us Today in This Scripture Lesson?**

Some 1,900 years have passed since John was given this revelation. As it taught, down through the ages there have been many churches which have been faithful, some which have been unfaithful, and many of mixed membership: some good, some bad. Many times in the lives of Christians living at particularly dark times in the church's history, there have been many who thought that the end of time was soon to come; but it has not come. We need to see that Christ has often turned his church back to him and from the faithful few has raised up, through revival, strong churches to reform and redirect the church toward its proper goals. Should we suppose that Christ will never come or the end will never arrive? Certainly not — this book teaches us that until the very last one of God's children is brought into the Kingdom, time cannot end. In the meantime, God's people are to be faithful in proclaiming that gospel, realizing that they are God's chosen means of calling men to Himself. The longsuffering of God may seem a thousand years to us, but it is but a day to the Lord (II Pet. 3:8,9).

We also see that if we are to be used by the Lord and have a place in His work on earth, then we must seek to keep the church pure, not allowing false

doctrines and evil practices to remain in the church. God will have in heaven a pure church and a complete church; but in the meantime, on earth, we must contend with the world and Satan, realizing that the enemy is not only out in the world but in the church as well. We must endure with the rest of the world the wars, famines, earthquakes, social injustices and all the rest, knowing that in the meantime, we have the words of eternal life that are the only hope for men.

We can be sure of this, either we are in the last days when Satan is soon to be loosed and when the hate of the world will seek to snuff out the church altogether, or we are on the brink of great revival when the Lord will raise up his church on earth to new heights and cause it to break forth with new vigor. Either way, as God's children on earth today, our mission is clear. The Spirit and the bride continue to say to sinners: "Come he that is thirsty, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Amen: Come Lord Jesus!

### **Meditation on and Application of the Word of God to Our Lives.**

1. How would I describe my church as I compare it with the seven churches of Asia? Is it faithful? Does it show true love? Would Christ wish to spew it out of his mouth? How concerned am I, and have I shown myself to be, for the spiritual purity of my church? To which aspect of the church have I contributed? its purity or its impurity?
2. As I think of God's angels holding back the final judgment on earth until the very last believer has been converted, do I feel any sense of urgency in the life I live today? What am I doing to reach those not yet reached with the gospel?
3. How do I feel about the news of famines, wars, earthquakes, and the like which is printed in my papers daily? Does this remind me of the coming judgment of all men? Am I concerned for those who die without Christ in these catastrophes?
4. Do I feel the pressure of conforming to the world and its standards? Does my business require me to do things that are not right in God's sight? Am I

willing to pay the price economically to refuse to do these things?

5. Is my vision of heaven based on what John has shown in his book? Do I long for that day to come as he did? Am I as faithful to serve Christ, in the meantime, as he was — though it cost him his freedom?
6. Am I praying for true revival and sweeping reform or else the coming of Christ soon? or am I just enjoying all I can the life I presently live, not really thinking of the church's future and the time of Christ's return?
7. How has this study of the book of Revelation affected me?

