

An OVERVIEW

By Topics of the

New Testament

**#4 – 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews
James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude,
1, 2, 3 John, Revelation**

12 Lessons

**Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

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Lesson One

"THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN"

(2 Tim. 4:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of 2 Timothy 1-4)

1. Few of us:
 - a) Like to talk about death that faces us all;
 - b) Nor of the death of a loved one.
2. However, there are times when there is pleasantness & joy connected with death.
 - a) Our study today is one of those occasions.
 - b) We are looking at the triumph of the Apostle Paul in death.

DISCUSSION

I. BACKGROUND LEADING UP TO PAUL'S 2nd IMPRISONMENT.

A. Some question Paul's release from the 1st Roman Imprisonment.

- 1) Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem & later taken to Caesarea.
- 2) After two years—he asked to be sent before Caesar.
 - a) As a Roman citizen, he had that right.
 - b) So, he was sent to Rome under the guard of a Roman soldier.
- 3) He was in Rome for two years—in his own hired house—with a Roman guard.
- 4) Was he tried & released or simply released?
 - a) We are not told directly in the Bible.
 - b) There are indications that lead to the conclusion that he was freed from prison.

B. What are those indications?

- 1) Early Christian writings are fairly unanimous in their testimony of such.
 - a) Clement of Rome.
 - b) Eusebius & others.
- 2) Paul's prison epistles certainly leave strong impressions of an expected release.
 - a) Phil. 1:21-26
 - b) Philemon 22—***"But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you."***
 - c) 1 Tim. 4:13—***"Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."***
 - d) 1 Tim. 3:14-15—***"These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."***

C. The Roman justice system was still working fairly good at this time.

- 1) The fact that he stayed 2 whole years in his own hired house would indicate that his accusers never showed up at Rome.
- 2) If his accusers did not show up—case would be dismissed
- 3) He was allowed to preach freely—have friends in to minister to his needs.
- 4) Nero was on the throne—but had not gotten as bad as he would be later.

D. Many of the things mentioned in the two Timothy letters & the Titus letter do not fit into Paul's history before this time.

E. We have indications as to where Paul might have journeyed:

- 1) Rom. 15:28—*"Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain."*
- 2) Phil. 1:21-26 (Go by Philippi)
- 3) Philemon 22 (Go by Colossae)
- 4) 1 Tim. 1:3—*"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine."*
 - a) He had left Timothy at Ephesus when he went into Macedonia.
 - b) He had hopes of returning to Ephesus.
 - 1 Tim. 4:13—*"Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."*
 - 1 Tim. 3:14—*"These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly."*
 - From indications in 2 Timothy, Paul may not have made it back to Ephesus.
- 5) Tit. 1:5—*"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you..."*
 - a) While he left Titus at Crete.....
 - b) He later wrote and wanted him to join him at Nicopolis (3:12).
- 6) 2 Tim. 1:8—*"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God."*
 - a) Shows the 2 Tim. letter was written from Prison at Rome. (1:17)
 - b) He had left his cloak, books, and parchments at Troas with Carpus. (4:13)
 - c) Paul had to leave Trophimus sick at Miletum. (4:20)
 - d) He wanted to see Timothy. (1:4)
- 7) We do not know where Paul was retaken as a prisoner & sent to Rome.
 - a) Could have been at Nicopolis or Troas.
 - b) Or Close to Ephesus—on his way to see Timothy.

II. HIS 2nd IMPRISONMENT AT ROME WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM HIS FIRST.**A. His living conditions & friends:**

- 1) His confinement seems to have been much less pleasant as before.
 - a) 2 Tim. 2:9—*"For which cause I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained."*
- 2) He was harder to find. (2 Tim. 1:16-18)
- 3) It seems that it was dangerous to visit with Paul.
 - a) To show sympathy may have imperiled one's life.
 - b) As he came to trial—*"No man stood with me, but all forsook me." (4:16)*
 - c) No advocate would dare to plead his cause.
 - d) Only Luke, among old friends, was there. (4:11)

B. He was probably tried before Nero.

- 1) Nero's hands were stained with blood of his young wife, adopted brother, and his mother.
 - a) He could slaughter his nearest relative without seeming remorse.

- b) He could have Christians covered with pitch, strapped to a cross, and burned alive—
 - c) AS HE RODE IN THE MIDST OF THEM IN HIS CHARIOT, MAKING FUN.
 - 2) Paul would have known about Nero's persecution of Christians to try to cover up his setting Rome on fire.
 - 3) He had no real hope for release this time—especially from this man.
 - 4) And yet...
 - a) He knew his life was in the hands of the Lord—not this man.
 - b) All the power of Rome was empty pageantry before God.
 - c) They had no power, but what God allowed.
 - d) He also knew that the Lord would give him his message when the time came.
 - 5) He evidently spoke boldly the gospel before them all.
 - a) May have been a large audience.
 - b) 2 Tim. 4:17—"***But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.***"
 - 6) Thus, for the time being he was not condemned.
 - a) 2 Tim. 4:18—"***And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.***"
- C. His waiting before the final sentence of death.**
- 1) He takes time to write to Timothy revealing the hopelessness of his condition.
 - 2) What the letter reveals:
 - a) It has the usual warmth of friendship expressed in the 1st letter.
 - b) It has many of the same admonitions found in the 1st letter.
 - Reminding him of his work.
 - Trying to help him be strong & not be afraid to suffer for the cause.
 - To be strong, endure hardness as a good soldier.
 - Charge the brethren concerning these teachings.
 - Avoid things that lead to strife.
 - Diligently teach, meekly instruct all.
 - Preach the word at all times, reproving, rebuking, exhorting.
 - c) That Paul wanted to see Timothy face to face before he died.
 - 1:2—"***his dearly beloved son***"
 - 1:4—"***greatly desiring to see thee....that I may be filled with joy.***"
 - 4:9—"***Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.***"
 - 4:21—"***Do thy diligence to come before winter.***"
 - d) Special requests:
 - Bring Mark with you. (4:11)
 - Bring the cloak, books, and parchments that I left at Troas with Carpus. (4:13)
 - e) His upcoming death seemed to be obvious—expected!
 - 4:6-8
 - He was ready whenever it came.

D. His final trial & Death:

- 1) We have no further information from Scripture.
- 2) However—from his writings we know:
 - a) His mind, heart, and life were prepared for death.
 - b) He knew that death would be the Lord's way of "***changing his criminal fetters into a wreath of triumph.***"
- 3) He was not having to face these last days by himself however.
 - a) Luke was still there. (4:11)
 - b) Onesiphorus had been also a great encouragement to him. (1:16-17)
 - c) Also, some new friends at Rome encouraged him:
 - Eubulus
 - Linnus
 - Pudens, possibly a senator at Rome.
 - Claudia, his wife.
 - d) However, he still wanted Timothy there.
 - He wanted parting words to be face to face.
 - He wanted him there in the final hours.
 - We do not know if Timothy made it in time.
- 4) His final trial brought death.
 - a) Not by crucifixion—but by decapitation as a Roman citizen.
 - b) Would be led outside of Rome where execution took place.
 - c) There his Heroic & Faithful soul would be released from his now feeble, battered, and aged body.
 - d) But he would leave behind him a great heritage to all followers of Christ.
 - Of martyrdom, if necessary.
 - 13-14 inspired letters of the N.T.
 - An example of great concern for the lost of the world.
 - An example of great concern for the Lord's church.
 - e) Where the gospel is preached:
 - Saul of Tarsus (Paul) will be known, loved, and respected.
 - Not only as a Christian....
 - But as a great soldier of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

1. As we look at this dedicated man:
 - a) We see a man of integrity, strength, loyalty, commitment to a cause.
 - b) But we see a man that suffered much in life.
 - c) And even died a martyr's death.
 - d) **But he had a CAUSE worth dying for!**
2. But we also can see the great triumph that he experienced because he was a Christian.
3. Do you have that confidence?
4. Could you see triumph in your death?
5. Only the dedicated, faithful Christian has a promise of Triumph in death.

Lesson Two

"INSTRUCTIONS TO PREACHERS"

(Tit. 2:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from Reading of Titus 1-3)

1. Read Titus 1:1-5
2. Some inferences from the Titus letter:
 - a) In Paul's travels, he stopped and preached on the Island of Crete.
 - b) Titus was evidently with him on this trip.
 - c) When Paul left—He requested for Titus to remain with the church.
3. From this Letter we can also learn:
 - a) What the responsibilities of a preacher are;
 - b) The need for developing proper leadership for the church;
 - c) The challenges that a preacher would have to deal with;
 - d) The need for him to watch how he lives before others.

DISCUSSION

I. SEE THAT PROPER LEADERSHIP IS APPOINTED.

A. Titus 1:5—"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you."

- 1) Titus had been very helpful in working with the church at Corinth.
- 2) He had become an experienced preacher of the gospel.
- 3) Paul could depend upon him to further work and develop the stability of the churches on the Isle of Crete.
- 4) Involved in that process was developing & appointing elders in every city.
- 5) These men would need to:
 - a) Meet certain qualifications. (1:6-9)
 - b) They had to know & hold fast to the Word of God. (1:9)
 - c) They needed to be able to exhort & convince those who contradict God's truth. (1:9)

B. It was important to realize that wrong leadership or teachers could destroy the church.

- 1) If their mouths cannot be stopped:
 - a) They will teach things that they should not;
 - b) They will do it just to get gain;
 - c) They will destroy whole households in the faith. (1:11)
- 2) Some of these men will be lawless in their attitude.
 - a) They will disrespect God's Law.
 - b) They will be given to idle & misleading talk to lead men's minds astray. (1:10)
 - c) They will be given to following after Jewish Legends or Myths. (1:14)
 - d) They will be strong advocates of the commandments of men that turn men from God's Truth. (1:14)
 - e) They will get caught up in foolish questions and become contentious about the Law. (3:9)

- 3) These people may have to be dealt with openly.
 - a) They are to be rebuked sharply so they will be sound in the faith. (1:13)
 - b) They are to be stopped in their false teaching. (1:11)
 - c) If they continue in their divisive spirit:
 - After being properly exhorted and rebuked;
 - And there is no change;
 - They are to be rejected—shunned. (3:10)

II. A PREACHER IS TO BE VIGILANT IN TEACHING SOUND (HEALTHY) DOCTRINE.

A. He is to teach older men:

- 1) To be Temperate, Dignified, and Sensible (wise). (2:2)
- 2) To be soundly established in the faith, in love, and in their persistence to the end. (2:2)

B. He is to teach older women:

- 1) To be holy in their demeanor. (2:3)
- 2) Not to accuse anyone falsely—nor slander others. (2:3)
- 3) Not to be known as a drinker, slaves to drink. (2:3)
- 4) But to be teachers of that which is noble and good. (2:3)

C. He is to teach older women to teach younger women:

- 1) To be sober. (2:4)
- 2) To be affectionate to their husbands & children. (2:4)
- 3) To be sensible, chaste, good house-keepers, kindhearted. (2:5)
- 4) Submitting themselves to their husbands. (2:5)
- 5) And give no occasion for the Word of God to be blasphemed. (2:5)

D. He is to teach the younger men:

- 1) To also behave prudently, sensibly, living well-ordered lives. (2:6)

E. He is to teach servants:

- 1) To be submissive to their owners in all circumstances. (2:9)
- 2) To comply with their wishes.
- 3) Not to talk back to them or be argumentative. (2:9)
- 4) Not to take things which do not belong to them. (2:10)
- 5) But rather proving themselves faithful & reliable in all things. (2:10)
- 6) So that they may beautify the teaching of the gospel. (2:10)

F. To teach all in the church:

- 1) To be in subjection to those in authority. (3:1)
- 2) To be ready & watchful to enter into every good work. (3:1)
- 3) To slander or speak ill of no one. (3:2)
- 4) To avoid quarreling or strife. (3:2)
- 5) To be forbearing, yielding, considerate. (3:2)
- 6) And under all circumstances to show a gentle spirit in dealing with others. (3:2)
- 7) Affirm constantly for God's people to be diligent in engaging in good works. (3:8)

III. THE PREACHER'S NEED FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

A. To examine his life.

- 1) Strive to be a model of a life nobly lived. (2:7)
- 2) An all-around example of doing what is desirable. (2:7)
- 3) Let no man treat you with contempt because of your hypocrisy. (2:15)

B. To examine his work.

- 1) Avoid the wisdom of men and foolishness of men that turns from truth. (1:14)
- 2) Your preaching must be with integrity & seriousness, without corruption. (2:7)
- 3) The kind of preaching that makes healthy Christians. (2:8)
- 4) Preaching that does not need to be censored or objected to. (2:8)
- 5) Giving no reason for your adversary to condemn you. (2:8)
- 6) As you preach, exhort & rebuke people—and be sure they understand that this message is from God, not you. (2:15)

IV. REALIZE THE NEED OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE LOST.

A. The Gospel makes known God's grace to men:

- 1) It brings a message of salvation to all men everywhere it is preached. (2:11)
- 2) It tells us that God is both willing & able to justify & redeem sinful man. (2:14)
- 3) It is accomplished by grace & mercy through the death of Christ. (2:14; 3:5)
- 4) It is also accomplished by:
 - a) The washing of regeneration;
 - b) The renewing of the Holy Spirit;
 - c) The removal of our sins;
 - d) And being made a new creation in Christ. (3:5)
- 5) The gospel gives men hope at the return of Christ. (2:13)
- 6) It makes us heirs of eternal life. (3:7)
- 7) This justification is not the work of men, but the work of God. (3:5)
 - a) But it obviously requires man's positive response in faith.
 - b) The need to obey this gospel.

B. This Gospel changes people's lives:

- 1) Look at men's lives before they hear & obey the gospel:
 - a) Vain talkers, unruly, deceivers. (1:10)
 - b) Liars, acting like wild beasts, lazy & indolent. (1:12)
 - c) Minds & consciences defiled. (1:15)
 - d) Lives are in disobedience to God's will. (1:16)
 - e) Living degraded & self-willed lives. (1:16)
 - f) Useless for good works of any kind. (1:16)
 - g) Engaging in worldly lusts. (2:12)
 - h) Disobedient to proper authorities. (3:1)
 - i) Speaking evil of their fellow-man. (3:2)
 - j) Living foolishly, submitting to all kinds of lust & pleasures. (3:3)
 - k) Living lives of malice, envy, and hatefulness. (3:3)
- 2) Look at the kind of life the Gospel calls us unto:
 - a) To be blameless. (1:6)
 - b) To respect God's marital & home arrangements. (1:8)
 - c) To show friendship to fellowman & do him good. (1:8)
 - d) To be serious-minded, just, holy, temperate. (1:8)

- e) To be zealous of good works. (2:14)
- f) To be obedient to authorities. (3:1)
- g) To show gentleness & meekness to all. (3:2)
- h) Live a life characterized by soberness, righteousness, and godliness. (2:12)

C. This Gospel was designed by God before the world began.

- 1) He wanted man to have eternal life. (1:2)
- 2) He planned it before time began. (1:2)
- 3) But has only fully made it known through preaching in this last days. (1:3)
- 4) We can fully expect it because God cannot lie. (1:2)

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Lord has given the commission to His followers:
 - a) To preach this gospel into all the world—to every creature. (Mk. 16:15)
 - b) Those who:
 - Will believe this message of hope;
 - And will be immersed in water in the name of Christ;
 - Have the promise of salvation or remission of sins.
 - c) Those who will not believe this message continue in their doomed condition.
- 2. Have your believe & obey this gospel?

Lesson Three

"WHY TURN FROM THE SUPERIOR?"

(Heb. 6:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Hebrews 1-6)

1. Hebrews is an unusual book in many ways!
 - a) We don't know for sure whom God used to write it.
 - b) We don't know for sure when written.
 - c) We don't even know for sure of its destination.
 - d) Among several persons, the apostle Paul is connected with the book.
2. It is an obvious work of INSPIRATION.
 - a) It is a masterpiece of writing.
 - b) One of the more important books of the N.T. in content!
3. Some insight is given to us about the people to whom addressed:
 - a) Some had been in the church for some time.
 - b) They should have been mature, but were not. (5:12)
 - c) They are called upon to look back to former days:
 - Which were better. (10:32)
 - When they had good leaders to look back to. (13:7)
 - But when some of their number may have been martyred.
 - d) At present:
 - They were not facing martyrdom. (12:4)
 - But they had suffered the loss of goods in persecution. (10:32-34)
 - And...more persecution is about to come.
 - e) It is believed that the TEMPLE was still standing. (10:25)
 - f) There seems to be:
 - Obvious discouragement;
 - And grave dangers of apostasy from the faith. (6:4-6)
 - g) Many scholars feel that Jewish Christians were the main ones in mind.
4. Two approaches were taken in Chs. 1-6 to help them:
 - a) To show the complete superiority of Christ and the New System over the Old System.
 - b) To give several severe warnings of the dangers of apostasy.

DISCUSSION

I. THE EXALTATION & SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST.

A. *Christ is a superior spokesman for God*

- 1) In former times, God spoke thru prophets to the fathers. (1:1)
- 2) But now He is speaking to us thru His Son. (1:2)
- 3) His superiority as a spokesman is described:
 - a) He has been made the lawful owner of everything. (1:2)
 - b) He is the One who created all orders of existence. (1:2)
 - c) He is the brightness of the Father's glory. (1:3)
 - d) He is the flawless expression of the nature of God. (1:3)
 - e) He upholds the universe by the Word of His power. (1:3)

- f) He has made expiation as man's high priest—for sin. (1:3)
- g) He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (1:3)

B. Christ is superior to the angelic hosts around the throne of God.

- 1) It is shown by His superior Name—**"the Son of God."**
 - a) 1:5---**"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."**
 - b) 1:5---**"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."**
 - c) 1:6---At this birth: **"Let all the angels of God worship Him."**
- 2) In contrast:
 - a) Angels are God's ministers. (1:7)
 - b) They are spirits—A flame of fire. (1:7)
 - c) They minister to them who shall inherit salvation. (1:14)
 - d) Angels have not been exalted to God's right hand. (1:13)
- 3) He is referred to as Deity, but not angels. **(1:8-12)**
- 4) He did not put the "world to come" in subjection to angels, but His Son. (2:5)
- 5) He did not redeem Angels, but man. (2:16)
 - a) He became flesh like man—identifying with man.
 - b) He tasted of death for every man.
 - c) He became the captain of man's salvation.
 - d) He is not ashamed to call us brethren.
 - e) By His death, he destroyed the power of death over man.
 - f) He then became a merciful & faithful High priest to make reconciliation for our sins.

C. Christ is superior to Moses.

- 1) Moses was faithful in all his house. (3:2)
- 2) But Jesus was given more glory than Moses.
 - a) He became the builder of the house. (3:4)
 - b) He became the Son over His own house. (3:6)

D. Christ is a superior High Priest.

- 1) **2:17-18**
 - a) He was made like us:
 - So He could be a merciful & faithful High Priest.
 - So He could be a High priest in all things pertaining to God.
 - So he could make reconciliation for sins of the people.
 - b) He suffered being tempted—to be able to succor us in our temptations.
- 2) **4:14-16**
 - a) God called Him a priest and He is passed into the heavens.
 - b) He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.
 - c) He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.
 - d) We need to come boldly before God's throne of grace to obtain mercy & grace to help in time of need.
- 3) **5:1-10**
 - a) The normal process of choosing a priest is given:
 - He is taken from among men.
 - He is to minister for men in things pertaining to God.
 - He offers both gifts & sacrifices for sins.
 - b) The reason for this approach:

- He can have compassion upon the ignorant.
 - He can help those who are out of the way.
 - Because He, Himself, is flesh—compassed with infirmities.
 - Therefore, he can offer gifts & sacrifices both for himself and the people.
- c) No man has a right to take this honor unto himself.
- God must call him—like He did Aaron.
- d) Jesus' priesthood is like this:
- He did not make Himself High Priest.
 - God called Him—*"Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."* (5:6)
- e) While in the flesh Jesus:
- Offered up prayers & supplications;
 - With strong crying & tears;
 - Was heard because he feared;
 - Learned obedience by the things which He suffered;
 - Became the perfect person to become author of our salvation;
 - But to also serve as our great High Priest.
- f) So God made Him a priest like unto Melchisedec.

II. WARNINGS OF THE DANGER OF APOSTASY.

A. 2:1-3

- 1) Words spoken by angels brought condemnation to the lawbreaker.
- 2) How much more so to those who disobey Words of God's Son.
- 3) So—don't be negligent of the salvation He is offering.

B. 3:6-11

- 1) Hold fast the confidence & rejoicing of hope steadfast to the end.
- 2) Must not harden our hearts as the Jews did in the wilderness.
 - a) They tempted & proved God.
 - b) They saw God's works for 40 years—but they grieved God.
 - c) Their hearts always erred—They would not learn God's ways.
- 3) God did not allow them into Canaan.

C. 3:12-15

- 1) Don't be like disbelieving & disobedient Jews in wilderness.
- 2) Don't let an evil heart of unbelief cause you to depart from God.
- 3) Don't let your heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
- 4) We can be partakers only of God's rewards if we hold out to the end.
- 5) So, don't harden your hearts.
- 6) Don't be like the Jews in the wilderness.
- 7) Or, you can't enter into your promise land either.

D. 4:1-9

- 1) Realize we can come short of receiving our reward from God.
- 2) Good news was preached to God's people, but it didn't do any good.
 - a) They wouldn't believe the message.
 - b) We have heard—and we do believe.
- 3) God will carry out his promise of reward.

E. 4:11-16

- 1) However—Must put forth strenuous effort to enter into our reward.
- 2) Must guard strongly against unbelief.
- 3) Turn to God's Word for insight to help you to be faithful.
- 4) Turn to Jesus Christ, our great High Priest for help.

F. 5:11-14

- 1) Realize your dullness of hearing—Because you need to learn.
- 2) Realize your immaturity—need to grow up.
- 3) Learn how to use God's Word to discern between good & evil.

G. 6:1-6

- 1) Need to hold to first principles, but move on to more mature themes.
- 2) With God's help, it can be done.
 - a) If you have once been enlightened by the gospel;
 - b) If you have been assured of your eternal reward;
 - c) If you have been given the benefits of God's Spirit;
 - d) If you have enjoyed the benefits of God's Word & the powers of world to come;
 - e) If you then fall away.....
 - f) If you crucify to yourselves the Son of God afresh.....
 - g) If you put Him to an open shame....
 - h) **YOUR ARE IN VERY GRAVE DANGER** of not being able to be brought to repentance again.

H. 6:7-9

- 1) Bad soil is only fit to be burned off.
- 2) So—bad Christians are only fit to be punished.

I. 6:10-20

- 1) God has not forgotten your works & love toward His people.
- 2) Be diligent—be full of hope unto the end.
- 3) Follow the example of those who have shown faith & patience in trials:
 - a) Like Abraham:
 - God made a promise to him.
 - He swore by Himself.
 - ***"Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee."***
 - He patiently endured—and received the promise.
- 4) God's oath should be an end of all discussion on this matter.
 - a) He gave His word.
 - b) He cannot lie—so it will be done.
- 5) Therefore:
 - a) Have a strong consolation.
 - b) Lay hold upon the hope set before you.
 - c) Let it be an anchor to the soul—sure & steadfast.
 - d) Follow Christ into heaven.

CONCLUSION

1. The Superiority of Christianity over Judaism is obvious.
2. But the Superiority of Christianity over all other religions should be more than obvious.
3. Jesus can become man's redeemer, Savior, helper unto eternal life.
4. He can become man's great High Priest before the throne of God.
5. Without Him—man cannot approach unto the presence of God!

Lesson Four

"THE ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST"

(Heb. 10:10-14)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Hebrews 7-13)

1. Our last lesson was on Hebrews chs. 1-6:
 - a) We emphasized the superiority of Jesus Over:
 - 1) Spokesmen for God;
 - 2) Angels;
 - 3) Moses, the servant of God;
 - 4) And the Aaronic Priests under the Law.
 - b) And also, the many warnings given of the dangers of turning away from Christ.
2. Hebrews 7-10 continues this emphasis of superiority.
3. But Heb. 10:19-13:25 ends with a strong exhortation to be faithful.

DISCUSSION

I. CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY CONTINUES TO BE SHOWN.

A. Superiority over Priesthood & Gifts under Old Covenant.

- 1) Jesus' priesthood was like Melchizedek's, not Aaron's.
 - a) God purposefully made his priesthood to portray Jesus' priesthood.
 - b) He was both a king & a priest—So is Jesus!
 - c) God had Abraham to pay tithes to him.
 - d) He gave him names, titles, like Jesus: *King of Righteousness, King of Peace.*
 - e) And strangely—No information was given about his genealogy—*"No beginning—no end!"*
 - f) And no end indicated to his priesthood.
- 2) Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to the Aaronic priesthood.
 - a) Aaron's priesthood only took tithes of their brethren.
 - b) Melchizedek's priesthood took tithes of a stranger, Abraham.
 - c) The Aaronic priest even paid tithes to Melchizedek thru Abraham.
 - d) The Aaronic priesthood was not to be permanent because:
 - God promised to make the Messiah a priest like Melchizedek,
 - And not like the Aaronic priesthood.
 - e) And—if there is a change of priesthood—there is a necessity a change of Law.
- 3) Jesus' priesthood:
 - a) It is after Melchizedek, not like the Aaronic priesthood.
 - b) Jesus could not be a priest like Aaron—He was not of the priestly tribe (Levi).
 - c) Jesus was made a priest by an Oath of God—But Aaron's was not.
 - d) Aaronic priest died, but Jesus ever lives to serve.
 - e) Jesus only offered one sacrifice for sin (Himself) once for all—not daily like the Aaronic priesthood.
 - f) Jesus serves as priest at the right hand of God in the true Tabernacle.
 - The One not made with hands
 - The One not on earth as like the Aaronic priests did.

B. The Old Covenant:

- 1) Jesus is the mediator of a better Covenant.
 - a) Based on better promises.
 - b) The Old could not deal with man's weakness to sin.
 - c) And God had promised a new covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34).
 - d) Therefore, the Old Covenant was to fade away.
- 2) Jesus is the Mediator of a New Covenant.
 - a) Accomplished by His death.
 - b) It went into force upon His death.
 - c) His death was also for the benefit of those under the 1st testament.
- 2) His Covenant was dedicated by blood as the old was.
 - a) There was a strong emphasis in O.T. upon purifying by blood.
 - The Covenant & the people were sprinkled by blood when ratified.
 - The Tabernacle was sprinkled with blood.
 - ***"Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission."***
 - b) Jesus' blood was that which dedicated the New Covenant and all things therein.

C. The Tabernacle.

- 1) Under the first Covenant, they had a material Tabernacle in which God's Spirit dwelt.
- 2) It was divided into two compartments:
 - a) The sanctuary (holy place)
 - Within was the lampstand that gave light.
 - Also, the table with shewbread on it.
 - b) The Holiest of Holies
 - Within was the golden censor.
 - Also, the Ark of the Covenant (Mercy Seat).
- 3) The regular priest could only go into the first part to serve.
- 4) Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies.
 - a) It was done once a year.
 - b) To sprinkle blood upon Ark of Covenant for Himself & the people's sins.
- 5) This showed that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made open to all.
- 6) It also showed that the gifts & offerings could not make the conscience of the priest perfect.
- 7) Christ's priesthood is in the perfect Tabernacle made without man's hands.
 - a) He went into the Holy of Holies (Heaven) with His own blood and obtained eternal redemption for us.
 - b) Therefore, our conscience can be purged from dead works.

D. Sacrifices:

- 1) All things in the Law were for purpose of foreshadowing the real to come.
 - a) Therefore—sacrifices could not make the worshipper perfect.
 - b) If they had—sacrifices would ceased to have been offered.
 - c) Because, once sins are purged perfectly—no longer a consciousness of sin.
 - d) Every year in the sin offering (Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur)—A remembrance was made of sin.
 - e) So the blood of bulls and goats could not do away with sin.

- 2) But Jesus' sacrifice can and does!
 - a) God planned His sacrifice before the world began.
 - b) Reason for these prophecies—to show that the 1st was to be replaced by the 2nd.
 - c) Once that Jesus' sacrifice had been made:
 - He could then sit at the right hand of God;
 - Until the end of God's plans were complete.
 - d) The fact that there was to be no further remembrance of sin shows it's superiority.

II. EXHORTATIONS BASED UPON THESE TRUTHS:

- A. We should draw nigh to God with a sincere heart—one full of assurance.*
- B. Must hold tight to the faith we have professed before others without wavering.*
- C. Must strive to help others to continue in love & good works.*
- D. Must not forsake the assembly of God's people.*
- E. If a person turns from Jesus' perfect sacrifice—there is no other.*
- F. If one rejects the Son of God—much sorer punishment awaits that person.*
- G. Needed to call to mind their former trials and successful endurance.*
- H. Don't cast away your convictions at this late date.*
- I. Learn to be patient in facing trials of life.*
- J. God's warning thru Habakkuk is still appropriate: "The just shall survive the great trials only by their trust in God."*
- K. Look to the great examples of faithfulness on the part of God's former people.*
- L. Be aware of the host of witnesses watching us in our race—so run with patience.*
- M. Look to Jesus for an example of endurance.*
- N. Accept trials as God's loving chastisement for our good.*
- O. Be diligent in your watchfulness.*
- P. Be aware of the great sacredness of the Mount you have drawn close to—as Israel did at Mt. Sinai.*

Q. Serve God with reverence & godly fear.

R. Let brotherly love continue among you.

S. Be concerned for your brethren who are in need.

T. Be sure your behavior is free of immorality & covetousness.

U. Remember those who taught you God's word—follow their godly examples.

V. Be willing to bear reproach as did Christ as he suffered outside the city.

W. Willingly submit to those who watch for your souls—follow their teaching and leadership.

CONCLUSION

1. Strong incentives have been given to continue following Christ.
2. We must be aware of the grave danger of turning from the holy commandment.
3. We shall inherit only if we are faithful to the end.

Lesson Five

"CHRISTIANITY IS PRACTICAL"

(Jas. 3:13-18)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of James)

1. James, the Lord's brother, is believed to be the writer of this book.
 - a) He identifies himself as **"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."**(1:1)
 - b) He was a great influence upon many Jews becoming Christians.
 - c) He also served as one of the elders in Jerusalem.
 - d) Tradition states that he suffered martyrdom in 62 AD.
 - 1) He was thrown from the top of the temple....
 - 2) And then clubbed to death.
 - 3) There is no statement in Scripture to this effect.
 - 4) If true, this would have been while the apostle Paul was in prison at Rome.
2. Those to whom he wrote by inspiration was: **"To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad."**(1:1)
 - a) His readers were evidently undergoing strong trials of their faith.
 - b) There was danger that their faith would waver.
 - c) They needed strong encouragement!
 - d) This letter was probably carried by Jewish Christians traveling from Jerusalem—and read in assemblies wherever they went!

DISCUSSION

I. THE NEED TO DEAL WITH DOUBT IN THE MIDST OF GREAT TRIALS.

A. God's people are called upon to endure trials & temptation.

- 1) These temptations do not come from God—but He allows them.
 - a) Difference in trying to get someone to fall—to tempt them.
 - b) And to put to a test—to prove a person's faith.
- 2) God provides strength & power to endure such trials successfully.
 - a) He offers us wisdom to understand His will in these things. (1:5)
 - b) Prayer is a way of showing our faith in God.
 - c) Doubting will leave us helpless in trials.

B. God promises good results when we endure trials.

- 1) We can rejoice because of the good that will come out of them.
- 2) Enduring trials can make us patient.
- 3) Being patient can help make us stable, steadfast, and dependable in all circumstances of life.

C. God will judge the persecutors.

- 1) The rich oppressors are described:
 - a) They will weep & howl for the miseries to come upon them.
 - b) All they have amassed will decay.
 - c) That decay will be a witness against them in the Day of Judgment.
 - d) The cries of those oppressed by them will come into God's ears.
 - e) Even their licentious lives are a judgment against them.

- They revel and plunge into dissipation.
- They indulge their fancies in the day of bloodshed around them.
- f) They unjustly put to death righteous people.
- 2) Their punishment is coming.
 - a) God's people are told to be patient—wait for the Lord's coming in judgment.
 - b) Let your hearts be fully assured of God's promises in this regard.
- D. He reminds them of examples of patience & faith—to strengthen them.**
 - 1) The prophets had shown great patience in midst of their suffering.
 - 2) Job is an outstanding example—you know how merciful & compassionate God was to him after he endured.
 - 3) Elijah's faith was so strong:
 - a) His prayer to God was heard;
 - b) It did not rain for 3 years and 6 months.
 - 4) The lesson: *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."*
 - 5) So avail yourselves of this great strength.
 - a) If someone is sick, call for the elders to pray over him or her.
 - b) If afflicted—pray for recovery.
 - c) If you have sinned against another—confess it—pray together for your forgiveness.
- E. He makes a special appeal to reclaim those who have fallen because of a lack of faith.**
 - 1) Restore him to faithfulness.
 - 2) Save a soul from death & cover many sins.

II. THE DANGERS OF BECOMING A HEARER ONLY.

- A. Proper hearing of God's Word is an absolute necessity.**
 - 1) We were begotten by this word of truth.
 - 2) So we should be swift to hear God's Word.
 - 3) But slow to speak, slow to wrath.
 - 4) To hear properly, we must:
 - a) Lay aside all filthiness & wickedness in our lives;
 - b) Have a humble attitude of receptivity to God's truth.
- B. Proper hearing involves obedience.**
 - 1) To hear only is self-deception.
 - 2) It is like looking into a mirror—then to go away thinking you are what you are not.
 - 3) Only the doer is blessed by God.
- C. Pure Religion is a doing religion.**
 - 1) It is showing a concern for those in need.
 - 2) It is refraining from sinful disobedience.
 - 3) Examples to illustrate:
 - a) To speak nicely to someone in need, but not help him or her, is worthless.
 - b) There is no way to demonstrate faith without doing something.
 - c) Even demons confess faith in God, but do not serve him.

- d) Abraham's justification by faith required an obedient faith in the offering up of his son.
- e) Rahab the harlot was justified by what she did in helping the spies.
- f) Faith only is like a dead body—it is dead!
- g) Justification before God is by hearing, believing, doing!

III. DANGERS OF BECOMING SELF-INDULGENT & APATHETIC.

A. Sin comes because of man's self-indulgence, rather than self-control.

- 1) We sin because we yield to our own lustful desires.
- 2) If we continue in such:
 - a) Lust will bring us into the hold of sin;
 - b) And eventually bring eternal death.

B. The Christian must learn to control his actions towards others.

- 1) We must stop making distinctions in the church.
 - a) The poor can rejoice because he is exalted in Christ.
 - b) The rich can rejoice because he has been brought into his proper relationship with God and man.
- 2) We must stop showing respect of persons in our assemblies.
 - a) It is sinful to do so.
 - b) It is to become a judge that is unjust & evil.
 - c) Just remember what the unjust rich have done to you in the past.
 - They have oppressed you.
 - They have brought you before judgment seats unlawfully.
 - They have blasphemed the worthy name of Christ.
 - d) Instead of showing respect of persons—show love & fulfill the royal law.
 - e) Be merciful in your judgments—if you expect to receive mercy.
- 3) We must stop warring & fighting among ourselves.
 - a) Such strife comes because of giving in to your lustful self-indulgence.
 - b) You will never have what you want & need until you learn to pray to God correctly.
 - c) But you must also learn to exercise self-control in your lives.
 - d) Friendship with the world makes us enemies of God.
 - e) God has placed His Spirit in us because He loves us & wants to bless us.
 - f) But He can't until we exercise discipline:
 - Must learn to be submissive to God's will in our lives.
 - Must learn to resist the Devil's temptations.
 - Must greatly desire a close relationship with God.
 - To have it—I must clean up my hands & heart.
 - I must be greatly afflicted over my past sinfulness.
 - I must be willing to humble myself before God & accept His forgiveness.
 - g) And then—God can exalt us—bless us!

C. Self-control must especially be gained over our tongues (Speech).

- 1) If not controlled—it will make our religious activities look hypocritical.
- 2) To speak evil of a brother is like becoming a judge of the Law.
 - a) Instead of being a doer of the Law—we want to become its judge.

- b) We try to set ourselves above God's Law.
- 3) Bridling completely the tongue is one of the hardest things man has to do.
 - a) A bridle can control horses.
 - b) The rudder can control ships.
 - c) But man's tongue is like a raging fire to tame.
- 4) The tongue is capable of so much evil.
 - a) It can defile the whole body.
 - b) It can bring forth some of the greatest evils of wickedness.
 - c) It is like a deadly poison when uncontrolled.
- 5) It can be so inconsistently used.
 - a) It can one moment bless God—the next, curse man made in God's image.
 - b) Nature shows that both good & bad cannot come from same source.
 - c) The tongue can revel in its boastings—forgetting how dependent we are upon God for our very existence.

IV. THE NECESSITY TO RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF THE WISDOM BY WHICH WE ARE WALKING.

A. We may be walking by devilish, earthly, sensual wisdom.

- 1) It is know by its results.
- 2) It may bring bitter envying & strife.
- 3) Or it may bring confusion & every evil work.

B. We should be walking by heavenly wisdom.

- 1) Such is characterized by:
 - a) Insight and understanding from God.
 - b) By a good life & humility of spirit—which is from God.
- 2) Heavenly wisdom described:
 - a) It does not result in strife, envying, confusion, & evil works.
 - b) It is pure & reasonable.
 - c) It is forbearing & courteous.
 - d) It is open to reason.
 - e) It is rich in compassion & good deeds.
 - f) It is without partiality and hypocrisy.
- 2) The fruits of heavenly wisdom can only come when:
 - a) You have peacemakers.....those who sow the seed in a peaceful spirit.

CONCLUSION

- 1. God's people need His wisdom to live life successfully.
- 2. This wisdom is given by God to those who seek it.
- 3. It never comes to the mere hearer of the Word.
- 4. It will also come into the life of the self-controlled man.
- 5. Do you have this wisdom?

Lesson Six

"CHALLENGE TO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

(1 Peter 2:19-25)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of 1 Peter 1-5)

1. Peter could have been in his 60's or 70's at this time.
 - a) He is seasoned, experienced, and stable.
 - b) He became steadfast like a rock.
 - c) He & his wife traveled among the churches—encouraging them.
 - d) Now, he is at Babylon:
 - Writing this letter
 - To the Christians scattered all over Asia Minor.
2. Emphasis of the Letter:
 - a) Stressed the simplicity of the gospel.
 - b) Gives insights to the many privileges of Christians.
 - c) Gives a great deal of exhortations to Christians.
 - Primarily to be faithful during persecution
 - Many other exhortations as well.

DISCUSSION

I. GREAT PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN:

A. Chapter One:

- V. 2—Purposefully chosen by God.
 - His Spirit has made this election possible.
 - We were led to be obedient people.
 - And, were sprinkled by the blood of Jesus.
- V. 3—The results of all of this:
 - We were born anew unto God.
 - We were given a living hope thru Jesus' Resurrection.
- V. 4—This inheritance is different than man's:
 - It is incorruptible & undefiled.
 - It won't fade away.
 - It is beyond the reach of change & decay.
 - It is reserved in heaven for us.
- V. 5—Meanwhile—God's power—through our faith—makes us safe till we receive it.
- V. 7—Trials must come to prove your faith to be sterling & genuine.
- V. 9—The end result of enduring trials is the salvation of our souls.
- Vs. 18-19—We have been redeemed (ransomed) by the precious blood of Jesus.
- V. 22—Your souls were purified by your obedience to the truth.

B. Chapter Two:

- V. 5—God has made us living stones to make up His spiritual house.
 - He wants us to be His holy (consecrated) priesthood on earth.

Purpose—to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

- V. 9—You are a chosen (elect) race;
A holy (dedicated) nation;
A people claimed by God for His own—A purchased people.
Called out of darkness into God's marvelous light.
- V. 10—You are God's people now—but at one time you were not.
You have obtained mercy now—but at one time you had not.
- V. 16—You are free in Christ.

C. Chapter Five:

- V. 10—After you have suffered a little while, God will:
Perfect you—Stablish you—Strengthen you—Settle you!

II. EXHORTATIONS TO CHRISTIANS:

A. Chapter One:

- V. 13—Brace up your minds (concentrate on) for what is ahead.
Be perfectly self-controlled.
Fix your hope in God's grace to you.
- V. 14—Be like obedient children.
Don't conform your life to your former passions.
- V. 15—Rather—be holy (pure) in your manner of life.
- V. 17—Stand in awe of God while you live out your time on earth.
- V. 22—Love one another earnestly with all your heart.

B. Chapter Two:

- V. 1—Rid your life of all:
Ill-will towards others;
Deceitfulness & Insincerity;
Jealous feelings;
Back-biting & slander of every kind.
- V. 2—Be like babes in your eagerness to learn the Word of God.
Thrive on it to your soul's health.
- V. 9—Our purpose is to show the world the excellence of God's calling.
- V. 11—Look upon your life as one that is traveling in a foreign land.
Be sure to refrain from indulging the cravings of your earthly nature.
For such wars against the soul.
- V. 12—Live honorable lives (upright lives) among the pagans.
- V. 13—For the Lord's sake, subject yourself to all human authority.
- V. 15—Try to live such a good life that your enemies' accusation will appear foolish.
- V. 16—Don't misuse your freedom in Christ by indulging in wickedness.
- V. 17—Show honor (respect) to everyone.
Practice love for the brotherhood.
Practice reverence to God. Show respect to the Emperor.
- vs. 18-19—Special exhortations to SERVANTS:
 - 1) Be submissive & respectful to your masters;
 - 2) Not only to the kind & thoughtful, but to the unreasonable;
 - 3) From a sense of duty to God, be willing to suffer unjustly;

- 4) You must bear patiently when punished for your own faults;
- 5) You can glorify God when you patiently suffer unjustly;
- 6) Be willing to follow the footsteps of Jesus in all these matters;

C. Chapter Three:

Vs. 1-6—Special exhortations to WIVES:

- 1) Learn to fit into your husbands plans;
- 2) Realize that your godly life may win your husband to Christ;
- 3) Your life must be pure & God-fearing;
- 4) Don't put too much emphasis upon adorning the outward person;
- 5) But put special emphasis upon adorning the inner person with a meek (gentle) and quiet spirit.
- 6) Be like Godly women of old—Sarah in particular.
- 7) Don't yield to panic or let anything terrify you.

V. 7—Special exhortations to HUSBANDS:

- 1) Be understanding towards your wife;
- 2) Be considerate of her wishes;
- 3) Even though she is the weaker sex—show your respect for them as equal heirs of the grace of life.
- 4) Otherwise, your prayers will be hindered before God.

V. 8—Be of one mind—united in the Spirit.

- 1) Show sympathy for each other.
- 2) Be loving as brethren.
- 3) Be kind-hearted.
- 4) Be humble-minded—courteous.

V. 9—Realize your vocation is to return blessing for evil against you—not evil for evil.

V. 10—Learn to control your tongue from evil & deceit—so you can enjoy life and happy days.

V. 11—We must learn to shun wrong and do right.

V. 14—Realize that there are blessings that come from suffering for Righteousness.

Especially, if you will not be made fearful of their intimidations

V. 15—Be prepared for suffering by:

- 1) Being sure Christ is supreme in your hearts.
- 2) Getting your knowledge of Christ clear in your minds to be ready to teach others.
- 3) Doing this with a modest & respectful way.

V. 16—Be sure that you maintain a clear conscience in all these things.

So that your enemies' accusations will have no validity.

D. Chapter Four:

V. 1—Because Christ's suffered—be prepared to suffer yourselves.

V. 2—Live your life according to God's will—not according to human passions.

V. 7—God's judgment upon the wicked will soon come.....

So—be of a sound mind.

Make constant use of prayer.

V. 8—It is very important that you keep your love for one another strong

- V. 9—Keep your house open to all who need you with a glad heart.
- V. 10—Use whatever gift God has given you:
- 1) To help your brethren;
 - 2) Realizing we must be careful stewards of God's favor to us.
- V. 11—Speak only God's Word to men—not your own mind or thinking.
- V. 12-13—When sufferings come:
- 1) Don't think of them as something strange;
 - 2) Realize that they are a testing by fire;
 - 3) It is not something foreign, but merely what Christ had to endure.
 - 4) If we are faithful in the midst of trial—we will be exceedingly glad at Jesus' return.
- V. 14—So rejoice when you suffer abuse because you bear the name of Christ.
- V. 15—But by all means:
- 1) Don't be guilty of murder, theft, or slander;
 - 2) Nor, of prying into other people's affairs.
- V. 16—Be willing to suffer, however, as a Christian:
- 1) Don't feel it to be a disgrace;
 - 2) Gladly confess His Name to the honor of God.
- V. 19—Persevere in doing right & commit your life unto a faithful God

E. Chapter Five:

- Vs. 1-4—Special exhortations to ELDERS:
- 1) Shepherd God's people out of a willing heart.
 - 2) Don't do it because of being pushed into the work.
 - 3) Don't do it by being bribed by money offered.
 - 4) Don't do it in order to exercise power & authority over others.
 - 5) Rather:
 - a) Show a readiness to do God's work.
 - b) Show yourself a model for the flock to follow after.
 - c) Look to the chief shepherd for your reward.
- V. 5—You younger ones show respectfulness to the older ones.
- 1) Indeed—all of you put on the apron of humility & serve one another.
 - 2) Realize that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
- V. 6—So—be obedient to God's will in all these matters—so He can bless you.
- V. 7—Learn to turn your worries over to God—realizing He is concerned for you.
- V. 8—Be calm, watchful, be alert.
- Be on your guard against your great adversary—the Devil.
- V. 9—Exercise strong resistance—being firm in the faith.
- Realize that your brethren all over the world are having to do the same.

CONCLUSION

1. Soon after this Letter:
 - a) Peter set a great example of how to suffer & die for Christ.
 - b) He is supposed to have been crucified upside down—at his request.
2. Peter believed that the Rewards of being a Christian far outweighed the dangers.
3. How about you and I?

Lesson Seven

"STICKING WITH THE FAITH"

(2 Peter 1:12-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. Our lesson—Study of 2 Peter & Jude.
2. There are amazing similarities.
3. 2 Peter probably written about 67-68 AD.
4. Jude—about 70-75 AD.
 - a) Jude identifies Himself as a brother of James.
 - b) Likelihood that he too was a half-brother to Jesus.
5. Both are gravely concerned about false teachers in the church.
6. We have combined the two books—they supplement each other.

DISCUSSION

I. BOTH EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO REMEMBER!

A. That God has given us a complete message!

- 1) 2 Peter. 1:3—"*His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.*"
- 2) Jude 3—"*.....the faith once delivered unto the saints.*"
- 3) Peter emphasized that these things were not cunningly devised fables.
- 4) He points out that he & others were eye-witnesses of Jesus' majesty.
- 5) Also, the promises of God's prophets have been fully verified.
- 6) These are not things from men's minds, but from God, Himself.
- 7) This completed message must be earnestly upheld.

B. But, also, this message must be put into practice.

- 1) We need to be diligent to do so. (1:5)
- 2) Our faith must be strengthened by: VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE, PATIENCE, GODLINESS, BROTHERLY KINDNESS, & LOVE.
- 3) This is the only acceptable & fruitful life before God.
- 4) To fail to do this shows:
 - a) That sin is blinding us to our true condition;
 - b) We have forgotten why we were forgiven.

II. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THESE THINGS?

A. Because False Teachers are coming!

- 1) Jude 14-15—Enoch, the 7th from Adam, foretold of such.
- 2) Jude 17-18—The Apostles fore-warned that such would come.
- 3) Jude 4—In fact, some have already sneaked in among them.
- 4) 2 Pet. 2:1—They will bring in destructive heresies.

They will deny the Lord who bought them.

They will bring on themselves swift destruction.
- 5) 2 Pet. 3:4—They will deny the Lord's return.
- 6) Jude 4—Their lives will be full of lewdness.

They will use God's grace as an excuse for sinful indulgences.

- 7) 2 Pet. 2:18—They will use covetous means to get what they want.
- 8) 2 Pet. 2:14—They will beguile unstable souls.
- B. *Because, unfortunately, many will follow their pernicious ways. (2:2)***
 - 1) Their outcome:
 - a) 2 Pet. 2:20-22—They will be entangled again in sin & overcome;
Be turned from obeying the commands of God;
They will be like a dog returning to its vomit;
They will be like a sow that goes back into the mire—after being washed.
 - 2) The only hope for some:
 - a) Jude 22—That the strong will show compassion on those still wavering;
 - b) Jude 23—They will save them by pulling them out of the fire.
Because they hate the way of sin that so polluted them.

III. HOW ARE THESE FALSE TEACHERS CHARACTERIZED?

- V. 8**—Unrealistic people.
They pollute the body.
- 2:20**—They have given over to sensuality;
They crave polluted things;
They scorn outside control of their lives;
They are daring, presumptuous, & self-willed;
They do not hesitate to speak evil of those in high repute.
- V. 10**—They pour out abuse upon things they do not understand.
- V. 11**—They are walking the way of Cain;
They are running uncontrolled into the error of Balaam—for the sake of gain;
They have rebelled like Korah & will share his doom.
- 2:13**—They spend the day in lustful indulgences as their pleasure.
- V. 12**—They are spots & blemishes at your feast of love.
They show no fear of their actions in your midst.
They are like clouds that promise rain, but do not.
They are like trees that promise fruit, but do not.
- V. 13**—They are like waves of the sea foaming out their shame to all.
They are like wandering stars, to whom the blackness of darkness is reserved.
- 2:17**—They are like wells that are dry.
- 2:14**—They have eyes for no one but adulterous women.
Their eyes never tire of sinfulness.
Their minds are trained to covet—to be greedy.
- 2:15**—They have forsaken the right way.
- V. 16**—They are murmurers, complainers—never satisfied with their lot in life.
Their lives are guided by their evil passions.
They are loud-mouthed boasters—their talk is arrogant.
They flatter men for the sake of what they can get from them.
- V. 19**—They are men of the world, devoid of God's Spirit.
- 2:19**—And the height of it all:

- a) They promise men liberty—no restraint.
- b) But They are themselves in deep bondage to their sensuality.

IV. GOD'S ANSWER TO THEIR SCOFFING & UNGODLY LIVES.

A. Their punishment will surely come—just like people of old.

- 1) 2:4, V. 6—God did not spare the angels that sinned or left their proper sphere of activity.
He cast them into Tartarus in chains unto Judgment.
- 2) 2:5—God's punishment upon the world in Noah's day shows His wrath.
- 3) 2:6, V.7—The cities of Sodom & Gomorrha, as well as cities close by, suffered the wrath of God by fire.
- 4) V. 5—Even the Israelite nation, after being miraculously brought out of Egypt, was destroyed in the wilderness because of their unbelief.
- 5) 2:9—God is very able to deliver the godly from trials....
But to also keep the wicked for punishment in the Day of Judgment.

B. God's present threatening:

- 1) 2:1—God will bring swift destruction upon false teachers.
- 2) 2:12—They shall utterly perish in their own corruption.
They are like natural brute beast—made to be destroyed.
- 3) 2:13—They shall receive the reward of unrighteousness.
- 4) 2:17, V. 13—The "mist of darkness" and "the blackness of darkness" is reserved for such.
- 5) 2:14—They are cursed children.

C. Why is God longsuffering and delaying his coming?

- 1) It is certainly not out of weakness or lack of power!
- 2) 3:8—It is not because he does not know how to count time.
- 3) 3:9—It is not because he is negligent as men are at times.
It is because he doesn't want men to perish.
And He is giving men time to repent.

D. What will happen when He does come?

- 1) 3:10—He will come like a thief in the night.
And the present heavens & earth will be done away, burned up.
- 2) 3:13—And a new Heavens & Earth will be brought into existence.

V. IN VIEW OF THESE THINGS, WHAT SHOULD GOD'S PEOPLE DO?

A. 2 Peter:

- 1) 3:11—Live holy & godly lives.
Look for & earnestly desire the Lord's return.
- 2) 3:14—Be diligent that we may be found in Him in peace, without spot, and blameless at this coming.
- 3) 3:15—Realize that God's longsuffering can bring salvation.
- 4) 3:17—Beware so that you will not be led away with error of wicked.
Be sure you do not fall from your own steadfastness.
- 5) 3:18—Grow in God's grace—and in the knowledge of the Lord.

B. Jude:

- 1) V. 20—Build yourselves up by staying in the most holy faith.
Pray as the Holy Spirit has given instructions.
- 2) V. 21—Keep yourselves in God's love.
Patiently wait for the Lord's mercy to give you eternal life.
- 3) V. 23—Make an effort to save those whom you can from these errors.

CONCLUSION

1. God's people can be led astray & be lost.
2. The dangers are spelled out clearly.
3. If we fall—It is our own fault—we would not listen!
4. To those who will listen—a glorious reward is held out before us.

Lesson Eight

**"CERTAINTY OF
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD"
(1 John 2:1-6)**

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of 1, 2, 3 John)

1. Conviction is based on EVIDENCE!
 - a) It is based on actually being present & observing the event yourself.
 - b) Or, depending upon an eye-witness to the event.
2. The apostle John was an eye-witness of that which he wrote.
 - a) He heard the Master.
 - b) He saw Him with his own eyes—observing Him in every day life.
 - c) He touched him—He knew He was there in the flesh!
3. He proclaimed Jesus as the means of Eternal Life for mankind.
 - a) John's teachings were not speculation—but Fact!
 - b) They were based on first hand observation & understanding.
 - c) Therefore, our convictions are not based upon speculation either!
4. Our relationship with God can be just as sure as our belief in Jesus!
 - a) 1 John 1:3—"*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*"
 - b) 1 John 5:13—"*These things have I written...that you may know that you have eternal life.*"
 - c) We can know we have fellowship with the Father!

DISCUSSION

I. THINGS THAT WE CAN KNOW & BE ASSURED OF (1 John)

A. We can KNOW God abides in us & we have fellowship with Him by:

- 1) Whether we keep His commandments. (2:3)
- 2) Whether we keep His Word. (2:4)
- 3) By the kind of spirit that He has placed in our hearts. (3:24)
- 4) Because He has given us His Spirit. (4:13)

B. We can KNOW we have passed from death unto life by:

- 1) Whether we love our brethren. (3:14)

C. We can KNOW we are of the truth:

- 1) Because we love our brethren. (3:19)

D. We can KNOW we love God's children by:

- 1) Whether we keep God's commands concerning our brethren. (5:2)

E. We can KNOW we are born of God by:

- 1) Whether we continue in the way of sin or not. (5:18; 3:9)

F. We can KNOW the difference between a false or true spirit by:

- 1) False spirits deny Jesus was born in the flesh.
- 2) True spirits confess freely Jesus came in the flesh.

G. We can KNOW we are of God by:

- 1) All of these things. (5:18-19)

H. We can KNOW we shall be like Jesus when he comes again by:

- 1) All of these things. (3:2)

II. IMPORTANCE PLACED ON LOVE OF BRETHREN.

A. God is love.

- 1) Love finds its origin in God. (4:7-8)
- 2) Love is perfected in the person who keeps God's Word. (2:5)
- 3) One who has God's love within, does not love the world. (2:15)

B. God's great love has been manifested.

- 1) By sending His Son to redeem us. (4:9)
- 2) By allowing us to become His children. (3:1)

C. If God so loved us, we ought to love one another. (4:11)

- 1) This was God's message from the beginning. (3:11)
- 2) This love is not to be in word only, but in deed & in truth. (3:18)
- 3) If we claim to love God who begat us—we will also love those whom he has begotten. (5:1)
- 4) If we say we love God, but hate our brother—we lie. (4:20)
- 5) If we can't love our brother whom we have seen—how can we love God whom we have not seen? (4:20)
- 6) God's command is to love Him and love our brethren also. (4:21)

D. We can test our love.

- 1) If we love the world—we don't have the Love of God in us. (2:15)
- 2) If our brother is in need, and we refuse him help—how can God's love be in our hearts? (3:17)
- 3) We can know we love our brother by whether we do what God commands about our actions towards him. (5:3)

E. If we hate our brother:

- 1) We still abide in darkness, not light. (2:10-11)
- 2) We are not children of God, who is love. (3:10)
- 3) We still abide in death, not life. (3:14)
- 4) We do not know God, for God is love. (4:8)
- 5) God does not dwell in us, nor we in God. (4:12, 16)
- 6) God's Spirit does not dwell in us. (3:24)

F. Outcome of this love in our lives:

- 1) We have a relationship with God assured.
- 2) We have a relationship with our brethren assured.
- 3) Fear is cast out of our lives. (4:18)
- 4) We know God and He knows us.
- 5) We dwell in God and He dwells in us.
- 6) We are His children & continue to grow more like our Father. (4:12)

III. KNOWLEDGE OF THESE THINGS HELPS US DEAL WITH SIN IN OUR LIVES.

A. Sin is:

- 1) Disobedience to God's Law.

- 2) Transgression—going beyond God's Law.
- 3) Failing to walk in God's Law. (3:4)
- B. *Universality of sin:***
 - 1) All have sinned & need redemption. (1:10)
 - 2) If we say we have not sinned:
 - a) We make God a liar;
 - b) His word or truth is not in us;
 - c) We deceive ourselves. (1:8)
- C. *What about the man who continues in the way of sin?***
 - 1) He is of the devil. (3:8)
 - 2) For the Devil sinned from the beginning. (3:8)
- D. *Jesus was manifested to take away our sins.***
 - 1) He had no sin Himself. (3:5)
 - 2) He therefore could become our propitiation, our substitute for sin. (2:2)
- E. *This cleansing of all past sins—this being born anew—brings obligations:***
 - 1) We are to no longer walk in the way of sin. (3:9)
 - 2) We are to act like God's forgiven children. (2:12)
 - 3) We are to abide in Christ, not sin. (3:6)
 - 4) We are to continually walk in the light. (1:7)
 - 5) We are to continually confess our sins. (1:9)
 - 6) We are to turn to our Advocate for help. (2:1)
- F. *To continue in the way of sin shows:***
 - 1) We have not seen Jesus.
 - 2) Nor do we know Him. (3:6)

IV. 2 & 3 JOHN

- A. *2 John stresses walking in TRUTH.***
 - 1) John loved God's people who were in the truth. (1)
 - 2) The truth dwells in God's people (2).
 - 3) John rejoiced that God's people were walking in truth. (4)
 - 4) It is God's command that we walk in truth. (4)
 - 5) To walk in love is to walk in truth. (5-6)
 - 6) Deceivers & liars do not walk in truth. (7)
 - a) Such do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh. (7)
 - b) Such are deceivers & anti-Christ. (7)
 - c) Be on your guard against such that you lose not your reward.(8)
 - d) Such people do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, and have not God. (9)
 - 7) In regards to such false deceivers:
 - a) Do not receive them into your house. (10)
 - b) Don't bid them God-speed. (10)
 - c) For in so doing you become partaker of his evil deeds. (11)
- B. *3 John also stresses the practical aspects of walking in truth.***
 - 1) Gaius was loved because he walked in the truth. (1)
 - 2) John also rejoiced greatly to learn that these brethren continued to walk in truth and to uphold the truth. (3)
 - 3) John had no greater joy than to learn of this fact. (4)

- 4) He encouraged them to continue being fellow-helpers of the truth.
 - a) By receiving the traveling preachers;
 - b) By helping them with their expenses in preaching to others. (5-8)
- 5) But Diotrephes showed he does not walk in truth, nor in love of brethren.
 - a) He would not receive the apostle John because of his prideful arrogance. (9)
 - b) He spoke against John with evil words, not truth. (10)
 - c) He would not even receive the traveling brethren. (10)
 - d) And even went so far as to threaten to throw out of the church those that did receive them. (10)
- 6) Brethren were ask to remember:
 - a) Those who do good & follow truth—they are of God. (11)
 - b) Those who do evil & do not follow truth—they have not seen God. (11)
- 7) John was very happy to hear about the reception of Demetrius because he does walk in truth. (12)

CONCLUSION

1. A man either validates or invalidates his profession of Christianity by his actions!
2. Christianity is not theoretical (all in the mind—pious attitude!)
 - a) It is hard, true, practicality!
 - b) It involves:
 - Abstaining from sin
 - Obeying the will of God
 - Walking in truth
 - Walking in light
 - Walking in love of brethren, as well as God.
3. Only then can we be assured of our relationship with God & entertain hope of eternal life.

Lesson Nine

“FOUR GREAT TRUTHS FROM REVELATION”

(Revelation 22:12-21)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Revelation 1-3)

1. For the person who knows little about the Bible as a whole—the book of Revelation is:
 - a) A curiosity
 - b) Hard to understand
 - c) Different from our western way of thinking
 - d) It uses terminology that comes from the Old Testament
 - e) It uses concepts of time in a way that is different from the usual
2. The book is indeed:
 - a) A wonder-filled world of great imagery
 - b) A book that takes the ordinary and blows it up through symbolism.
3. Because of the symbolism:
 - a) It makes it hard to be exact in one’s understanding
 - b) It is capable of being understood in different ways
 - c) This is part of the reason for the confusion about the things in this book.
4. People get so wrapped up in the details, they often miss the big picture—the main purpose of the book.
5. This is the reason for the title of this lesson—“*Great Truths from Revelation.*”

DISCUSSION

I. THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

A. This letter is addressed to the 7 churches of Asia.

- 1) Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.
- 2) The apostle John wrote down Christ’s message possibly as late as 96 A.D.
- 3) The purposes of the letters were to:
 - a) Encourage, strengthen, and comfort.
 - b) But also to rebuke and exhort to faithfulness.
- 4) The letters indicate that persecution of Christians had already begun.
 - a) They were losing their means of livelihood.
 - b) Neighbors would avoid them—so they would not be identified with them.
 - c) Their property was often confiscated.
 - d) Some were called upon to deny Christ or be put to death.

B. Jesus is pictured as being in the midst of the churches.

- 1) That He sees all.
- 2) That He is in control.
- 3) That He expects His people to be faithful unto even death itself.
- 4) To uphold His name and not to deny it.
- 5) “*I pledge allegiance to the Lamb with all my strength, with all I am; and I will seek to honor His commands.*”
- 6) Are we willing to make such a pledge of allegiance?

C. In this letter, Jesus piles symbols on top of symbols to help His people to be faithful.

- 1) He wants us to see a true picture of Who He is.

- 2) A true picture of the church—who we are!
- 3) A true picture of the great battle that is raging!
- 4) A true picture of who the real enemies of righteousness are!
- 5) And the final outcome of that battle!
- 6) Poem by Ray Boltz:

I have heard how Christians long ago
Were brought before a tyrant's throne
And they were told that he would spare their lives
If they would renounce the name of Christ.
But one by one they chose to die
The Son of God they would not deny
Like a great angelic choir sings
I can almost hear their voices ring.

I pledge allegiance to the Lamb
With all my strength, with all I am
I will seek to honor His commands
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.

Now the years have come and the years have gone
And the cause of Jesus still goes on.
Now our time has come to count the cost
To reject the world, to embrace the cross.

And one by one let us live our lives
For the One who died to give us life.
Till the trumpet sounds on the final day,
Let us proudly stand and boldly say:

*I pledge allegiance to the Lamb
With all my strength—with all I am
I will seek to honor His commands
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.*

II. 4 GREAT TRUTHS FROM REVELATION.

A. Identifying the Great enemy of God & man.

- 1) Terms that describe him:
 - a) 12:3—***“a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.”***
 - b) 12:9—***“the great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan”***
 - c) 12:10—***“the accuser of our brethren”***
- 2) His rebellion against God:
 - a) 12:7-8
 - b) He encourages people to worship him & his followers. (13:4)
- 3) He caused the fall of mankind:

- a) Gen. 3:1-6—The serpent’s temptation in the Garden of Eden.
- b) 12:9—“*who deceives the whole world*”
- c) 12:13—“*persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.*”
- d) 13:4—He receives the worship that belongs to God!
- e) 13:4—He has followers who do his work for him.

B. Redemption provided for Mankind!

- 1) Terms to describe the Redeemer:
 - a) 1:8—“*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*”
 - b) 1:18—“*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.*”
 - c) 5:5—“*Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has Prevailed...*”
 - d) 5:6—“*a lamb as though it had been slain*”
 - e) 13:8—“*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*”
- 2) The means of man’s redemption:
 - a) 12:11—“*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*”
 - b) 1:5—“*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*”
- 3) Jesus’ worthiness of worship:
 - a) 5:12—“*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.*”

C. The Ultimate defeat of Satan and His followers.

- 1) Satan’s efforts against the people of God:
 - a) 12:13—“*he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.*”
 - b) 12:17—“*And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*”
 - c) 6:9-10
- 2) The Binding of Satan:
 - a) 12:9—“*So the great dragon was cast out....he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*”
 - b) 20:2—“*He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*”
 - c) Satan’s power is curbed—but still at work!
- 2) Satan’s ultimate destiny:
 - a) 20:10—“*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*”
 - b) 20:15—“*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

D. The Ultimate Redemption of Man.

- 1) Pictured as:

- a) 7:4—***“And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”***
- b) 20:4—***“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”***
- 2) Their reward pictured:
 - a) 21:1—***“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”***
 - b) 21:2—***“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”***
 - c) 22:3—***“And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”***

CONCLUSION

1. In reading and studying this book:
 - a) We are called upon to picture each scene depicted;
 - b) To hear the trumpets and be alarmed;
 - c) To see the horribleness of the enemies of righteousness;
 - d) To smell the awful stench of the smoke coming from the abyss;
 - e) To taste the wine of God’s fury in judgment upon unrighteousness;
 - f) To feel the shed blood that comes up to the horses’ bridle;
 - g) Etc.
2. These great scenes are meant:
 - a) To arouse our sense of horror;
 - b) As well as, our sense of comfort!
3. He ends the book with two things:
 - a) A warning not to add to or take from it. (Rev. 22:18-19)
 - b) All men have a choice. (Rev. 22:17)
4. Have you made your choice to give your allegiance to Christ—the Son of God?

Lesson Ten

“GREAT ASSURANCES TO GOD’S REDEEMED”

(Rev. 7:13-17)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Revelation 4-11)

1. (In the first lesson we briefly touched on four great truths about Revelation.
2. In chapter 4-5 is the first great worship scene of Deity & the Lamb.
 - a) It was intended to exalt God, the Father.
 - b) But, it also was intended to exalt Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is Deity!
3. The Message now turns to answer a crucial question raised by God’s people—
“Will the Righteous suffer with the wicked upon this earth?”
 - a) The answer is not given as directly as we would like—but indirectly.
 - b) God’s people will suffer along with the wicked in this world.
 - c) They will even suffer **Special Tribulation, persecution, and even Martyrdom.**
 - d) But something must be remembered:
 - They are not being judged or punished when these things happen.
 - They are being **Proven, Tested, Tried**, to the Glory of God.
 - They have God’s assurance of His love & promised reward in spite of these things.
4. The seals are now being removed one by one from this scroll by the Lamb.
 - a) The following is what John sees as each is removed.
 - b) **“And the things which shall be hereafter.”** (1:19)

DISCUSSION

I. 1ST SEAL—White Horse & Rider (6:1-2)

A. Significance:

- 1) White is good, Righteousness—possibly the successful spread of the Gospel.
 - a) In about 30 years—Gospel was preached in the civilized world. (Col. 1:23)
 - b) It continued to spread and grow in great numbers.
- 2) The Gospel will be spread successfully in a world filled with trials.
 - a) God will bring his people to victory.
 - b) They will be conquerors (spiritually).
 - c) Their victory will be won by the Word of God—and those faithful to it.

II. 2ND SEAL—Red Horse & Rider (6:3-4)

A. Significance:

- 1) War seems to be intended by this vision.
- 2) Where there is war—there is no peace.
- 3) It is depicting nations in conflict—killing one another.
- 4) Great sword—An unusual amount of killing among nations.
- 5) Understood:
 - a) God’s people will live in the midst of such.
 - b) They will possibly suffer along with others.
 - c) Some will even suffer martyrdom.

III. 3RD SEAL—Black Horse & Rider (6:5-6)

A. *Significance:*

- 1) Most feel that **Famine** is an obvious indication—economic hardship.
- 2) Such usually follows war—makes life hard for the masses of people.
- 3) Christians will be caught up in this also—may have to suffer too.

IV. 4TH SEAL—Pale Horse & Rider (6:7—8)

A. *Significance:*

- 1) All of these means of sorrows usually lead to death.
- 2) A sizable portion of mankind will be caught up in these sorrows.
- 3) Upon death—mankind goes into **Hades**—a place of waiting.
- 4) But again—both Christian & non-Christian will suffer these deaths.

B. *Thoughts on the first 4 seals:*

- 1) These seals do not seem to be in sequence.
- 2) These are general things to come over a period of time.
- 3) Christianity will spread over the world—in the midst of great trials.
 - a) The world will suffer—but so will many Christians also.
 - b) **Matt. 24:6-13** (Jesus talking about what Christians will face in near future)
- 4) God is **aware** of all of these things—He even allows them.
 - a) He even allows some of His servants to suffer & be put to death as Martyrs.
 - b) He has His purposes & plans in such.

V. 5th SEAL—Souls of Beheaded Christians under the altar (6:9-11)

A. *Significance:*

- 1) An altar is where you offer sacrifices unto God.
- 2) These Christians had offered their lives on this altar.
- 3) **“Souls”**—not bodies—after death, but before resurrection.
- 4) They wanted to know how long before God took action against these evil people.
- 5) They are re-assured by:
 - a) Being given a white robe (They are righteous before God)
 - b) Told to rest for a little time (Be patient—wait on God’s time-table)
- 6) God allows the enemy to have power to kill His saints—until God is through with them.

VI. 6TH SEAL—The Day of Wrath to come (6:12-17)

A. *Significance:*

- 1) John sees 7 great descriptive concepts of God’s judgment upon mankind!
 - a) Earthquake (Matt. 24)
 - b) Sun blackened (Joel 2:31)
 - c) Moon to blood (Joel 2:31)
 - d) Stars fell to earth (Isa. 34:4)
 - e) Heavens departed as a scroll (Isa. 34:4)
 - f) Mountains & Islands moved (Ezek. 26:15)
 - g) Kings, great men, rich men, chief captain, mighty men, bond & free hide themselves (Isa. 2:10)
- 2) They were hiding from God and the wrath of the Lamb.
 - a) Why?
 - b) They had persecuted God’s people unjustly—beheaded souls under the altar.

- 3) Look at the Paradox—A Lamb—Wrath!
 - a) They do not normally go together.
- 4) These descriptions indicate the overthrow of a city or a nation of people.
 - a) It is 7-fold—complete—full—what is deserved!
- 5) How long until it comes?
 - a) Not given—but the fact of its coming is certain!
 - b) Whether here on earth or at Judgment Day—it is coming!

VII. FURTHER ASSURANCE & COMFORT GIVEN (7:1-8)

A. Significance:

- 1) This vision could be an enlargement on the question: ***“What about God’s people in the midst of all these sorrows?”***
- 2) The Winds would be the forces that bring these tribulations upon the earth.
 - a) The four angels were holding back these forces until God’s people were sealed—indicating that they belong to God!
 - b) God’s threat of punishment is constantly over the wicked.
 - c) It is just a matter of when He will let them go.
- 3) The sealing is not some tangible mark.
 - a) Rather, it is God’s way of giving assurance to His people.
 - b) ***“All my saints, and I do mean, all of them will be saved.”***
- 4) $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$.
 - a) God’s people before & after Christ—totally completed.
 - b) Not literal Israel, but spiritual Israel.
 - c) Rev. 7:9-17—A great multitude that no one could number.
 - a) 144,000 deals with the sealing process
 - b) The great multitude deals more with the reward concept.

B. There may be additional possibilities of this vision:

- 1) It could be God’s re-assuring his faithful people of future reward in heaven.
- 2) Or, it could be saying that the Martyrs would not have died in vain.

VIII. WARNINGS TO THE UNREPENTANT (Chs. 8-11)

A. The Trumpets thunder out the coming judgment of God upon the unrepentant.

- 1) God is longsuffering with mankind...He doesn’t want to punish, but he will if men will not turn from their evil ways.
- 2) His threats are not in vain.

B. Reasons why God will punish—

- 1) ***“They would not repent of the works of their hands....” (Rev. 9:20)***
- 2) Their ungodly treatment of God’s messengers and people.

CONCLUSION

1. These visions are dealing with two primary things, at least:
 - a) What happens to God’s people in the midst of a hostile world.
 - Foretells of its onward march to victory.
 - Of its glorious martyrs who gave their lives to propagate the faith.
 - Of its glorious triumph over paganism.

- b) What will happen to the peoples of the world.
 - The continual calamities they must face.
 - And the ultimate punishment of God.
- 2. God is fully aware of all that is transpiring upon the earth.
 - a) He allows them to happen to carry out His plans.
 - b) He wants His people to be reassured as they get caught up in these sorrows:
 - a) That these things are not a punishment upon them;
 - b) But a testing of their faith to their ultimate glorification.
- 3. Sinner friend:
 - a) What do you get out of enduring all the heartaches, sorrows, temptations, and trials of life?
 - b) At the end—What do you receive?

Lesson Eleven

“THE GREAT ENEMIES OF GOD’S PEOPLE”

(Rev. 12:1-5)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Revelation 12-18)

1. In Chapters 10-11:
 - a) We have some interlude visions:
 - The mighty angel with the little scroll
 - The measuring of the Temple (Church) of God
 - The two witnesses
 - An introduction of the beast that fights against the 2 witnesses.
 - b) Finally, the 7th trumpet is sounded by the angel.
 - Worship & Praise breaks forth in heaven over God’s power among men.
 - And also because he had exonerated His people in the eyes of the world.
2. In Chapters 12-13:
 - a) Visions begin to come again.
 - b) We first see a vision of God’s people.
 - c) Then we are given a closer look at the enemies of God’s people.
 - d) We have them vividly, symbolically, portrayed before our eyes.
 - e) And we get a better picture of the great battle that is raging:
 - Between Good & Evil;
 - Between Righteousness & Wickedness;
 - Between God & Satan;
 - Between the Saints of God & the Visible Co-workers of Satan.

DISCUSSION

I. THE VISION OF THE WOMAN (12:1-2)

A. Significance:

- 1) The Woman represents the church and its growth throughout the world.
- 2) Its guide was the teaching of the Apostles. (Acts 2:42)
- 3) It began on the day of Pentecost and grew rapidly.
- 4) The church had growing pains!!

B. The visions now turn to the enemies of God’s people.(See Contrast)

II. THE VISION OF THE GREAT RED DRAGON (12:3-4)

A. Significance:

- 1) Christianity was born & spread in the midst of the Roman Empire.
- 2) Satan’s purpose is to destroy the work of God among men.
- 3) He uses any power that he can deceive into doing his bidding.

III. VISIONS OF THE GREAT STRUGGLE (12:5-17)

A. A Man Child is born (5-6)

- 1) ***He is to rule the nations with a rod of iron.***
 - 1) Christ, as well as His church, are both described as doing this!

- 2) Iron is strong.
- 3) Righteousness requires strong convictions & determination to live right.
- 4) Most people are not willing to surrender to righteousness.
- 2) ***The Child is caught up unto God & His Throne.***
 - a) Some think the child is Jesus—caught up to the throne of God.
 - b) But the symbolism seems to be of the church & its growth.
 - c) God would not allow His church to be destroyed by Satan.
 - d) He exalted the church by its triumph over pagan Rome.
 - Even though terribly persecuted off and on for over 200 years.
 - Satan and his workers were not successful in destroying the church.
 - In 313 AD, Emperor Constantine stopped the persecution.
 - And made Christianity the acceptable religion of the Empire.
 - e) So, the Devil was defeated in His first major effort!
 - f) But this was not the end of the story.
 - g) After this, the church would go into the wilderness.
 - Go into obscurity for 1260 days (same time frame as before).
 - This will be looked at more later.
 - h) The Devil had not been successful in persecuting the church from without.
 - i) Now, he turns to work from within the church to destroy it.

B. The Devil's defeat described: (7-9)

- 1) Symbolically, this war is being fought out in heaven.
 - a) It is basically a spiritual battle between God and Satan.
 - b) Michael & His angels fought against the Devil and his angels.
 - c) The Devil was defeated.
 - d) All were cast out.
 - The Dragon—Old Serpent—The Devil—Satan—the Deceiver.
 - And his angels—followers were defeated.
 - e) The church won the first round.
- 2) I wonder:
 - a) If this symbolic picture is not making use of the actual account of what originally happened with Satan & his angels.
 - b) To illustrate the battle with regards to the church.

C. The rejoicing in heaven (10-12)

- 1) V. 10—***“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”***
- 2) This message is obviously to encourage those who will be martyrs to the Cause of Christ in this great battle.
 - a) The church will be victorious because of the faithfulness of the martyrs.
 - Through the blood of Christ—cleansing, forgiveness, salvation.
 - Through faithful profession of faith in Christ as the Son of God.
 - Through willingness to die for that conviction.
 - b) Christians are encouraged to rejoice in this great victory.
 - c) But this is not the end of the story!
 - The Devil will not stop his efforts.
 - Woe to mankind—watch out for his deceitful, wicked ways.

- Satan knows that he does not have eternity to do his work.

D. The Devil's renewed efforts briefly described (13-17)

- 1) He was defeated—cast down, but not out!
- 2) He will continue to pursue the church—the product of God's truth.
- 3) The woman is given 2 wings of a great eagle—Divine assistance.
- 4) She flew into the wilderness:
 - a) Where God nourished her;
 - b) So she would not die.
- 5) She was there for a time, times, and half-time (3 ½ or 1260 days)
- 6) The Devil's efforts:
 - a) A flood out of his mouth to destroy the woman.
 - b) He will put forth overwhelming efforts to destroy her during the 1260 days.
 - c) But even the earth (temporal rulers) will help the church to survive.
 - d) He is enraged with the woman.
 - e) He continues to make war on her offspring.
 - f) Upon those who:
 - Keep the commandments of God
 - And have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

E. General Observations:

- 1) The Devil tried to subvert God's plan of Redemption through Christ and failed.
- 2) He also failed in his efforts to stamp out the body of Christ by persecution.
- 3) But he does not give up easily—He continues to wage war on the church.
 - a) All kinds of overwhelming efforts will be put forth to destroy it.
 - b) He will cause ignorance of the Word of God thru the dark ages.
 - c) Encourage Pride & Ambition in leaders of the church to bring about a corruption of it.
 - d) Teach false doctrine & encourage false practices.
 - e) It will even appear as though he has succeeded in his efforts.
- 4) But God saw to it that the church was preserved for mankind.
 - a) The wilderness—a place of hardship—but safe.
 - b) Nourished by God's Word during that time.
 - c) And it won't be forever—limited time—time, times, and half-time.
- 5) But even when the church comes back to life again—Satan won't stop his efforts.

IV. SATAN'S TWO GREAT HELPERS ARE NOW DESCRIBED (13:1-18)

A. The Devil is the arch-enemy of God, Christ, and God's people.

- 1) Man does not see the Devil—but he can see his helpers.
- 2) They do his work for him.
 - a) They are his agents through whom he works.
 - b) Through them, he brings misery, mischief, tribulations, trials, and persecution.
- 3) These helpers are described in Ch. 13—as two beasts.
 - a) The beast of the Sea.
 - b) The beast of the Land.
- 4) Together—they are the terrible trio—the Triunity of wickedness.
 - a) They are the copy of the Divine Triunity.
 - b) Their purpose is to undermine God's work among mankind.

- c) They want to deceive and defeat righteousness.

B. The Beast of the Sea (13:1-10)

1) Description:

- a) 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 crowns:
- He is like the Dragon.
 - He symbolizes the temporal powers—rulership.
 - Satan uses such to persecute & undermine & destroy the church.
- b) He wears the name of blasphemy—Usurps God’s rightful place.
- c) He looked like a leopard:
- His feet like a bear—powerful—overwhelms victims.
 - Mouth of a lion—Roar reminds all who has dominion.
 - Dragon gave him his power, seat, authority—Satan’s helper.
 - One of his heads wounded, but he revived—Almost lost his power, but regained it.
- d) The people worshipped:
- The dragon who gave the beast his power.
 - And the beast, saying: ***“Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”***
- e) The beast spoke great things and blasphemies.
- f) He was given power to continue for 42 months (Same as 1260).
- g) The beast blasphemed:
- God,
 - His Name,
 - His Tabernacle (church)
 - And those who dwell in heaven.
- h) He was allowed to make war with the saints and to overcome them.
- i) He was given authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation.
- j) All who dwell on earth will worship him—except the true child of God.
- k) But his end will come by the same means as he gained power.
- 2) Significance:
- a) This beast has power during the same 1260 days (years, etc)
- b) It could not be the Pagan Roman Empire—since that ceased.
- c) Or did it?
- d) Was it to continue under another guise to fight against the true church?
- e) Was it also a political, as well as false Christianity combination?
- f) Many believe that this was describing Apostate Christianity that took over the church.
- The dragon gave her the power she had.
 - All nations, kindreds, peoples—worshipped.
 - All accept the true child of God—whose names are enrolled in the book of life.

C. The Beast of the Land (13:11-18)

1) Description:

- a) Came up out of the earth.

- b) Had 2 horns like a lamb—two rulers or 2 kinds of rulership (Temporal & Spiritual)
 - c) He spoke like a dragon
 - Looked like a lamb—Spiritual, humble, harmless
 - But spoke like a dragon—showed whose side he was really on.
 - d) He exercised all the power of the 1st beast. (Co-reigning)
 - e) He caused the earth to worship 1st beast whose deadly wound was healed.
 - f) He performed great signs, and even made fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men.
 - Purpose—to deceive men and keep them under their power.
 - g) He caused men to make an image of 1st beast and pay homage.
 - h) He gave life to the image of the beast.
 - i) He caused all men to be subject to the beast.
 - They could not buy or sell without his mark.
 - The beast's number is that of a man---666.
- 2) Significance:
- a) The Apostate church took power over the nations spiritually.
 - b) But later was able to combine the temporal power of old Rome.
 - c) They could then force the nations to submit by threat of death.
 - d) Thus, the powers to be brought against all mankind would be terrible.
 - They would be deceptive, over-powering.
 - Only the elect, the faithful, those who really obey God will escape their deception and power.
 - All the rest would yield and be overcome.
 - e) Those powers will brand their own—give them a name to distinguish them.
 - f) 666 is a symbol of man—3 times—Worldliness at its greatest power.
 - g) When Apostate Christianity & the Political Powers combine—you have great wickedness.

CONCLUSION

1. The deceptive powers of Satan are awesome.
 - a) The whole world is caught up in his snare.
 - b) And the sad thing is—they don't even realize it.
 - c) The reason why—they are blinded—in darkness—do not know God's truth.
2. This deceptiveness is seen in:
 - a) The symbol of evil dressed in refinement—a counterfeit of goodness.
 - b) The spirit of the world dressed in mild manners.
 - c) The spirit of carnal religion—like one that opposed Jesus & slew Him.
 - d) A religion ready to resort to violence to attain its ends.
 - e) One that substitutes empty forms for true spiritual submission to God
 - f) A religion of sight, not one of faith.
3. There is no question—history reveals:
 - a) A political & religious alliance that held sway for hundreds of years.
 - b) This alliance was in order to keep their powers over men.
 - c) We can still see such at work, even today.
4. But God's faithful people are not caught up in such.

5. Chapters 14-15 tells of the triumph of God's people over Satan and His helpers.
6. Chapters 16 tells of the terrible punishment upon such by bowls of wrath.
7. Chapters 17-18 tells of the Great Harlot and her identity and punishment.

Lesson Twelve

“THE CHURCH IN THE LAST DAYS”

(Rev. 19:1-9)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the Reading of Revelation 19-22)

1. Babylon the Great has fallen!
 - a) God has judged the Harlot on the Beast.
 - b) The outcome is now obvious.
 - c) The Harlot will be stripped of her power over the nations.
 - d) And Ch. 18 was an appropriate funeral dirge over fallen Babylon.
2. Ch. 19 opens up with the Halleluiahs chorus!
 - a) The church has survived Babylon’s worse.
 - b) God’s True Bride can come out into the open once more. (Contrast)
 - c) God’s judgment has liberated the earth from Babylon’s hold.
 - d) The Word of God now has free course again on the earth among men.

DISCUSSION

I. VICTORY CELEBRATION DESCRIBED. (19:1-2)

A. The Great Babylon has been humbled—has fallen!

- 1) Political & Spiritual Rome with all her fearfulness has been brought low.
- 2) The magnificent city that men thought would last forever has fallen!
- 3) God’s justness & righteous judgment has been brought to bear upon her.

B. Who brought this humbling of the Great City?

- 1) Obviously—the Lamb with his great power.
- 2) Vs. 11-16 describes the Lamb coming to do battle with Babylon.
 - a) He was riding a white horse (righteousness of His Cause).
 - b) He judges righteously.
 - c) His eyes were like a flame of fire (ability to see & know all).
 - d) Many diadems or crowns on His head (Ultimate ruler over all).
 - e) Clothed in linen, white & clean (unsoiled by sin or evil).
 - f) He has a flaming sword coming out of His mouth with which to do battle.
(The Word of God)

3) His names:

- a) Faithful & true (lives up to His promises—dependable).
 - b) Name that only He knew (Denoting the inability of mere men to fathom Him).
 - c) The Word of God (Expression & Revealer of God’s will to man).
 - d) King of kings, Lord of lords (His dignity, Superiority over all).
- 4) His vesture dipped in blood (possibly denoting victory).
 - a) He smites the nations with His sword.
 - b) He either converts or condemns with His Word.
 - 5) He has an army following Him.
 - a) They too are clothed in white linen.
 - b) Riding on white horses (made righteous in the blood of the Lamb).

C. How is the defeat envisioned?

- 1) Like a great supper to which birds are invited.

- a) Called the feast of the Great God.
- b) But birds are the ones who are invited.
- c) Their food:
 - The flesh of those killed in the battle.
 - Dead bodies all over the battlefield.
- d) Who killed them?
 - Him that sat upon the white horse.
 - With the sword from His mouth.
- 2) Also, like being cast into a Lake of Fire.
 - a) Notice that only the Beast & False Prophet were cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - b) They were cast alive into the Lake of Fire.
 - c) This is their overthrow—never to arise again as before.
 - d) However, her followers were merely slain with the Sword.
 - e) Their final punishment has not come yet.

D. This great defeat calls for celebration.

- 1) The Halleluiah Chorus.
 - a) Halleluiah means—praise be to God.
 - b) In 18:20—***“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her.”***
 - c) In Ch. 19, they do rejoice.
 - d) 19:1-6
- 2) At the same time is a celebration of a great marriage feast.
 - a) The Lamb has been faithful—He has carried out His promises.
 - b) But so has the True, Faithful bride—adorned in white & linen.
 - c) To be invited to this marriage feast is a great honor.
 - d) ***“Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage super of the Lamb.”***

E. John is encouraged to worship & give glory only to God for this great victory!

II. OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE--THE BINDING OF SATAN. (20:1-6)

A. Background:

- 1) The **Dragon, Beast, & False Prophet** were introduced in Chs. 12-13.
- 2) The Beast & False Prophet are envisioned as Babylon. Harlot on Beast)
- 3) Their overthrow was seen in Chs. 17-19.
 - a) The Beast & False Prophet were cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - b) They no longer exist.
- 4) But the Dragon....Satan....was not cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - a) He was only bound!
 - b) Imperial & Papal Rome were his tools to rule over men.
 - c) But they were humbled—and cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - d) They perished, but Satan was still alive!
 - e) His next efforts will come!
 - f) But, He will have to find a new tool to use.

B. What is meant by the expression, “a thousand years?”

- 1) There is no indication that it is to be taken literal—so, symbolic.

- 2) 1000 carries with the concept of “completion.”
 - 3) If it indicates time—it is the completed period of time.
 - 4) It is not important for us to know the exactness of time.
 - 5) This period comes at the end of the 1260-day period.
- C. *What is to happen during this 1000-year period of time?***
- 1) Satan is bound!
 - a) He has been defeated in his efforts to deceive the nations.
 - b) As the Word of God has free course—men’s minds are enlightened.
 - c) As long as the Word of God is preached—men cannot be deceived as before.
 - d) Satan no longer has the use of the Harlot on the Beast to deceive and rule over the nations.
 - 2) The saints are reigning!
 - a) They have been placed on thrones—denoting victory.
 - b) The church has again survived Satan’s onslaughts.
 - c) It was a time of exaltation, vindication, and judgment.
 - d) This is symbolically spoken of as the first resurrection.
 - Like looking over a battlefield with much dead.
 - All of a sudden—certain ones come back to life!
 - Both the dead saints & living saints enjoyed this victory.
 - Both share in this great triumph.
 - e) They reign for the entire period of time (?) (1000 years).
 - 3) The enemies of God stay dead.
 - a) They stay dead for the entire period of time (1000 years).
 - b) They were defeated—they obviously do not share in this triumph.
 - c) Only the saints of God share in this triumph.
 - 4) Observations:
 - a) With the defeat of Babylon.....
 - b) And the Word of God having free course upon earth again....
 - c) God’s church, His Cause begins to grow & thrive again.
 - d) The Devil’s great deception no longer holds the world in subjection.
 - e) Those who are involved with the “first resurrection” will not be punished with the 2nd death—as enemies of God will be.

III. SATAN’S FINAL EFFORT & PUNISHMENT. (20:7-10)

A. After the 1000 years, Satan is loosed.

- 1) For a little season.
 - a) Little in comparison to either the 1260 day period or the 1000 year period.
 - b) Probably denoting Satan’s weakness or limitations now.
- 2) Satan will again attempt to deceive the nations.
 - a) God has further use of Satan.
 - b) Reason he was not cast into the Lake of Fire like the Beast & False Prophet.
 - c) Satan will have another opportunity to deceive the nations.
 - To deceive the nations into fighting against God & His people.
 - To try to overthrow God’s work among men.
 - d) He is pictured as gathering Gog & Magog for the great battle.
 - Gog & Magog represent Satan’s new efforts to fight against God.

- They gather around the church to lay siege to her.
 - They will constantly try to overthrow her.
- 3) What is the outcome of this battle?
 - a) This attempt will fail too—just like Babylon’s efforts.
 - b) No matter how many or how great his efforts are—all will fail.
 - c) The dead are all gathered in battle with Satan—but defeated.
 - d) Satan & his followers are cast into the Lake of Fire & Brimstone.
 - e) They are tormented day & night forever & ever.

IV. THE FINAL JUDGMENT. (20:11-15)

A. The Throne scene:

- 1) The earth & heavens fled away from the presence of Him on the throne.
- 2) The dead—small & great—stand before God to be judged.

B. The Judgment scene:

- 1) Books were opened.
- 2) Book of Life was also opened.
- 3) All were judged out of the books by their deeds.

C. The Punishment:

- 1) If name not written in Lamb’s book of life—cast into Lake of Fire.
- 2) This is the 2nd death.
- 3) This will be a righteous judgment according to their deeds.

CONCLUSION

1. God’s people have had to suffer for righteousness thru the centuries.
2. But the final accounting has not come yet—But it will come!
3. While the nations were deceived for a period of time by the Great city.....
 - a) God saw to it that her deception was stopped.
 - b) So, Satan will have to look elsewhere to accomplish his task.
 - c) He will eventually find another way to deceive the nations.
 - d) But it will be short-lived.
4. Then, the final judgment will come.
5. Which side are we on?
6. Is our name written in the Lamb’s book of life?
7. Are we part of the beautiful bride to be married to Christ (Rev. 21-22)

