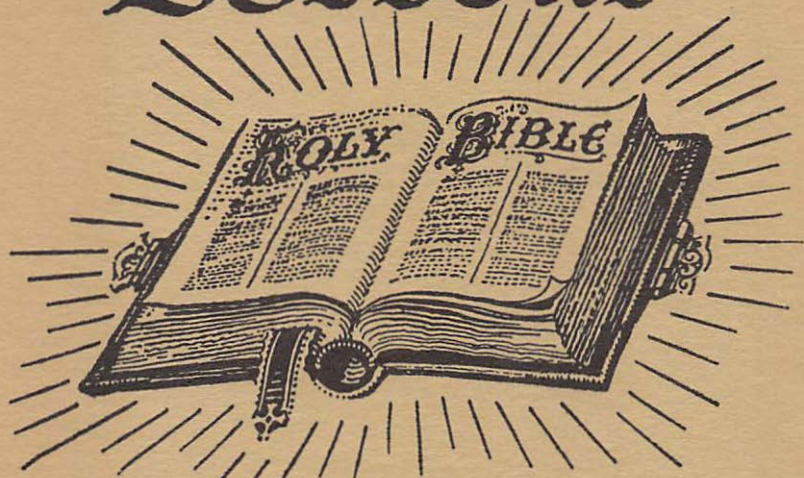


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Bible Lessons



"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 10, No. 1
Jan., Feb., March
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Vol. 10

Jan., Feb., Mar., 1978

No. 1

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1978

The series of lessons for this quarter will conclude our study in the book of Revelation. I believe that we can say that the main theme running through this series of lessons is the great conflict that is ensued between the forces of righteousness and truth under the leadership of Jesus Christ and the influences of darkness under Satan, and the final triumph of the Church over all these various agents that Satan employs. The first beast (Roman Catholicism), and the second beast (Protestantism), and the dragon loosed the second time (Communism), are all to be overthrown. The triumphant phase of the Church in this world and the eternal triumph at the last are revealed here. The pouring out of God's wrath upon the earth because of men's rejection of the truth is clearly seen. The Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the faithful, the angel standing with one foot on the sea and one foot on the land, the faithful and triumphant standing on the sea of glass sounding the harps of God, are scenes that we should let be indelibly imprinted upon our minds and hearts. Then, there is the scene of the corrupt Church, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT with her harlot daughters. Contrasting this with the beautiful vision of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven along with the cry to God's people caged in the dens of Babylon, "Come out of her", we understand what God has been doing in these latter days. Fear and watchfulness takes us as we see the dragon power under the cloak of Communism being loosed and rampantly deceiving the nations. It is all pictured here. WE ARE IN THE LAST DAYS. MANY OF THESE PROPHECIES HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE! The masses of evil are surrounding the true Church today. We are being pressured from every side. Let us look up, for our redemption draweth nigh.

L. Busbee

January 1, 1978

THE MULTITUDE WHICH NO MAN COULD NUMBER

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

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

(1)

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

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

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

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

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Memory Verse: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30.

Central Thought: The Seal of the Living God is the Holy Spirit enshrined within the hearts of His people, an innumerable host of believers who are willing to follow the Lord all the way through tribulation and with which Satan opposes them, being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Word Definitions: *The four winds of the earth:* Wind denotes spiritual influence which includes doctrines and movements in the religious realm. God knew that mankind was capable of conceiving and propagating self-devised and self-

thought up ideas of religion even in the name of Christianity. *Great tribulation:* Every child of God must of necessity prove his or her faithfulness to Christ by means of enduring and passing through great trials and afflictions. *He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them:* shall spread His tabernacle over them. Greek. *The Lamb . . . shall feed them:* shall tend them and be their Shepherd. Greek.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The sixth seal has just been opened revealing terrible things from God's wrath. John beholds these four angels holding the four winds of the earth. This is an impressive scene. God wills that every man serve and love Him. He knows that not all will do so. He realizes that Satan's influence is in the world, and that his stronghold will never be loosened as long as men will to serve the lusts of the flesh and the way of sin. God has absolute control of everything and everybody. Even people who refuse to walk according to His divine laws will He rule ultimately in the end. It is only those who lovingly and willingly obey and follow Him who will inherit His eternal blessings. The conflict that ensues between the hosts of wickedness and the faithful band is of great interest and concern with Him. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the seal that God would have within the heart and life of all His saints. This seals us and preserves us from the darkness and evil deceptions that are turned loose upon the world. Only those who believe according to truth in Christ and consecrate their hearts and lives to His perfect will, are able to receive the Holy Spirit.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the angel want to do before the four winds of earth were turned loose?
2. Can you think of four main religions of earth that are in opposition to the truth?
3. Is it consistent to believe there will only be 144,000 saved?
4. What kind of multitude did John see after this?
5. How were their robes made white?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Is it not wonderful that God has made it possible and sure for everyone who wills to serve Him to have access to His grace and salvation? From all nations come men and women of good will and honest intent. With hungering heart for right-

eousness and truth the Saviour is found to be precious to them. Behold this wonderful scene! This vast innumerable throng surrounding the throne clothed in white robes with palms in their hands are exulting in the triumph of their King. The purity and cleanness of their hearts and lives with the glorious victory over sin and death is shining forth. It makes us think of the verse of a song:

**"Ten thousand times ten thousand in sparkling raiment white
The armies of the ransomed saints throng up the steeps of light;**

**'Tis finished, yes, 'tis finished: their fight with death and sin,
Fling open wide the golden gates and let the victors in!"**

Here are the redeemed of all ages pictured before us. They have come out of great tribulation. They have gone through much suffering and endurance; but it was worth it all. In a spiritual sense this is true even now. Satan fights hard in giving opposition and pressure against those who choose to follow the Lord. He will seek to make the way of the Lord appear hard and unjust. This is only to try the faithful and add more glory to their decision for their Saviour. If you will serve the Lord and are purposed with all of your heart to do so, there is plenteous grace for your need. You can serve the Lord in His temple and He will be real to you. The 16th verse of our lesson is a quotation from the 49th chapter of Isaiah and the 10th verse. Surely Christ is the satisfying portion to those who know Him in His wonderful grace. He spreads His tabernacle over us and feeds us with Himself, the Bread of Life. Tears are wiped away and we know the true meaning of joy and soul rest. Some day the veil of the flesh will be forever removed. All the glorious blessings that we have had spiritually will be fulfilled in eternal realities. Faith will be lost in sight. Oh, how we do rejoice in the fullness of the inheritance that Christ has given us, both now and in that glorious day to come!

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. 5:12. Are we different than those who were burned at the stake? Are we different than those who have been tortured because they would not give up their faith in Jesus Christ? Oh, how thankful we are for those who have stood true "which were before" us! They preserved the Bible and kept it from being completely destroyed. Truly it's a miracle that God's Word is with us today. Surely the eye of

God was over it and we are glad that He was able to find people who were willing to obey His will in taking care of it so we can have it today. They are the ones who were persecuted before our time. They are the ones who will be in that "multitude, which no man could number" with palms of victory in their hands. We want to stand with them and wave palms of victory. Can we "rejoice and be exceedingly glad" when troubles come our way because of our stand for truth and right? Oh, may God help us to get a vision of what Jesus meant when He gave us the above Scripture! Surely there is victory for us in every trial and test of life. We have not suffered unto death. There are many things that could come our way. Oh, how we thank God for how He has brought us through, up to the present time! Surely, He will see us to the end with victory and we can be among that great number who will stand before our God in that great day, dressed in robes of righteousness. What a great hope we have within our souls! It is a hope that is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Heb. 6:19.

"When he shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in him be found;
Dressed in his righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne."

—M. Miles

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January 8, 1978

THE HOST OF HELL TURNED LOOSE

Rev. 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

Memory Verse: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. II Tim. 3:1.

Central Thought: Because of man's lack of love for the truth, God has allowed vile, deceptive spirits to invade upon the realm of the souls of men, bringing deceptive doctrines and evil mannerisms, causing perilous and treacherous times for the saints of God.

Word Definition: *Woe:* Exclamation of grief, sorrow, distress, and anguish. *Brimstone:* sulphur. *Jacinth:* blue.

LESSON BACKGROUND

At the opening of the seventh seal there was a short space of silence. Then John beheld the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. With this scene he also saw an angel standing before the golden altar offering much incense with the prayers of the saints upon the altar. The smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God. Then the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there followed voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. What we are beholding here is very doubtless to be the beginning of the gospel era being shown again, this time at a different aspect. The seven angels with their seven trumpets, and the censer of fire being poured out upon the earth all have to do with the advent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and the dispensation of the gospel by the servants of the Lord. We have omitted the first four trumpets sounding from our lesson, and will devote our attention to the last three trumpets and the woes they brought upon the earth, because we are persuaded this is the age in which we now live. We are facing the hosts of deceptive evil influences and spirits that were loosed upon the earth at the sounding of the 5th and 6th trumpets. This is where we should be stirred and awakened to diligence and watchfulness. The atmosphere is peopled with evil spirits and heavy with the depression of hell. Every kind of doctrine imaginable is being promulgated. Devil worship, occults, spiritualism, besides the hosts of movements and churches going in the name of Christ, are a mass of opposition to the truth. We are not to believe every spirit and not to embrace everything that shows itself. We are to try the spirits and be continually on our guard. It truly is a perilous time.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would God bring WOE upon the earth?
2. What would the bottomless pit typify?
3. Who were the locusts (evil spirits) given power to hurt?
4. Looking backward, why were the four angels not loosed before now?
5. Do you think we are now living in the midst of all this woe?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The last three trumpet angels were to bring three woes to the inhabitants of the earth. We know that according to the Scripture the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and that His ear is open unto their prayers. Psalms 34:15. Regardless of how wicked, evil, and perilous the times, He will make a way for His people to escape and overcome. As we yield and submit ourselves to Him, He will overrule the powers of darkness that otherwise would overwhelm us. Those who refuse to obey the gospel will be given over to be a prey to the wicked spirits that are abroad in the land. It is a serious thing to deal with God and the gospel of His salvation. Psalms 2:12 exhorts us to "Kiss the Son [embrace and worship purely], lest He be angry" with us and we perish from the way. We are not forced or required to serve the Lord and let His will be done, but the cost of not doing so is very great. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." His mercy "is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, . . . to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." The "angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." Psalms 103:17-20. Oh, how diligent we should be and how quick to do His biddings! Such is the standard and qualifications of receiving His blessings. Even though we are saved by grace without the works of the law, yet the principle of obedience has never been taken away. We still must obey Christ and live to His law. If we refuse and rebel against it, we will be given over to be taken by a foul spirit.

How needful for every soul who experiences divine grace and mercy to go on to the perfected life and receive the Holy Spirit to live and rule! This is the seal of the living God. This seal upon our hearts and lives will safeguard us from deception and being defiled by these evil spirits that are turned loose upon the world. The four angels that were bound in the river Euphrates (Ver. 14) are the same angels that held the four winds of earth. (chap. 7, ver. 1). It implies that before God would allow the hosts of hell to be so lavishly turned loose upon the realm of mankind, He provided a safeguard for all who willed to serve Him aright. Many times the Holy Spirit has kept us from error and false doctrine! Instead of listening to every spirit that comes along, we pray and seek God's guidance, and the Holy Spirit shows us the truth every time. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In later editions of the Greek New Testament they give the word *eagle* instead of *angel* in the first verse of our printed lesson. It would not be one of the seven angels but would be a swift messenger. "It simply announces that the three trumpets yet to sound will possess greater calamities to the people of earth than those that have preceded, by reason of which they are called woes." (Rev. Exp.). Now in chapter nine we start out with the fifth angel sounding and a star falls from heaven to earth who possesses a key to the bottomless pit. This is a fallen star so it would be a symbol of false prophets, and was given a key. How different than the gospel ministers who were given a key to the kingdom of God. This key opened the bottomless pit by false teachers and out came delusive hosts of evil spirits which were very dense and the air was even darkened.

Today we know there are still false teachers who have the key to a host of evil spirits. Did you ever know of a time when witchcraft, atheism, etc., were so prominent? A move is on the way to try to banish the name of God from every place; even trying to take, "In God We Trust" off our money.

The smoke that came upon the earth represents deceptive teachings, and need not keep the light of God from shining in the hearts of His children. During the plagues in Egypt "thick darkness" covered the land of Egypt for three days, but in the dwellings of the children of Israel they "had light." Also we read that a "pillar of fire" by night gave them light as they left. In the temple there was light continually. This was a symbol of the glorious light of the gospel of Christ that has "shined in our hearts." Praise God for light in our souls in the midst of gross darkness even today!

The locusts were commanded to only "hurt men," who had not the "seal of God in their foreheads." Rev. 9:4. This makes us know that these false religious imposters were coming against the church.

—M. Miles

THE WASP AND THE SPIDER

I was examining several wasp nests high up under the eaves of our log cabin in the mountains. Suddenly one of those fierce little beasts buzzed towards its nest. Swerving off the track, it got one foreleg snared in the long filament of a spider's web. With considerable anger at being caught in mid-air, he spread his powerful wings and knocked the cord free from its bottom

anchorage. This swung him wildly from the top anchorage, like a man on a flying trapeze.

The wasp settled down to rest for a moment. Then came a small, light-brown spider from his lair at the top of the irregular web. He appeared helpless beside the sleek, jet-black wasp, which was three times his size, had powerful wings, fierce jaws and—most important—a deadly sting in his tail. As the spider approached, the wasp stabbed out at him viciously, but the spider kept a fraction of an inch beyond the tip of that deadly needle.

Quick as a flash, the spider flung another of his cords around the one foot already caught, then he raced to the top of the net to attach the other end. There the spider waited to let the wasp tire himself out, buzzing angrily at the now strengthened cord. Then, down again the spider came and glued another of those entangling threads to the wasp, this time to his left wing. Again the wasp stabbed wildly and excitedly, and again the spider retreated up to the eaves.

On his next trip down, the spider attached the thread—much to my amazement—to the left hind leg of the wasp, within a fraction of an inch of that sting and its poison. If it had struck home, it could have meant death to the spider. But I discovered that attaching the line to the hind foot was more clever than daring, since a wasp can sting only by “sitting down” forward. A wasp’s stabs are not like a horse’s kick, backward, but like a cow’s kick, forward. The spider apparently knew all about that. The filament, once it was glued to the left hind foot of the wasp, was taken downward and fastened to a log of the cabin. Now the wasp was secured top and bottom, and could not swing freely in the air. Next, the spider glued one of his ropes to the right hind leg of the wasp and then, in quick succession, to the left and right antenna. All this amid wild stabbing of the wasp.

The wasp bit hard at the web with his horizontal teeth, trying to cut his way out of this death trap. (By this time I was up a ladder for a ringside seat.) Now the spider threw a web around the three left feet of the wasp, handcuffing them together. Never once did he try to bite the wasp. He just kept lassoing one leg after another. After thirty minutes of violent twisting, fighting, and stabbing, the wasp’s only movement was a twitching of the left front foot and the right hind leg. Was it all over now? Had the spider won the fight as easily as that?

An hour and a half later I climbed the ladder again. The wasp, far from finished, was flexing its body, that part with which he stung, stabbing at his own mouth again and again with his sting. What! I thought—are you trying to kill yourself by stabbing yourself in the throat? A closer look revealed his mouth tangled with filmy, cottony stuff from the web that he had tried to cut himself out of, and now he was picking his teeth with his stinger! The spider was still making methodical trips up and down, on each trip ensnaring his victim with one more of those thin filaments. The wasp's end was now only a question of time.

From outward appearances, the wasp was far stronger than the spider, and far more capable of taking care of himself, but he made one fatal mistake—he let one foot get into the web of that innocent-looking spider.

How often young people are like that—it is the first sin that causes the trouble. The first cigarette, the first drink, the first dance, the first lie, the first swear-word, the first thing stolen, that starts the walk to the death chamber. If there were not a first, there would never be a second.

The Apostle Paul tells a young man to “flee youthful lusts” (II Tim. 2:22). And to be doubly safe, Timothy is warned against a number of things he must “shun . . . depart from . . . purge himself from . . . avoid.” Happy is the Christian young person who never puts his foot into the spider web of sin for the first time.

You Are Lost

Unless you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you are lost for eternity. The Bible says: “There is none righteous, no, not one.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. 3:10, 23. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

—Ralph Toliver

January 15, 1978

THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Rev. 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Rev. 11:11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Memory Verse: For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. I Thess. 4:16.

Central Thought: The great eternal purpose of God shall be finished and completed and time will close with a triumphant Christ and His Church reigning forever and ever while the wicked are destroyed.

Word Definitions: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound. . . ." The word *begin* here is a translation from the Greek word, *mello*, which means expectation, to intend, that is, be about to be. This makes it clear that the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound (when he is about to sound) are the days just previous to his sounding. In these days just before he sounds the mystery of God (the work of salvation) shall be finished.

LESSON BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

In our previous lesson we saw a vast host of wicked spirits loosed upon the earth and given access to deceive the souls of men. Our lesson today opens a solemn scene of an angel in glorious array coming down from heaven and with his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, swearing with uplifted hand by Him who liveth forever and ever that time should be no longer. In the days of wickedness before the first destruction of the earth by a flood, God decreed there would be such destruction. Before it was carried out, God gave space and time for reformation and escape to those who would believe and obey Him. He gave Noah guidance and understanding to build an ark in which he would be saved. Later, when God decreed to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain, He sent warning to the righteous and any who desired to escape, and gave them space and opportunity to do so. This is the nature of God to recompense transgression, but at the same time afford an opportunity to escape for all who will to be saved. We see this same thing in our lesson. The decree is once more sworn by Him who lives forever. Time is going to end. But it is not going to end until God is fully satisfied that all who will to be saved will have just opportunity to do so. After this decree is made we find John in a relationship with the angel. He is given the little book that the angel had in his hand, and he eats it. Then he is given a reed

to measure the temple of God (The Church). In doing so, another aspect of the gospel era is unveiled which we have already partially covered in a previous lesson. It concerns the two witnesses, (the Word and the Spirit) and their ministry in the Church age. It shows the 1260 years of Papal darkness, the 350 years (three days and a half) of sect-making when men denied the personal right of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to lead souls, and takes us up to where we bring into our lesson the scene of the two witnesses being resurrected once more to their rightful place. This is evidently the reformation of the evening light which brought light and victory to many souls who were hedged up in the pens of men and worldly, unspiritual churches. At the same hour there was a great earthquake. This is evidently the terrible landslide toward the world that commenced working right in the leaders of the Church of God. Terrible accounts have reached our hearing of the sad days that it brought to the Church. But there was a remnant, thank God. There were a faithful few who held to the narrow way. This remnant was affrighted (filled with the fear of God at the sight of those who were swept away). They gave glory to God for their deliverance. This marks that the second woe is past. The third woe fell at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The seventh trumpet is the ending of time, the closing out of the Church age. Yes, we realize that many do not teach it this way. But give it some time, thought, and most of all, prayer. Notice carefully what the voices in heaven said, and what the four and twenty elders said at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This can be nothing else but the end. Consider what we say, and may the Lord impart the needed understanding to each one.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the angel swear?
2. Before the seventh angel sounded what was to be finished?
3. What is the mystery of God?
4. Why does God send trouble upon earth and pour out His wrath upon mankind?
5. In the great conflict between good and evil, who is going to win?
6. What is the third woe?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We read about the two witnesses that were trampled under foot in the streets of great Babylon. Protestants were those

who protested against the Catholic Church. They began to set up different groups by different names which were founded on different interpretations of the Scriptures. Among the Protestants were those who were truly saved. They belonged to the Church of God. During this time the Word and the Spirit had no place to operate in their official capacity as Governors of God's church, therefore they were represented as being slain. Sectism is not governed by the Word and the Spirit but by human lawmakers and governors. We note that when the Holy Spirit is not the ruler, worldliness takes its place. "Revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" abound and many festivals are connected to the church. They seem to think they must have these things to get members and keep their interest alive in the organization. It is not the Holy Spirit's drawing but human activities. There is no harm for saints and young people to get together in a godly right way, but it must not be connected with the church in the sense of the church sponsoring it. God's Spirit must be the ruler, and the Word the rule by which all live and feed.

During the three and an half days, or 350 years of Protestantism, the two witnesses were slain. (1530 A.D. to 1880 A.D.) They were not to always lie dead in the streets. In 1880 a band of the true children of God went forth and called the saints to come out from among Babylon and there was a mighty out-coming. Many times they were called, "Come-outers." They recognized the call of the Holy Spirit and rejoiced in the Word of God given to them under its anointing. They came rejoicing to Zion. They now were free from man-made laws and could worship the Lord in the freedom of their spirits. The "spirit of life from God entered into them (the two witnesses), and they stood upon their feet; great fear fell upon them which saw them." We read of how D. S. Warner and the others of that day were persecuted by the sects. They tried to hang some of the ministers and would try to break up their meetings, but the truth prevailed. Today we want to be sure the Spirit and the Word have the right of way in our midst.

—M. Miles

(NOTICE TO TEACHER: Place your order for the next quarter early! It is important that your order be in this office not later than March 1, 1978.)

January 22, 1978

THE LAMB ON MOUNT SION

Rev. 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Memory Verse: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. Heb. 12:22.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, is set as King upon His holy hill of Zion, the Church of God, triumphantly over all the sin and error prevailing in the world.

Word Definitions: *Sion*: From the Hebrew word *Tsiyuwn* which means conspicuousness like a sign, monument or guiding pillar. This is comparable with another Hebrew word *Natsach*, which means "to glitter from afar and be eminent." Thus it gives evidence of brightness, sunniness, clearness, and capability of giving great assurance. The word *Babylon* (Babel) on the other hand means exactly the opposite. It means "confusion" coming from another Hebrew word *Balal* which means "to mix." God is not the author of confusion or any other means of Satan to hide the truth and take away the key of knowledge from souls so they cannot search the Scriptures and find what is the real truth. Fully repenting from sin, believing in Christ with all the heart and being born again puts one well on the road to finding and discovering what the real truth is. God has sent His Spirit into the world to reveal to the soul of man the saving truth of His salvation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the 13th chapter we have brought out the beast, the image to the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name. This all adds up to the false religion and system of worship going in the name of Christ and not founded on the Word or inspired and anointed by the Holy Spirit. We have this in the world today. It was here before we came on the scene. But the triumphant Christ who died and rose again is well able to keep those who really seek Him earnestly with all their hearts. We see Him here, in spite of the terrible state of affairs, reigning on Mount Zion with those who are His. Here is another aspect of the triumphant Christ and His people. This multitude figuratively counted at 144,000 are those who are saved and purified by His grace. They are redeemed by His

blood, purely following Him in all things. The number, 144,000, cannot be taken as a literal count, but it is rather a figurative number affecting a combination and union of the believers from Israel of old and its twelve tribes and the believers of the gospel preached by Christ and His twelve apostles. It is contrary to the rest of the Bible to teach that only 144,000 are going to actually be saved. We must seek for deeper meanings than that which the flesh can understand. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to stand on Mount Sion? Who was standing there?
2. Whose name was in their foreheads? What does this signify?
3. What do you think that the substance of the new song was that they sang before the beasts and elders?
4. What three things were vividly spoken of by this blessed throng?
5. What were the three messages of the three angels mentioned in our lesson? Is there any connection between them?
6. What is meant by the term: the patience of the saints?
7. Why are the dead blessed who die in the Lord?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us stand and behold in awe the scene that our lesson unfolds. The beautiful mountain of God's holiness is spread out before us. It is an elevated realm of spiritual life in the heavenly places. Here Christ stands, triumphantly with His feet implanted in eternal life never more to be moved by death and suffering. It is a vision that will comfort and inspire your hearts. Christ lives, and because He lives, we live also. He gives us the more abundant life. He, the Lover of our souls, reveals His beauty, charm, and grace through the Spirit to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Look at the throng that gathers around Him. Upon their hearts and minds is written the divine law of holiness which is the law of God. The Father has given them to Christ. He is not ashamed to introduce them to the close fellowship of His Son. Listen to the song they all sing in harmony and glory. See their pure and stainless lives. They have forsaken the world and its defilement and are consecrated to the Lord and His perfect will. They are truly devoted to Him. There is no guile or deceit or harm in their hearts. Oh, what it does mean to be in that number, and be one of that blessed throng even

now! But look! Another scene unfolds before us. Three angels, one after another, fly through the midst of heaven, each one with an important message to the souls of men. Read each message carefully and slowly. Do we fear God and give glory to Him? Are we aware of the dreaded consequence of being a partaker of Babylon and receiving the mark that she would put upon us? These are serious thoughts. How we need to be wise and take heed to the course we take in life! Satan has so many snares to set for us. Just reject the Lord and there is no telling where we might end up or what kind of condition into which we will get. Oh, the great and terrible punishment laid up in store for those who choose the way of the transgressor! Here is the patience of the saints. Here is where we have to be strong and endure faithfully. Let us stand out against all error and false doctrine. Let us not be a partaker of the sins of those around us. Life is short and will soon be at its close. Our works are going to follow us. They will not be forgotten and in the judgment they will testify for us.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Starting with the sixth verse we see another phase of the last reformation brought to view. The first angel's message was to every nation, tongue, and people. It's not a new gospel but speaks of the nearness of the second coming of Christ, and warns the people to prepare for the judgment. Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14. This has been done and the end is near. Since 1880 the gospel has been carried to all nations.

The second angel cries that Babylon has fallen. This caused a giving away to ungodliness. According to Rev. 16:19 the great city of Babylon is composed of three parts—Catholicism, Heathenism (or idol worship) and the false prophet—Protestantism. Babylon is fallen and then another cry is, "Come out of her, my people." The third angel warns that none should drink of Babylon's wine, nor receive her mark on his forehead.

Oh, it is a dangerous thing to tamper with false movements! Some might say one can go to sectism and try to help get people out, but if you go, you will soon come under the spirit that dominates that movement and think that they are not so bad after all. The devil is working to deceive. Many are brought under false spirits and their lives are changed to fit that spirit's leadings. The devil is working miracles among

them. We read in Rev. 16:14a, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." Don't be deceived by the sectarian miracle workings. We need to be on our guard.

—M. Miles

The "T" Rail

My father died when I was a small boy. We soon found ourselves running short of the necessities of life, so Mother decided to buy a small farm, and we moved to our new home in Bath County, Kentucky. Our nearest neighbor was Uncle George Williams, who had several children; one was a boy about my age. We boys went down to our new neighbors to get acquainted. We had just gotten there, when I saw a piece of T-rail four or five feet long hanging from a limb of an apple tree. This rail had a hole in one end with a wire run through it, and this wire was around the limb of the tree. The rail was touching nothing.

I asked the boy what it was doing there, and he said that it was their dinner bell. I thought he was kidding me, and said so. He picked up a hammer laying there, and said, "Three taps on the T-rail with the hammer would tell the men in the field that dinner was ready." I wanted to try it, but he said, "Wait until dinner is ready, and then you can try it." When dinner was ready I got the hammer and took hold of the T-rail and hit it. The sound was dead. Nute said, "You grounded it when you took hold of it." He took the hammer and hit the rail three taps, while it swung free, and the message rang clear. Soon we saw the men coming from the field.

I soon found out that the rail was a message bearer. Two taps would bring Mr. Williams home if he were needed. Five taps meant the house was on fire, and everybody would come running home. We lived at that place three years, then moved away, and I thought no more about the T-rail in the apple tree, until about 40 years later, when the Lord brought it back to my mind, and taught me a lesson on the church.

I had been a part of the Anderson Church of God, and enjoyed their messages, also their campmeetings, but as time went on, the messages were watered down until they did not ring true. I was worried about it, and could not rest; I did not know just what was wrong. Walking down the street thinking about the condition, I found myself in vision, looking at that old rail hanging in the apple tree, and the voice (that still, small voice) spoke to me and said, "The trouble with the church is, that it

is grounded." Someone had hold of it. The earthly headquarters had grounded the message. An earthly headquarters will always ground the message and God's people, and the Holy Spirit having moved out, left it dead.

I have learned from this T-rail that congregations can become grounded and kill the message. Individuals can do the same. We must be anchored from above, to keep us and our message from being grounded. We need the two witnesses, the Word and the Spirit; they both come down from above. The disciples were earthbound as they could not grasp the teachings of Christ. They were looking for an earthly kingdom, and some of them wanted the best place; one on the right hand, the other on the left hand of Christ. But when the angel took the fire off the golden altar and cast it into the earth (Rev. 8) it burnt the earthbound cords, and the Church got off the ground, and was held above this old world, by that which comes down from Heaven, where Christ sits on the right hand of the Father. Oh, brother, it is that which comes down from above that will keep us anchored to the Rock, and keep the message ringing out true and clear. Let's be sure we are anchored on that which entereth into that within the veil. It will hold us clear and true from the grounding things of this old world, and when the gospel hammer hits that gospel T-rail, the message will be heard, and it will be clear. It will bring God's people together, and will be convincing to the lost of the earth. It will bring healing to the sick, comfort to the broken hearted, peace to the troubled soul. Oh, brother, let's check the anchor, and be sure we are anchored from above! When we are held in place by that which comes from above, then, and then only, will the beauty of the Christ be seen in the Church.

Peter, even after he preached that message at Pentecost and then came from the upper room, still had to have that which comes down from above before he would take God's message to the Gentiles, so God gave him a vision while he was on the housetop, and that vision came down from above. He was told to slay and eat. He said, "Not so Lord, I have never eaten anything common or unclean." God said, "What I have cleansed, call that not common nor unclean." It took that which came down from above to free Peter from his former teaching, and to prepare him to go to the Gentiles. We are always in need of that which comes down from above. Christ said, "I am the bread of life," and He came down from above.

—C. S. M.

January 29, 1978

THE GREAT WINEPRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

Rev. 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (Read Rev. 19:15).

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Isa. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

3 I have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Memory Verse: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. II Cor. 5:21.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ in the sacrifice of Himself upon Calvary's cross for the atonement of the sins of mankind absorbed the wrath of Almighty God so that "whosoever will" could be saved, but His wrath will be turned upon all who refuse to accept His pardoning love.

Word Definition: *Winepress:* The winepress in a vineyard was a vat or trough where the grapes were crushed in order to get the juice from which wine was produced. Wine was the product of the vineyard. Isa. 65:8 says: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." The clusters of grapes were run through the vat and usually crushed by tromping or treading. The wrath of God decreed recompense and vengeance for sin and wickedness. But God did not want to completely destroy the souls of men. His wrath became appeased when Jesus took our place and suffered in our stead for our sins. The wine is a symbol of His blood that takes its ultimate place as the price and atonement for the Holy Spirit to live within us. Thus the Holy Spirit can be spiritually the wine that we drink into giving us life, health, and gladness. *Edom and Bozrah:* Edom at the first was the name given to Esau because he chose to eat of the red lentiles offered to him by Jacob as payment for the birthright. Edom means red. The word *Edom* is the same word as *Adam* which means "red or ruddy." Bozrah was a place in Edom where grapes were gathered. These terms are symbolical. Christ came to reconcile fallen Adam's race, the alien Esau and his posterity, literally, all mankind. To do this, He had to tread the winepress alone, the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The background of the term *winepress* we have brought out in the word definitions. This lesson has to do with the work of salvation for the sake of the souls of men. The One who looked like the Son of Man was Jesus; the white cloud could refer to witnesses and sacred prophecies that backed His coming, and the sharp sickle is evidently the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. But not only does the wine of the wrath

of God become life to the believer, but it becomes a bitter languishing cup to those who spurn the gospel message. Let us remember the message of Psalms 2:12: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the greatest work that Christ accomplished on His mission to earth?
2. What would have happened if He had not come to tread the winepress of the wrath of God?
3. Why did Christ have to tread the winepress alone?
4. Are we going to experience or feel the effect of the treading of this winepress in our own lives?
5. What will our end be if we reject Christ and refuse to receive His pardoning love?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Revelation 19:15 depicts Christ Jesus as One who treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Here is one of the many aspects of the Saviour of the world. He came to appease and turn away the wrath of God from us. The wrath of God is against sin and wickedness of men. Romans 1:18 tells us that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The gospel not only reveals the righteousness of God, but it reveals the wrath of God against sin. Sin was the cause for which Christ suffered the horrible death and agony on the cross. It surely must be a terrible offense to God to require such recompense. But sin is just that offensive. How much more offensive and worthy of wrath it is for indifferent and unthankful souls to pass by lightly the sacrifice of Christ and fail to let it work for their eternal good! The earth is reaped by the gospel. It is a saviour of life unto life or death unto death. Every man is responsible to God for how he treats the gospel. The vine of the earth is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. No one will escape. Either we submit to the gospel and accept its terms and obey its precepts, or we are bound for the worst suffering at the hands of an avenging, wrathful God. Our works are going to be tried by fire. We had better take heed to what we put into our profession of godliness. We will give an account of our works here. Jesus trod the winepress alone. Even His beloved disciples forsook Him and fled. No one understood, and no one could give Him

the comfort of a helping hand. He was the only One. Now we who believe in Him are called to suffer for His sake. It is the least that we can do. We could not suffer with Him then, but we can fellowship His sufferings now. Let us faithfully do this, and be true to Him who bore our sins and sorrows.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a time for everything. We wonder why God waited four thousand years to send Jesus to the earth to die as a sacrifice for our sins, but God knew when it was the best time to send Him. He knew when there would be a few who would accept Him as their Saviour. When we think of the time that He did come and such a few did accept Him, we know that surely God knew when the time was ripe.

God's wrath is poured out against sin. Only Jesus could tread the winepress of God and through His blood we can be saved from our sins. The sins of the whole world were thrown into that great winepress. We can read about some of the sins of the world in Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:28-32. When adulterers, haters of God, disobedient children, murderers, whisperers, etc. are thrown into the great winepress, they are trodden out by the precious Jesus Christ. Those who turn to the Lord can have their sins washed away in His precious blood and come forth clean and pure.

There are some precious truths in these thoughts and we trust that God will make them a blessing to your souls.

—M. Miles

February 5, 1978

STANDING ON THE SEA OF GLASS

Rev. 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Memory Verse: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom. 1:16.

Central Thought: By hearing and obeying all the holy revelation of the Word of God we triumph over all false doctrine and ungodliness.

Word Definitions: *Filthiness:* Baseness, depravity, villainess. *Superfluity:* surplus, more than needed, superabundance.

Naughtiness: badness. *Engrafted (word)*: Implanted; the Word implanted to grow and bear fruit in our hearts and lives.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After the treading of the great winepress of the wrath of God by Christ in His holy atonement for the salvation of men, we see another manifestation of the pouring out of God's wrath. The atonement for sin in Christ does not disannul God's hatred and displeasure for sin and iniquity. Rebellious man who refuses to repent and forsake sin in the face of what Jesus suffered on account of sin merits to himself the great wrath of the Almighty God in a measure unequalled before. Oh, how we need to be touched, moved, and impressed in our hearts by the gospel! How we need to allow the sweet influences of divine grace to accomplish its intended work. Thus we can be of that number we see in our lesson. Behold them standing on the Word of God that has been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. They are triumphing over all things. False doctrine, darkness of the world, evil, pride, lust, greed, and every other contrary force against God and His truth we can trample under our feet. It is interesting to note that part of what this triumphant throng who stands on the sea of glass is speaking is much like the expression of David in Psalms 86:8-10. "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone." This is something that we must keep in mind through these lessons and in our very souls. God and His cause and His people are triumphant. Victory is for His saints. If we will keep our hearts humble and willing to obey Him in all things, we will never know defeat in the Christian life.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Upon whom must the wrath of God be poured out and why?
2. Who will escape the wrath of God?
3. What does it mean to stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God?
4. Is this to be done at a future date?
5. What does it mean when it says that the sea of glass was mingled with fire?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A most vital and important thing for every saved person to do is to read and study the Bible with sincere prayer that the Holy Spirit will reveal the real truth to his or her heart. It is also vital to have a listening ear to hear it preached by others whose lives measure to the standard of the Word and who are anointed to preach the Word. The sea of glass in our lesson that was mingled with fire is none other than the true doctrine of Christ revealed and emblazoned on the humble souls of men and women. It is something that we are to stand on steadfastly and never be moved from. It will enable us to triumph over the beast, his image (these two are Catholicism and Protestantism), his mark (man-rule and human systems), and over the number of his name. All the spiritual apostasy and error come when we fail to properly esteem the Word and the Spirit in their rightful place in the Church and in our individual lives. Oh, to be in that number who are standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire! This is an experience that we are to know even now. Do not dream about this as a future event. This is for us to have in reality. God's wrath is being kindled and the judgments of His truth and gospel are making known His wrath against sin and those who continue therein disobedient to the gospel. The purity and holiness of the Lord is a reproof and judgment to those who dare go on in their sins. To come to the Lord we must realize the depth of His holiness and righteous character. It will judge, condemn, reprove, and make manifest every sin and error of our lives as we stand in the light of His Word. It will be like a looking glass wherein we see what manner of people we really are in God's sight. If we will take heed to its precepts and not seek to justify ourselves, the Word will make us clean and fit to enter the presence of the Lord unafraid, and the wrath of God that is being poured out will not harm us. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The "mark of the beast" is none other than the false spirit that fills the people who are under the papacy which marks them. They are full of delusive doctrines and errors. Every sect has a spirit connected with it and that is the reason they stick together. They also cling to their name. You say something about a Catholic, Methodist, or Baptist and you will hear from them. They stick up for their false movement or the "name of the beast" and his image. Of course the "number of his name" is the man whose name is 666. On the Pope's miter is the

blasphemous name of the words, Vicarius Filii Dei — Vicar of the Son of God. (In II Thess. 2:3,4 it points out the Pope as being the "man of sin.") You take out the Roman letters, that stand for a number, from that name and add them together; it will add up to 666. The Word and the Spirit are left out of the movements of the beast and his image. (Catholicism and Protestantism). God's church is built on the principle of unity with its headquarters in heaven and the Holy Spirit rules it. The Spirit and the Word agree. Praise God for the Truth!

Those who stood on the sea of glass had victory over the beast, his image, and his mark and the number of his name. Praise God, they belonged to the Lord and obeyed the Word of God! His power ruled and they gave glory to the Lord.

One time the Lord gave me a vision of a person standing upon a Bible. It was a huge Bible and I could only see this person's feet on that Bible. All around the Bible evil spirits were working so very hard to cross the edges of the Bible and get to that person. But the person was standing there very calmly and quietly. That one was on the solid Word of God and no evil spirit could disturb that person. Oh, may the Lord help each of us to stand firmly on God's Word! —M. Miles

February 12, 1978

THE POURING OUT OF GOD'S WRATH

Rev. 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Memory Verse: For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? I Peter 4:17.

Central Thought: God's wrath and displeasure, because of man's disobedience to His truth, brings woe, sorrow, and destruction affecting every phase of mortal living.

Word Definition: *Noisome and grievous sore:* injurious and hurtful ulcer. *Armageddon:* From the Hebrew word which means (Har) mountains or range of hills, and (Meggido) which means a rendezvous or a gathering or meeting. Much speculation is being made about this term, the battle of Armageddon. It is presented as a battle that is to take place in this certain valley in Palestine, a literal battle with carnal weapons, etc. Let our vision take in a more serious conflict that is even now being waged in a spiritual sense between the forces of good and evil. It is permitted of God to bring to light and show His triumph and His power of grace in the hearts of His saints.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us bear in mind that we are beholding the pouring out of God's wrath upon people who have rejected the way of truth and holiness and have yielded to Satan and his devices. God is a God of judgment and righteousness. If any man refuses to obey and submit to His holy purpose in this life, God has wrath and retribution to pour out. It may not come right now,

but eventually all evil will be recompensed. In our lesson we have people being affected by the vials of wrath who were out of line with God. We have mentioned the first three vials and omitted the last four, for we desired to bring in the thought of the gathering battle that we are persuaded is taking place right now. It is a spiritual struggle. Some of the symbols used here are obscure to our understanding, and we do not claim to have the answer for everything. But there is enough evident expression here to cause us to realize the peril of these latter days. The key note of this lesson could well be found in verse 15. Think seriously of what He is saying here. This is plain talk. We must watch and keep our garments, lest we be found naked. This is spiritual nakedness, meaning a condition of the soul void of the righteousness of Christ. Note the areas upon which the vials of wrath were poured: the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, the sun, and the air besides the other two. These are areas of vital sources of life and light. Could it not be that the awful condition that the world is in is the result of the outpouring of God's wrath? —L. Busbee

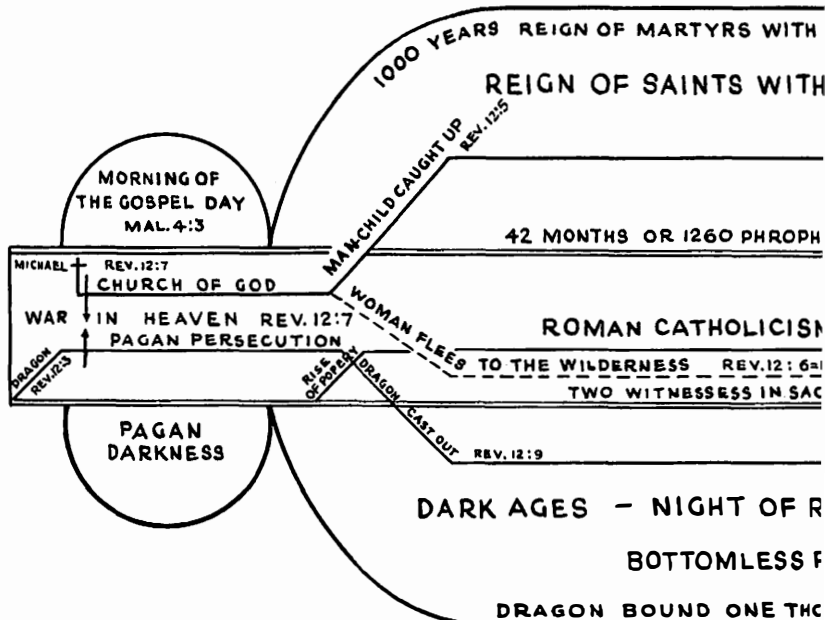
QUESTIONS:

1. What caused God to pour out His wrath upon men?
2. Why does God's judgment begin with His people?
3. What warning do we have given to us in verse 15?
4. Does Satan have power to work miracles today?
5. What kind of battle is the battle of Armageddon, and where is it waged?

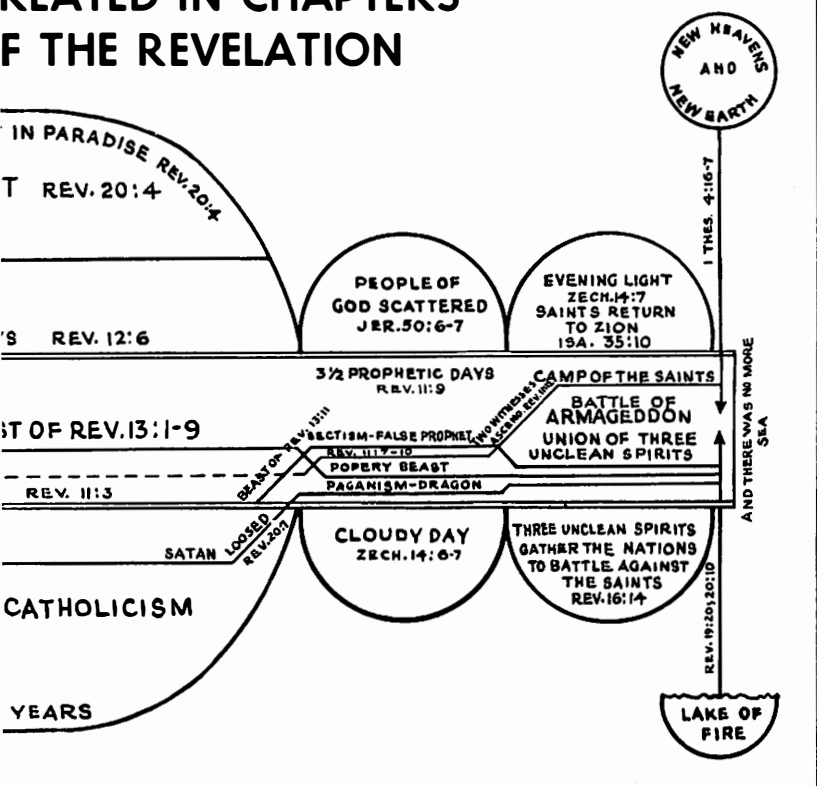
ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is a righteous thing for God to recompense tribulation to souls that trouble His saints and resist His Holy Spirit. The third angel that poured out his vial upon the fountains of waters justified God greatly for this, saying, "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." Another voice out of the altar justified God in doing this, too. Let us not think that the rugged gospel truth is too hard for men to bear. If we will humble our hearts and accept the truth and love it no matter how close it comes or how much it intermeddles with our life, we will be saved and greatly rewarded. Thus we will escape God's wrath. When God's wrath was poured out upon the seat of the beast, it brought pains and sores, and they gnawed their tongues for pain and blasphemed God, but they did not repent of their deeds. It surely does bring sores upon

DIAGRAM EXPLAINING IN EVENTS PROPHETICAL 11-12-13-17-18-19-20



TAIL THE ECCLESIASTICAL CREATED IN CHAPTERS F THE REVELATION



many hearts today when the plain truth is preached uncompromisingly to them. It is the truth that hurts so many times. Even the Pope of Rome said in a recent statement that he feared death and the coming judgment. The very thought of standing before God strikes terror to the hearts of many. They do not like to think about it. Their hearts would rather have their present short-lived pleasures upon which to dwell. But this is what they need to reckon with. Yes, it brings wrath and judgment for sin and wrong, but it is better to have it now and let it work for our salvation than to put it off and then meet it all at the judgment. If we could read the hearts of men and women today, we would find this kind of attitude of fear and trying to escape the future doom prevailing. False prophets are giving comfort and cheer, soothing their consciences by making them think that once they are saved, they will always be saved. They tell them it will be different when Jesus comes, and there will be no sin with which to deal. Many just turn it all off, saying there is no God, and they think this will relieve them of any responsibility. Oh, the surprise that is coming! Surely we need to walk carefully, and keep our garments spotless from this world. We need to be hid with Christ in God. This Christian life is a hidden life, not known by the proud in heart. Let us keep our lives covered with the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness so that we can meet the Lord without fear.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In thinking of the river Euphrates we remember about the river connected to the ancient city of Babylon. History tells us that its channel was a protection to the city, yet it was the means of its destruction. By turning the water from its course, King Cyrus marched under the walls of the city and took it. Later this was the means of the captives from Jerusalem being able to return and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. (See Jer. 51:30-32,46; Ezra 1:1-3.) According to verse 12 the angel pouring out its vial lifted a restraint. This of course is mystical Babylon or the evil spiritual city. It has three parts, the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. This is the anti-God group, Catholicism and Protestantism. What is coming out from them? Slimy false spirits which are spirits of the devil, and they are working miracles. Some might say the devil can't work miracles but we have it here in our lesson that they can. Great healings go on in false movements but they are the work of the devil to deceive people.

The great battle of Armageddon is on, evil fighting against right. The time will come when it will be more pronounced in the world today. We need to keep on the whole armour of God that we may be able to overcome all the wiles of the devil and be ready to stand before God spotless in the day of judgment.

—M. Miles

“THE DOOR SHALL BE SHUT”

The porters were crying: “Take your seats for Derby and the South!” The great terminus buzzed with life, and passengers hurrying to and fro hastened to get into the train. Good-byes were said, last handshakes and farewell kisses given—the guard lifted his flag to wave the “All Clear” signal for the train to steam out of the station.

It was just at this moment that one of the passengers seated in the last carriage saw a man come running through the iron gates on to the platform. He was breathless, and red in the face from his efforts to reach the train before it left. He made one last effort, and sprang into the carriage just as the train gathered up speed, and with a shrill whistle, puffed its way out. The man sank exhausted into his seat in the corner of the carriage, a porter slammed the door, and the passenger who had been an interested spectator of these happenings, said, with a smile: “And the door was shut!”

The newcomer glanced at the speaker, and then buried himself behind a newspaper. Not another word passed between them for the rest of the journey. But with every puff of the engine the words spoken repeated themselves in the brain of Andrew Floyd. “And the door was shut—and the door was shut—and the door was shut!”

Vainly he tried to read his paper—it seemed to him that the words not only repeated themselves in his ears, but danced before his eyes. “And the door was shut!” Behind the sheltering shade of the paper he went back many years. He saw himself sitting by the side of his mother in a country chapel. A white-haired preacher was speaking from the text which contained those very words: “And the door was shut.” The small boy listened intently. The preacher had a vivid way of telling a story, and he ended his sermon on the parable of the Ten Virgins by saying: “The Gospel train is fast filling; the last person will soon be in it; and then can you tell how you would feel, not to be just in time, but just too late? To be one who shall cry, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us?’ when the only answer will be, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’ ” Matt. 7:23.

Through the years, buried beneath the hurry and cares of this life these words had lain forgotten, but not lost, in the depths of the memory of that boy, now grown to be a man with a family of his own. Andrew Floyd looked out the window, but he did not see the beautiful green fields, the pretty country cottages, nor the grime-blackened towns through which the express puffed its way. Instead he saw a hill in far-away Palestine, and climbing that hill a band of men, followed by a motley crowd. The band of soldiers made the three prisoners with them to lie down on the three bare wooden crosses which they had carried to the summit of that hill, and then with relentless cruelty, they had nailed them to the wood. The crosses had been lifted by rough hands, put into holes already dug for them, and the earth piled up around.

Who was the central Figure lifted up on that ugly Cross? Yes, he knew it was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God—and as Andrew Floyd gazed upon the silent, suffering Form, the tears began to course unheeded down his cheeks. His sin had been borne on that Cross — and how ungrateful he had been! All these years, and he had never taken refuge within the Door which had been opened for the safety of sinners—for his safety that day when Christ, the Son of God, loved “unto the end.”

“And the door was shut.” Yes, it might have been shut, and if it had been, he, Andrew Floyd, would have been shut out, for as yet he had never thanked that silent Sufferer for dying for his sins, nor taken Him as his own personal Saviour. But he would do so now! Not another moment should pass until he knew himself to be safely inside the Door! Andrew Floyd shut his eyes, and for the first time for many years, he prayed. With sorrow in his heart he poured out his repentance, and grief, and gave himself unreservedly to the Saviour.

So occupied was he that he did not notice the stopping of the train. It was only when he lowered his paper a short time later, that he saw the man who had awakened his soul had left the train. He was sorry—he would have liked to tell him that he had brought a soul to Christ through his words! Still, it could not be helped: perhaps some day he would see him again.

Andrew Floyd never met his fellow passenger—however, he did have the joy of knowing that his words had awakened Andrew’s soul, and brought him to the Saviour. Two years later, away in the far East, where his work for the Lord had brought him, Andrew Floyd met a friend, who was also a

friend of the man who had been sitting in the carriage when Andrew came hurrying into it on that memorable day. This friend was on his way back to England, and to him Andrew related the foregoing events which led to his conversion.

So struck was Captain McIntyre with the story that he used it in giving an address on reaching England. In his audience sat his other friend—the man who had spoken the words! After the meeting he spoke to Captain McIntyre, and learned from him what his simple words had done in bringing another to Christ. What joy filled his heart as he listened to the story as related to his friend by Andrew Floyd, now in the service of the Lord in that remote country!

Friend, may I repeat those same words to you? **"The door was shut."** Today that Door stands open, but one day it will be shut. On which side of it—of **Him**—will you be found? Oh, the madness and danger of delaying your salvation to the last moment! May you hear His voice, and enter in through the Door without delay!

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in." Rev. 3:20. That is Christ, your Saviour, waiting patiently at the door of your heart. But listen again—

"I am the door," says the Saviour, "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John 10:9. Will you not unlock the door of your heart, and confessing your sin and your need of salvation, invite the Saviour to come in? If you do, then at that very moment you will enter in through the other Door, which is Christ Himself, and will know the joy of sins forgiven, and of having received the Gift of Everlasting Life!

—T. Stubbs

February 19, 1978

THE APOSTATE CHURCH

Rev. 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

James 3:16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Memory Verse: For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. I Cor. 14:33.

Central Thought: The Papacy is represented as "mother of harlots," which is the leading church of the sects that are fallen.

Word Definition: "The term *Babylon* doubtless has even a more extensive application than papacy and protestantism. . . . If the capital city represents an apostate church, the church of Rome, then the other cities with which she is compared also represent other apostate churches of like

character." The Greek and Gregorian churches are daughters. *Many waters* is a symbol of many people and nations.

LESSON BACKGROUND

A number of times we have covered the same ground. This fact has confused many people in studying Revelation. Some want to explain it as a continuous narrative from beginning to the end. Revelation has a number of distinct themes running over the same ground.

In our lesson we have a description of the church of Rome. She is given in a symbol of a drunken harlot. This might shock the modest feelings of the pious today, but nothing more vile can describe the wickedness that abounds in the so-called pure church or mother church. Such an outward show of purity makes her corruption all the more evil and deplorable. She is "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication," as stated in our lesson.

Let us remember that "the woman in chapter 17 is the church of Rome, while the beast is the civil power, the one supporting the other. This interrelation of the civil with the ecclesiastical power continued for ages." As early as the fifth century, however, the Pope's power was being strongly exerted in political affairs. (Rev. Exp.)

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Apostate Church symbolized as being?
2. Why should it be symbolized as a beautiful woman decked in precious stones, yet she is a wicked woman?
3. The beast that carried her is a symbol of the civil government of Rome and the woman is the evil church. Who are her daughters?
4. What is she drunk with and what does history tell us to prove this fact?
5. Who is the author of confusion and what brings us peace?
6. Where can we find the wisdom from above? Is it in the false movements?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The picture in our lesson brings to mind the beautiful woman arrayed in finery and decked with precious stones and pearls. She is carried on a beast that has names of blasphemy and in her hand is a cup full of abominations and filthiness. What a combination! She is a drunken harlot and the "kings of the earth" have encouraged her in her corruption and

idolatries. They have become "drunk with the wine of her fornications." The woman had an appropriate name written on her forehead so that all might know her true character, "Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." In the apostles' day they saw this "mystery of iniquity" working in a small way. (II Thess. 2:7). It grew from men wanting to be something and they gave themselves positions in the church and swayed others to follow them. This is something we need to watch today. It is the truths that we want exalted and not the vessel who gives them. Finally, we read in church history that man was exalted to the extent that it ended up with a Pope over all, who claimed to be the Vicar of the Son of God. Such a blasphemous title!

The church of Rome was the "mother of harlots." If she stands degraded, then her daughters are the same. This is the same family that is connected with that "Great City which reigneth over the kings of the earth." The church of Rome did produce the Protestant churches. They copied many things from her, but none of God's saints were in the Roman church. We read how she was a relentless persecutor of the saints because she was "drunken with the blood of the saints," and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. We know that many Catholics declare they did not persecute others, but history has too many proofs to this fact. We have a book entitled, *Fox's Book of Martyrs* and it testifies to this fact. In 1414 there was "the sixteenth General Council" held and with "Pope Martin present in person, condemned the reformers, Huss and Jerome, to be burned at the stake and then prevailed on the emperor, Sigismund, to violate the safe-conduct that he had given Huss, signed by his own hand, in which he guaranteed the reformer a safe return to Bohemia and the inhuman sentence was carried out, with the haughty prelates standing by to satiate their eyes on the sight of human agony." —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The scene of our lesson was that which John saw when he was carried away in the spirit into the wilderness. This is not a literal something that he saw. It was a spiritual something. It was in the wilderness, an area of barren, waste, and unprofitable land. It is in this area of spiritual deadness and lack of Holy Spirit inspiration that the apostate church makes her rise. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God is looking at things from a spiritual standpoint. All these things

we behold here are spiritual conditions but are expressed in a literal description. All those who wonder after this false church are those whose names are not written in the book of life. Those who are with the Lamb are called, chosen, and faithful. Jesus Himself said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Oh, it is a serious thing! Then there are those who are called and then chosen, but to be faithful is quite another thing. We are going to be tempted and tried. It is for us to be faithful as well as to be called and chosen.

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Look at that title. Note the commas. Observe the first: **MYSTERY.** What does this mean? Paul spoke of the mystery of iniquity. Iniquity is just as much of a mystery as godliness. Just as people do not understand godliness, so they do not understand what real iniquity is. It takes being enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Who is the woman's harlot daughters? The Roman Catholic Church has some daughters. There were movements that sprang up in the Protestant Age that followed the same error that Papacy fell to: Man-rule, pride, human wisdom, etc. Many of these so-called churches had good beginnings. The Methodist Church had a good start under the influence of the godly Wesley brothers. But what happened? People failed to walk in the light and they became a cold, lifeless sect. So it has been with many other churches, many of which are going on today prospering in numbers and finance. But their spiritual condition is that of death and formality. These are the harlot daughters of Babylon.

—L. Busbee

February 26, 1978

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"

Rev. 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

II Cor. 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Memory Verse: And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Eph. 5:11.

Central Thought: Every honest-hearted child of God should hear the call from heaven, "Come out of her, my people." Babylon has fallen.

Word Definition: *Yoke* means "something that binds, unites", etc., or "join together."

LESSON BACKGROUND

"The word 'Babylon' became the emblem of all that was haughty and oppressive, and especially of all that persecuted the church of God. The word here (Rev. 18:4) must be used to denote some power that resembled the ancient and literal Babylon in these characteristics."

"If she (the Romish church) be the mother, who are the daughters? It must be the corrupt, national, established churches that came out of her." —Lorenzo Dow.

In the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* we read: "An important question, however, says Mr. Jones, still remains for inquiry: Is Antichrist confined to the church of Rome? The answer is readily returned in the affirmative by Protestants in general; and happy had it been for the world had that been the case. But although we are fully warranted to consider that church as the 'mother of harlots,' the truth is that by whatsoever arguments we succeed in fixing that odious charge upon her, we shall, by parity of reasoning, be obliged to allow other national churches to be her unchaste daughters, and for this plain reason, among others, because in their very constitution and tendency they are hostile to the nature of the kingdom of Christ." (The above three paragraphs are taken from *What the Bible Teaches*, pages 379-381.)

QUESTIONS:

1. What had Babylon (Catholicism and her daughters, Protestantism) become?
2. Why did the call from God go out to those who were honest-hearted to come out of her?
3. Does Ezekiel (chapter 34) prophesy of that time and how God will seek out His sheep?
4. Discuss the end of Protestantism (350 years after the 1260 years of Catholic rule) that brought up to the year 1880. What happened at that time?
5. How can one be yoked up with unbelievers or infidels?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As we have proven that Babylon stands for the corrupt popery and the unchaste daughters which are Protestantism, we need to be alarmed with the pronouncement in our lesson. It is fallen and has "become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Every child of God will flee from such a place when his spiritual eyes become open to this fact. The church will not always stay in the wilderness. She would starve in such a place and be in danger of imbibing the false spirits around her. Even though we had pictured in Rev. 12 the woman, or pure church in the morning dispensation, which was driven "into the wilderness," we rejoice today that she did not have to stay there. We are living in the last reformation when God is calling His

children out. We see them coming, rejoicing to Zion. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" (Songs of Sol. 8:5). Praise God for her return. The church "eclipsed was thy lustre by long papal night, And dimly the dark, cloudy day revealed thee to eyes that were earnestly searching for truth and the heavenly way. Thy light as the morning breaks forth in the earth, thy brightness all nations shall see; The ransomed from Babel are eagerly turning with songs of rejoicing to thee." ("Fair Zion" *Evening Light Songs*.)

You can read Ezek. 34, which describes the people of God under the figure of sheep. Sheep represented the scattered children of God in Babylon. It was a dark and cloudy day for them but Jesus has said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:26,27. When they hear the call to "come out of her my people," they obey. They do not wander around independently of each other, but the Holy Spirit brings them together in unity. Praise God for the Church of God and those who are "born again," filled with the Holy Spirit and who are obeying the Word of God!

In 1880, God raised up a holy ministry to send them forth with His Word against sect-Babylon. Many heard the voice of the Lord and came out of her. D. S. Warner and others traveled here and there preaching the truth and many came out of bondage to worship the Lord in freedom. Today, there are those who are still standing for the truths preached in 1880 and later. They are free from the bondage of style, worldliness of all kinds, and man-rule. The Holy Spirit directs their services and God is glorified.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When the sins of spiritual Babylon came up before God, the cry came, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." To separate one's self from religious association that has been such a part of their life is a great step to take and not many are willing to go to that extent to satisfy the conviction of their heart. Many acknowledge that the church they are in is not what it ought to be, but to separate from such seems a far-fetched and extreme move to make. Many faces gather blackness and souls go into gross spiritual darkness because they fail to walk in the light and knowledge that come to them. There are records of cases where people have expressed a yearning for a brighter day to come as they were so burdened for the deplorable condition of things. But many of those very people rejected the light when it

did come, and refused to separate themselves from the sect they were in. It is a big move to make, a move that is not consummated without much prayer and seeking God. There is much persecution and hardship to undergo. To some it seems to be a step in the dark, but God has proven to be to these earnest and honest souls a full, sufficient God of grace and guidance. Isa. 52:11,12 says: "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward [will be behind you and gather you up.]" It is wonderful to read of the early reformers and how God led them when they cut loose from the error that they had found themselves in. Being persecuted by their former associates and even relatives, these precious men and women found the Lord to be the consolation and guidance they needed. Man is so prone to fall into error and the masses of people too often prove to not be leakproof from the leaven of wickedness. Thus, conditions develop until it comes to a place where the forbearance and longsuffering of God decrees that His people must come out if they are to continue to be blessed of Him. This is a treacherous time for the Church. But as we step out for Him and follow the leading of His Spirit, we will find that He will go before us and will follow us up, protecting our souls on every side.

—L. Busbee

March 5, 1978

THE TWO SUPPERS

Rev. 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Memory Verse: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. II Thess. 2:11,12.

Central Thought: We are going to partake and be a part of one of two great suppers. We will either be saved and be a guest at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Christ), or we will reject the truth of the gospel and be meat for the evil spirits that are turned loose upon the world.

Word Definitions: *Alleluia:* From the Hebrew which means "praise Jehovah." *Omnipotent:* All ruling and all powerful (God).

LESSON BACKGROUND

After all opposition and persecution from spiritual enemies, and after beholding the apostate church in her wickedness, we have today's lesson lighting up the picture with a blaze of triumph and victory. The 19th chapter opens with exulting praise to God who has judged the great whore and avenged the blood of His servants. Seeing that the book of Revelation is dealing with the ecclesiastical heavens and the church realm, we are beyond doubt that this great whore is the Roman Catholic Church and that her harlot daughters are the sectarian movements that have sprung up. They all constitute and make up sect Babylon, from whom God is calling His people. The minds and hearts of mankind have conceived many deceptive doctrines and evil ways. The day of sect-making is not passed yet. People are still framing doctrines and theories, claiming to base them upon Holy Scripture. Oh, what an awful state to be in! So proud and vain is the heart of man, even in matters of religion! He is prone to err if he is not inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew that the going would be rough at times for those who were His own. Let us remember that in all these things the foundation of God is standing sure, and that it is sealed with the truth that the Lord knoweth them that are His, and God has decreed that all who take the name of Christ must depart from iniquity. If we fail or refuse to do so, we are hurting no one but ourselves. God's Word and truth are unchanged. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The flesh enters in too many times and souls are led astray. Let us be on our guard.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the victory that God has wrought as portrayed in our lesson?
2. How are we to prepare for the marriage supper of the Lamb?
3. What does the fine linen clean and white signify?
4. What kind of warfare do we see in our lesson?
5. Is the supper of the fowls of the air a literal feast? What is it?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Surely, we need to rejoice and give thanks to God for what He has accomplished in these latter days. He has judged and brought to light the evils of Catholicism and her harlot daughters. As we think of the long, dreary, Papal night of 1260 years and then the 350 years when the light was not clear nor

dark, surely we sense that it must have been a terrible thing for such a corrupt church to be supposing to represent Christ to the world. God has raised up men in the different ages of time to bring out the truth and reveal darkness and sin that lay hidden beyond the common people's observance. I am really persuaded that the scene in our lesson of the Lord Jesus riding on a white horse and the armies following Him, dressed in fine linen upon white horses, signifies the gospel going forth in holy power and the anointing of the Spirit in this evening time. The white horse signified purity and perfect holiness, sanctification, and the anointing of the Spirit. That is what the gospel did. It smote the nations. It pulled the cover off of sin and darkness. At the same time came the scene of the great supper of the sacrifice God had to make to the evil spirits of hell of the souls of men who refused to humble themselves to walk with God. It is a serious scene, far more serious and close to us than what the religious world realizes. They have Jesus riding out of heaven on a white horse fighting a literal battle of Armageddon at the end of this age and setting up a thousand years reign. What error! At the same time, sin is having a place in their hearts. They are lifted up with pride in their great radio audiences and financial success. Their doctrines tickle the ears, stir the fancy and imagination of men, but they fail to negotiate any kind of true holy reform in the heart. Look at the final windup of things. The beast and the kings of the earth make war against Christ and His truth. But what happens? They are cast into the lake of fire. On which side are we, and which supper are we going to attend?

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The term *marriage* is frequently used in the Scriptures to represent a special union between Christ and His people. We read in Romans about the early church being free from the law and that they "should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." Rom 7:4. In one sense, the eternal union of God's children with Christ has been with Him all through this dispensation, but in another sense she has been betrothed to Christ but left in the world. She was driven into the wilderness while a corrupt and drunken prostitute and her harlot daughters were in public view. But the judgments of God came down upon Babylon and the bride of Christ appears and is ready for a public marriage. What a great rejoicing there was! The special preparations that the bride is making represents the glorious holiness reformation that is sweeping the world, gathering God's people together.

The white horse shows Christ as a glorious conqueror; and his crowns denote His supreme dominion. The sword of his mouth and his vesture dipped in blood denote the dread work of vengeance upon his enemies, while the armies following him doubtless denote the "ten thousands of his saints" that accompany Him when He comes. Jude 14. The bride has already prepared herself for His coming and now the eternal union takes place.

—M. Miles

March 12, 1978

THE DRAGON LOOSED AGAIN

Rev. 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Memory Verse: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6:7.

Central Thought: In the beginning, the dragon was a deceptive system, one that "deceived the whole world"; but later was uncovered by Christianity's light and then it became a bitter enemy of Christ and His followers. Today the order is reversed. Its tactics are milder, but yet the dragon is deceiving people. We need to be on our guard.

Word Definition: *Dragon:* In the mythical history and legendary poetry of almost every nation, the dragon appears as the emblem of the destructive and anarchistic principle. . . . Like the serpent, the dragon is always a minister of evil . . . the object of which is to fight order, harmony, and progress. In Christian art, the dragon is the emblem of sin . . . It is often represented as crushed under the feet of saints and martyrs . . . Sometimes its prostrate attitude signifies the triumph of Christianity over Paganism."

—*People's Cyclopaedia*

LESSON BACKGROUND

We notice that the power referred to as "the Devil and Satan" is also denominated "dragon." Notice it says, "the dragon." This implies that the object has already been introduced. In Rev. 12:9 it says, "a dragon," which is "called the Devil, and Satan"; so the dragon is not the devil or Satan, just called that.

The angel that overthrew the public system of Pagan infidelity symbolizes the primitive host of Christians, the ministers in particular.

The key shows power and authority. In the gospel the same figure is applied to God's ministers, where they are given authority to bind the powers of wickedness on earth. Matt. 16: 19; 18:18.

In the book of Acts you read of the warfare of Christianity against the huge system of error, paganism or the dragon. "From this time the dragon as such—as a public deceiver of the nations throughout the Apocalyptic earth—was overthrown. This marks the beginning of the thousand years mentioned. . . . We cannot apply this period specified as literally one thousand years without varying from every principle of time prophecy in the Revelation, for they are all symbolic; neither can we apply it according to the usual year-day method, which, signifying three hundred and sixty thousand years; would throw this series of events out of harmony with the time-periods allotted to the other themes of truth running over the same ground and terminating at the same point—the general judgment. Therefore, to be consistent, we shall have to apply it as (so far as human knowledge of the exact dates is concerned) an indefinite length of time, on the same principle that 'the hour of temptation' in chapter 3:10, the three and one half days in chapter 11:9, and the 'hour' in which the ten kingdoms receive power with the beast (chap. 17:12), etc., are applied." —*Rev. Explained*

There is no such thing as two literal resurrections at the end. This false teaching is to give people a deceptive hope. There will be one literal resurrection and then the judgment. Read Rev. 1:7. When Christ comes in the clouds, all eyes will see Him and the wicked will "wail" because of seeing Him. Read John 5:28,29. At that "hour" the wicked will be resurrected to damnation and the righteous unto life. In our lesson those John saw who had part in the "first resurrection" were disembodied spirits above. The Scriptures clearly teach that mankind in their ordinary condition are "dead in trespasses and sins" and through salvation they are quickened to a new life in Christ; scripturally this is the first resurrection. Read Eph. 2:1; John 5:24,25.

QUESTIONS:

1. Was the devil, the prince of evil, bound for a thousand years or was it the dragon power, called Satan or the devil? Read Revelation 12:9.
2. Was the thousand years symbolically used in the day-year count or does it mean just simply a period of time?

3. Discuss the early church and its warfare against the dragon power or anti-God spirit.
4. Who were beheaded for Christ and lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, or a period of time?
5. Will there be two resurrections or do verses 5 and 6 talk about the first resurrection as applying to the phase of the church that was martyred for Christ and "lived and reigned with" him?
6. Discuss how Satan or the anti-God spirit is loose today?
7. What spirit will go down last as mentioned in verse ten? Does this make us know we are living in the last days?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Surely we are living in the day when the dragon spirit or paganism is loose. We do not need to wonder when it will come. Madalyn O'Hara is one example of that Dragon or Satan spirit that has been turned loose. She says a high percentage of the people in the U. S. are atheist, and predicts that it will grow rapidly. How sad to say that we see it growing. It comes from many angles. Our country was founded on freedom of speech and religion, therefore it is open to much corruption. Today many are saying that we need to listen to both sides of a question. I say, under the authority of God's Word, that we should not listen to error. If God's Word says that it is wrong, there is no other side to the question. Young people, guard your minds and your faith in God's Word. Don't listen to error. If you do, the devil will plant seeds of distrust and doubt in God's Word. The devil is causing people to believe in the "unreality of matter," witches, magicians, spiritualism, no hell, that Christ was a mere man, etc.

The dragon or Satan that is loosed for a season is doing miracles to deceive people. This is according to prophecy. Oh, we need to be aware and take a stand against evil! Don't let your mind run on the false teachings in the world. He will "keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isa. 26:3. Where are we to let our minds run? Not on false doctrines or man's theories, but we must keep our minds on God, His righteousness, and Word.

Notice that the dragon or the devil will go down last as a system. The beast (Catholicism), and the false prophet (Protestantism) were cast down first, or already in the lake of fire, and then the dragon, or the devil, was cast in last. That means in the last days the anti-God spirit, paganism or dragon spirit will be in the world with full force. They will encamp the

saints but God will take the saints up to be with Him when He sees they have had enough. When Jesus cried out on the cross, God took Him out of His body of suffering; just so the saints will be taken out of this world of persecutions when God sees that it is enough. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The dragon is loosed again in these latter days in the form of Communism and other atheistic movements that deny the power of God. Recalling that it was the message of the early morning church and the influence of Christianity that broke the power of the dragon in the times previous, we are persuaded today that the reason for the rise of the dragon again has been the apostasy of the professed Christian Church. The multiplicity of belief, strife, and division that has corrupted the nominal church has helped to fill the hearts and minds of many people with unbelief and doubt. George Lenin, the man who helped bring Communism to power in Russia, lost faith in religion as a young man when his brother was executed for being a revolutionary. As we read of the horrible state of affairs that went on in Russia in those days, especially in a religious sense, we do not wonder that men lost faith in religion. There was a man in Russia that claimed to have power with God, and he wielded his influence with the royal family of the Czar. The Czar had a son who was a free bleeder and would call on this man, Rasputin, to come and pray for his son when he would take a bleeding spell. This man would get results in these times, too. But he lived such a wicked life with drunkenness and women right while all of this was going on, even alluring the affection of the Czar's wife, so the report went. Such things only helped men and woman to lose faith in the Christian religion. There are no doubt other factors envolved that helped give rise to this dragon power, but nevertheless we see how quickly and successfully it has spread over the world. The current of the world around us is a downward pull away from spirituality and the fear of God. Ignorance, darkness, deception, evil, lust, greed, and dishonesty swirl their gripping tide around us every day. It is worse than it has ever been before. It is going to mean all for us to maintain our integrity with God. The camp of the saints is being surrounded today. It is sad to think about the church going into camp, when it looks like we should be going forth to battle. But when the foundation of the fear of God is being destroyed in the hearts of people all around, what can the

righteous do? It is a time when it will mean a lot for a man to deliver his own soul. Surely it is a treacherous and perilous time.

—L. Busbee

March 19, 1978

THE HOLY CITY

Rev. 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Memory Verse: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Heb. 13:13,14.

Central Thought: The Bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem, which is the Church of God, containing all the blood-washed and Spirit-led men and women of all ages.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Just as one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues came to John and carried him away in the spirit into the wilderness to show him the corrupt, apostate church, even so now does one of these vial angels carry him away in the spirit, but this time to a great and high mountain. And what does he show John? Not the corrupt, defiled city, but the holy and pure New Jerusalem that had her origin in heaven, is what bursts forth before John's rapturous view. Doubtless, after viewing all the sin and corruption of the Roman Church and her daughters, and after seeing all the evil and strife that stained the world, this beautiful and inspiring scene must have looked wonderful and precious to this beloved disciple of the Lord. If an artist could draw a picture of what John saw in this holy city of New Jerusalem, truly it would be a dazzling splendor of glory and beauty that would exceed all other masterpieces of art. But the natural man cannot picture or show the things of the Spirit of God as they truly are. It takes the Holy Spirit inspiring and revealing to the heart these wonderful things.

The 48th chapter of Ezekiel, especially the latter part of the chapter, shows that Ezekiel was given revelation of a city that is the same as that which John saw. But it is more clearly defined and revealed here in our lesson today. As you read and study, ask the Lord to reveal it afresh and anew to your heart. Let God elevate your mind from the outward and dim — the earthly and fleshly. Look and see in the light of our lesson the glorious and beautiful city of God of which you are an inhabitant if you are truly saved and born again.—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the angel carry John?
2. What did he see?
3. Was it literal Jerusalem?
4. What was written on the gates? What does this mean?
5. What was written on the foundations? What does this mean?
6. Who will walk in the light of this city?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is needful for us to understand that the new heaven and the new earth spoken of in our lesson are in two phases, and yet it all is actually the same. The first phase of the new heaven and the new earth is experienced in the New Testament plan of salvation for the soul of man. He is made a new creature and given a new life. The old things are passed away. The old law of Moses is fulfilled in the new life of Christ. It truly is a new dwelling place for the children of God. Isaiah spoke of this new heaven and new earth in Isa. 65:17-19. But the apostle Peter, speaking of the destruction of this present literal earth and heaven declares in his second epistle that we, according to God's promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. II Pet. 3:13. That is the second phase, if you want to call it that. There is a new world yet to come. We who have served the Lord faithfully in this world and have partaken of His grace and holiness will live with Christ in that eternal world to come. Praise the Lord!

The Lord blessed my soul with the thought of a precious truth in thinking of the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel being on the twelve gates. From the 49th chapter of Genesis and the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, we find the blessing of the twelve tribes of Israel as given by Moses and Jacob. There is spiritual content in these blessings that is true in the Church of God today. Then it is inspiring to see that in the foundations of the wall of the city is found the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The Gospel that they lived and preached and the sacrifice that they were called upon to make for the sake of Christ and His cause, surely rewarded them with eternal fame. The gold of the city and the precious stones that garnished the foundations, and the pearls that brightened the gates — all these are not literal things. They are conveyed to us in literal expressions to picture or describe the spiritual wealth and beauty the real city of God has in the eyes of God. Surely it is worth while to be saved and living for the Lord. Some day the whole thing with all its glory and beauty will be spread forth before our immortal view. Let us live for the Lord so that we can be accounted worthy of seeing and enjoying these eternal treasures.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many of us may wonder just what heaven will be like. In our lesson we see that John saw a beautiful city. It is, of course,

in symbolical language, but the beauty that is described makes us wonder just what the reality will be. Surely it is beyond our greatest imagination. We see used in this wonderful description the most precious stones of earth and the greatest things of value to try to help us know that it is surely great. Oh, I want to see it for myself, don't you?

This city is 1500 miles square. It has twelve gates of solid pearls and is nearly 300 feet high with six thousand miles of walls stretching around it which are built of the purest jasper. It has in it the most indestructible material found on earth. Think of the vast amount of labor it would require to cut the material and place it in its proper place. Oh, how great our God is! This symbolizes our eternal home. We stand in awe and our hearts are filled with praises to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour, who died such a horrible death on the cross, being innocent, so we can go to that city. Are you on your way? Has your name been enrolled in heaven? Does your soul long to be in that place where it can expand to its limits or fullness? Oh, what will it be to be there! Then we think of what it will mean *not* to be there. "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The twelve foundations are of the most brilliant and costly gems that can be chosen from this world. Nothing cheap or common went into them. The various colors were of the most delicate shades. Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone. All nations can enter in from all four directions. There were gates on all four sides. May the Lord help us to check our daily life and see that we are living acceptably in His sight. We want to keep cut loose from this world so we can enter into that city, which is only for the pure and holy. —M. Miles

March 26, 1978

THE RIVER OF LIFE AND A FINAL WARNING

Rev. 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

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:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Memory Verse: And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Rev. 22:12,13.

Central Thought: The holy city, the river of life, and the tree of life are offered freely to whosoever will keep the commandments of the gospel of Christ, taking heed not to add to nor take away from the prophecy of this book of the Revelation.

Word Definitions: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." The word *street* means a broad place. It could refer to either an avenue where people pass or a city square where people converge and gather, or to both. In the holy city grows the tree of life. When it says *the tree of life*, it does not mean just one single tree, but

rather a multitude of this particular kind of tree. "Without are dogs" The term *dog* here refers not to four-legged beasts. It is meaning men and women with a carnal, fleshly nature without Holy Spirit inspiration and guidance and understanding. These are *without*, that is, on the outside of the city of God and have not access thereto.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the 47th chapter of Ezekiel we see a similar vision to the one John sees here in our lesson. Ezekiel saw a mighty river flowing from the threshold of the temple. It was healing waters that went down into the desert and the salt sea, healing the waters thereof. On either side of the river bloomed trees whose fruit yielded each month, and the leaves were for medicine. Let us realize that this scene we are beholding here is not to be put off until after this life. This is something we are to experience now in Bible salvation. We are to drink of the water of life now. We are to eat of the tree of life now in a great spiritual sense. We are to keep and "do his commandments, that we may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." This entry is not the entry that we will make into heaven some day. This is an entry that God wants us to make now. We enter now into the city of God by being born again, being washed from our sins, and obeying the truth. "For without are dogs, sorcerers, etc." Could you picture our eternal home with these evil things right outside the gates? Of course not! This is talking about the experience that we must have in this present life. We must enter into the holy city as a safe refuge from the evils that are raging in the world around us. Thank God for this beautiful city, the Church of the living God, the home of the soul, and all the wonderful things that are therein.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did John see coming out of the throne of God?
2. Who else in the Bible had a vision similar to this one?
3. What did he see growing in the street and on either side of the river?
4. What will we escape if we get inside the holy city?
5. How can we add to the words of this prophecy? How can we take away?
6. Who is invited to take the water of life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In this final chapter of the Bible we find a beautiful description of the heavenly dwelling of God's people and a final warning to not trifle and try to change the words of the prophecy of this book. Consider the pure river of water of life! How precious that through the Holy Spirit and the inspiration that He gives through the Scriptures we can drink of that pure river. Here we have access to the tree of life. Adam and Eve, because of their sin and disobedience, were driven away from the beautiful garden and the tree of life that grew there. But now in Christ Jesus and His saving and keeping grace, we gain access to the tree of life. We eat of the luscious and beautiful fruit of the Spirit, and receive healing by faith to our souls and to our bodies as well. There is no night here. Our light is Jesus who shines constantly upon our souls. We have found that living for Him is the safest, happiest, and most satisfying life we could ever live. He has lifted us above the filth and darkness of the evil world around us. We dare not stoop to partake of these fleeting pleasures of earth that are contrary to true godliness. We have tasted life's pure river, and our souls are satisfied. "There's no thirsting for life's pleasures, nor adorning rich and gay, for I've found a richer treasure, one that fadeth not away." We see His face, and His name is in our foreheads. Our hearts and minds are stayed on Him, and we behold Him in all things that come our way. His love is ever toward us, and His eye is upon us for eternal good. Let the world rage on, but Christ is our all in all! This is a serious and yet a joyful ending to this series of study in the Revelation. There are vital truths contained herein that we all need to know and understand. Let us take heed to the word of warning to not take away nor add to. Let us not shape and chisel the words of this prophecy to suit ourselves. God is His own interpreter and He can make the truth plain to those who are seeking Him with all their hearts.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When we think of the glory that filled the earthly tabernacle which Moses made and the temple Solomon built, we can in a measure know of the glory that will fill the city of God in that place prepared for all who are faithful and true in this life and have been resurrected to live in eternity with our God. There will not be any need of the sun there. Praise God for the precious love that He has for all who will choose Him in this

world of confusion! We thank God there will “be no more curse” there. This symbolizes the removal of spiritual death and the impartation of everlasting life in that wonderful abode of the soul in eternity. In the New Jerusalem, the “tree of life” blooms and bears fruit forever and all may eat of it. In this life, we are blessed if we have partaken of the tree of life and entered into the city and when we die we will just be transported into the reality of the city of God. The offers of salvation will cease when Christ appears to give us access to that tree of immortal life over there, but here the church or bride is calling for all to come and be saved. Christ can satisfy every longing of the soul.

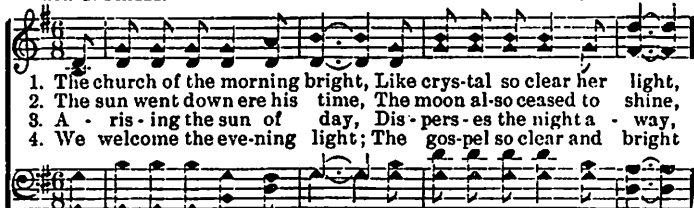
Notice the solemn warning to not take away or add to this book. It's a dangerous thing to trifle with God's Word. Today there are so many translations and they read so “smoothly” as someone has said, but beware! Under that “smooth” reading is evil and deception. God gave us the King James translation at the time when the new reformation was coming out and I feel that we need to stay by it. It has been tested and proven down through the years and many have lived and died a triumphant death by living to its precepts.

—M. Miles

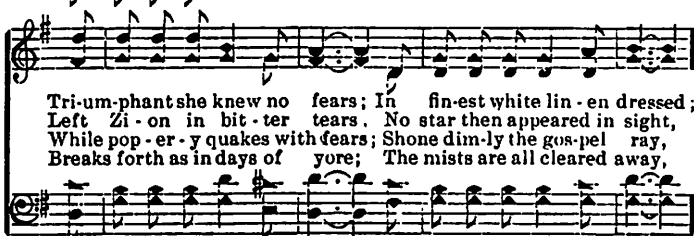
Biblical Trace of the Church

WM. G. SCHELL.

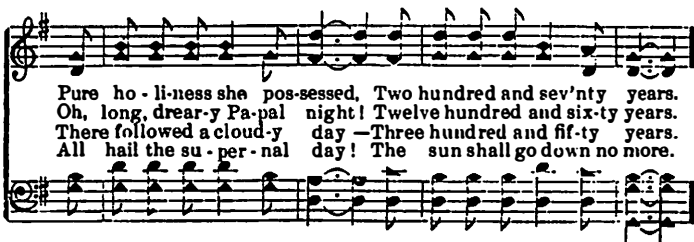
B. E. WARREN.



1. The church of the morning bright, Like crys-tal so clear her light,
 2. The sun went down ere his time, The moon al-so ceased to shine,
 3. A - ris - ing the sun of day, Dis - pers - es the night a - way,
 4. We welcome the eve - ning light; The gos - pel so clear and bright

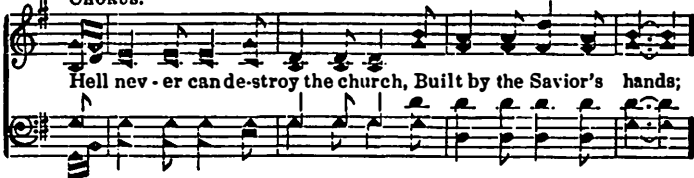


Tri - um - phant she knew no fears; In fin - est white lin - en dressed;
 Left Zi - on in bit - ter tears. No star then appeared in sight,
 While pop - er - y quakes with fears; Shone dim - ly the gos - pel ray,
 Breaks forth as in days of yore; The mists are all cleared away,



Pure ho - li - ness she pos - sessed, Two hundred and sev'n - ty years.
 Oh, long, drear - y Pa - pal night! Twelve hundred and six - ty years.
 There followed a cloud - y day - Three hundred and fif - ty years.
 All hail the su - per - nal day! The sun shall go down no more.

CHORUS.



Hell nev - er can de - stroy the church, Built by the Sav - ior's hands;



Up - on the Rock, the sol - id Rock, Christ Je - sus, still she stands.

Biblical Trace of the Church

De-spite of per - se-cu-tion's flood, And gates of hell, for - sooth ;

She's still the kingdom of the Lord, The pil - lar of the truth.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system also ends with a double bar line.

THE ETERNAL HOME OF THE REDEEMED

We are told in the Bible that, as "strangers and pilgrims," we are simply "sojourning here" for a time (I Pet. 2:11; 1:17). This world is not our final destiny; "our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Yes, IN HEAVEN, the place of God's throne and the home of the angels will be our eternal home; therefore "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

All God's people are "born from above." Their conversation is in heaven. Their names "are written in heaven." The church of God is "the kingdom of heaven." Thus all our hopes, our desires, and attractions are heavenward. The mind and heart of the Christian is naturally reaching out unto the eternal world. Earth loses its attraction. Its rubies and diamonds, its silver and gold, lose their luster and brilliancy, as the Christian with an eye of faith sees his riches in heaven. "Thou shalt have treasures in heaven." The Christian beholds the sparkling jewels, the unsearchable riches of Christ that await him over there, and as he presses forward toward the joy set before him earth's attractions fade away. None but the earthly minded desire to remain here. None but those who are void of spiritual life desire to make this earth their home. "Man is born for a higher destiny than that of earth. There is a realm where the rainbow never fades; where the stars will be spread out before us like islands that slumber upon the ocean; and where the beautiful beings which here pass before us like visions will stay in our presence forever."

—*Beyond the Tomb*, by H. M. Riggle

